



OPENING STATEMENT

Reimagining Equality: Eliminating racism, xenophobia and discrimination for all in the Decade of Action for the SDGs

H.E. Mr. Munir Akram

President of the Economic and Social Council

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**Mr. Secretary-General,
President of the Republic of South Africa,
Vice-President of Costa Rica,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the Special Ministerial Meeting of the Council on “Reimagining Equality: Eliminating racism, xenophobia and discrimination for all in the Decade of Action for the SDGs”.



2. We gather here today to explore the interlinkages between structural racism, inequalities and the Sustainable Development Goals.

3. The COVID-19 crisis has revealed existing inequalities in unequal access to food, education, health, housing, as well as access to justice. It has also incited xenophobia and discrimination.

4. Twenty years after the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, the promotion of equality and non-discrimination must remain a priority for the international community.

Excellencies,

5. Reducing inequalities is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a stand-alone



goal (SDG10). Leaving no one behind is also the overarching principle for this universal framework.

6. During the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations last September, our leaders committed to addressing the root causes of inequalities.

7. Solidarity and cooperation among countries, societies, communities, and individual citizens is the only possible way to eliminating racism, xenophobia and discrimination for all.

8. Our economic and financial models, priorities and assumptions need to be people-centered and serve humanity. Systems that perpetuate racism and inequalities must be dismantled.



9. We have reached a tipping point in which economic, social and environmental inequalities are intersecting in intolerable ways. Time is of the essence, I hope our session today will build the momentum for equality and an end to racism and discrimination.

I thank you.