

46th Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 1: High-Level Mainstreaming Panel (+ 20th anniversary of DDPA)
22 February 2021

Delivered by Sandra EPAL-RATJEN

Madam President, Distinguished speakers of the High-Level panel,

20 years ago the Durban declaration and plan of action acknowledged the discrimination suffered by victims of racism and xenophobia with regard to access to health and housing as a cause for the entrenched socio-economic inequalities that they face.

While some progress has been made in combatting racial discrimination and xenophobia in the law, the structural socio-economic inequalities that de facto discriminate people of different ethnic origin have not been addressed.

As it was repeated so many times in the last months, COVID-19 has been a magnifying glass and a booster for structural, existing inequalities and injustice.

COVID-19 has showed what it really means to be disproportionately impacted as an indigenous person or a migrant in times of a global health crisis. FI and its network of Franciscans and other partners on the ground, have documented this reality, including the situation of migrants in the northern countries of Central America, Mexico and the US; or the situation of indigenous people in Brazil whose regions had no oxygen supplies for patients in intensive care.

Yet, indigenous people and migrants are not only victims of discrimination and disproportionate impact. They are also key actors in the solutions to the multiple crises we are facing, including in the care of our planet. Only a coherent and integrated approach of the recovery driven by the compliance of States with their human rights obligations, especially under economic, social and cultural rights, and vis a vis those who are victims of racism and other forms of discriminations, carries hopes to redress the situation we have put ourselves into.

Therefore, we can only urge States to follow the call to action for human rights of the UN Secretary General, and, with the support of the UN country teams, to ensure effective measures and funding for the realization of the whole range of human rights.

I thank you.