



Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination
Thematic Discussion on racial discrimination against
People of African Descent

March 7, 2011

United Nations, Geneva

REGARDING

JOINT STATEMENTS of

DUTCH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS OF
AFRICANS AND PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENDANTS IN THE
NETHERLANDS

Read March 7, 2011

BY

MRS DRS BARRYL A. BIEKMAN

TIYE INTERNATIONAL¹

PLATFORM NATIONAL MONUMENT DUTCH SLAVERY PAST²
STRATEGY GROUP "2011 UN INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR PEOPLE OF
AFRICAN DESCENT

¹ Tiye International, Umbrella NGO of National Organizations of Black, Migrant and Refugee Women in the Netherlands in Special Consultative Status with the UN-ECOSOC of the UN.

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Chair

I speak on behalf of the leading NGO's representing the coalition of Women's movement, Tiye International (composed of 21 Organizations of Black, Migrant and Refugees women and Youth Associations); Organizations that participate in the Platform of Dutch Slavery Past and from Peoples of African Descent and other Networks of Civil Society in the Netherlands participating in the Strategy Group respective, the Platform UN international year for People of African Descent and Durban plus 10.

We thank again the United Nations for their decision to reaffirm the DDPA in April 2009 during the Durban Review Conference and the decision that has been taken to commemorate the tenth Anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action at a high level meeting of the General Assembly in September 2011.

We are satisfied and much honored with the decision to declare the 2011 as the Year for People of African Descent. In addition, we strongly reconfirm our commitment to be an active part of the process regarding the implementation of the DDPA, to promote the issue of solidarity with all victims of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and Afrophobia, the particular phobia and racism against Africans and African Descendants.

Likewise, we reconfirm our commitment to work for the human rights of oppressed Women, Youth and all other victims of racism, xenophobia and related intolerance so that we all may enjoy equal treatment and fundamental rights ending the suffering that has regrettably become so common in this era of humanity.

Chair,

While we, as part of civil society in the Netherlands, are active in the process to combat racism and initiated various proposals regarding the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Durban Conference & the Year for People of African Descent, we are deeply disappointed about the position of the Dutch Government.

The African Diaspora Civil Society in the Netherlands feel that they are excluded and mistreated in the way the Dutch Government have been taken positions regarding the two historical Events

- 1) The Year for People of African Descent;
- 2) The commemoration of ten Years of the Durban World Conference

I'm not here to put the Dutch Government in a bad daylight. Not at all.

Our purpose is to present the Dutch practice as a case to show how we in the Netherlands are suffering of what we would like to define as institutional discrimination & racism. Not only in the Netherlands but also in Spain, France, Belgium, UK, many countries in Europe. The Dutch case is only one example.

Chair,

In December 2010 we send a letter to our Prime Minister, to ask for his commitment towards necessary steps regarding the development of an action program related to the YEAR for People of African descent and the commemoration of Durban plus 10.

Our letter to the Prime Minister was answered by the minister of foreign Affairs also on behalf of the minister of Internal Affairs and Kingdom Relations.

Meanwhile we from the Civil Society followed a democratic process whereby organizations could deliver their ideas and project proposals related to the two Events. This, with the perspective to support the initiatives of policies to combat racism and other related impact of the Trans Atlantic slave trade, slavery & colonialism.

Regarding the observance of the International Year the minister of Foreign Affairs responded as follows (attached is the fully text)

Mrs. Biekman...

“...You refer to the UN year for people of African descent. In this context I firmly emphasize that this government will end integration policies aimed at specific ethnic groups. The subsequent targeted subsidies will also be terminated. This means that the elimination of discrimination related to race or ethnic origin, a special focus on people of African descent, what the government concerned, is not an issue. Furthermore, the Netherlands in general is not in favour of UN decades - years and days-, but rather it focuses on the implementation of international policy. That the Netherlands has made no attempt to prevent the UN-year is because of the importance the Government attaches to the fight against discrimination...”

End of the cite.

But in the same letter the minister wrote:

“...the Government will implement the recommendations of the DDPA that are related to combat racism. I refer you to the letter "action program to combat discrimination", which was sent last summer to the Dutch Parliament and will be updated this spring...” end of the cite.

Chair,

Since 2001 until to date not one National Action Plan in the Netherlands to combat racism has been developed that relates to the DDPA for so far it concerns People of African Descent. Despite letters and petitions People of African Descent consequently were denied as far it concerns the implementation of specific policies.

But as far the government concern the concentration are specific policies to combat Homophobia, Anti Semitism and against Romas en Sintis. These are categories whereby the Government has developed national policies & judicial mechanism towards people who committed crimes against Jewish & Homosexual people for instance. Our organisation don't have problem with that.

But, when it concerns anti black racism not one single ear from the Government for People of African Descent. For the government the created instruments to combat racism also with a local perspective are enough and therefore it is not necessary to develop specific mechanisms is the conclusion of the Dutch minister of Foreign, Affairs. While practices related to the racism ideologies from the PAST are still in existence within cultural traditions and language. This is what People of African Descent in the Netherlands experienced as Institutional racism and discrimination for decades.

In his letter the minister refer to the action plan. This is the action plan, named the "Integration action program" of which the CERD delivered their concerns in their letter (May 2009) as response to the Dutch Government, regarding the Dutch position as far it concerns people of African Descents and from the other countries of the Kingdom (former Dutch Antilles). In the respond letter from the Dutch Government to the CERD the Dutch Government clearly emphasized the same policy: no extra policies to combat anti black racism, no extra policies as far it concerns people of African Descent.

About the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the WCAR the minister responded as follows:

".....You referred to the World Conference against Racial Discrimination) WCAR "in 2001 in Durban and the implementation program) DDPA 'and the recent UNGA resolution commemorating the conference in Durban.....the position (of the Dutch Government) regarding the commemoration of the World Conference is determined by the fact that the racism debate is being misused by a number of countries to put Israel in a bad light and the concept of religious blasphemy (Defamation of Religions) to introduce the irrelevant and also to undermine the respect for human rights. The Government will therefore not participate in the commemoration of the WCAR as a whole..." end of the citate.

The Dutch Government has contributed 300.000 euro to the Office of the High Commissioner to support the development of national action plans by other countries, meanwhile in the Netherlands itself no National Action Plan has developed to combat racism according to the DDPA as far it concerns People of African Descent.

Recommendation

- 1) It is with these facts we strongly recommend a statement from the CERD towards all the Nation States those who are refusing to implement the DDPA including the Durban review resolution;
- 2) We strongly recommend the CERD to emphasize to the Nation States that racism is a violation of human rights of people, including peoples of African Descent and that it is not wise to undermine the respect of the human rights of African peoples and peoples of African Descent;
- 3) We strongly recommend the CERD to realize an ongoing process & to stimulate Nation States who have not done so yet to take the necessary steps related to the Year for people of African Descents and the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration an Programme of Action;
- 4) We again strongly recommend efforts for the establishment of a UN “Permanent Forum for African and Peoples of African Descent” as it has been established “Indigenous Peoples so that Africans and Peoples of African Descent will become more visible and active in the common efforts for progress, equality and fulfillment;
- 5) We strongly recommend CERD to take into consideration all the presented proposals from the Civil Society NGO’s since 2009 (during the Human Rights Council; Inter governmental Working Group & the Working Group of Experts of people of African Descent meetings). These include proposals from The African Diaspora Organizations in the Netherlands, Europe Region, Western Hemisphere, and Republic Suriname/Un Bondru. The proposals includes “Apology and Reparations” for the horrifies transgression, committed against Africa and African People and the continued impact of these crimes. We cannot leave this issue for our next generations to solve it. To do so would interpreted as the acceptance of the continuation of these crimes against humanity.

Thank You for your attention!!

**Organizations in the Netherlands that delivered proposals, for the Year for People of African Decent
& the Commemoration of ten Year “ Durban”**

- Stichting Nationaal Monument Nederlands Slavernijverleden
 - Tiye International
- Well-known as National Platform of the Dutch Slavery Past (LPS)
- Afrikaans Europese Vrouwenbeweging (including the youth segment)
“Stichting Sophiedela”
 - Stichting African World Studies Institute
 - AAD Netwerk Nederland
 - Funky Fresh Entertainment, Youth Movement
 - CYTA: Connecting Youth Through Africa
 - PanAFSTRAG Europe/Netherlands
- AUADS/NL (African Union (6thRegion) African Diaspora Europe
Region/Chapter The Netherlands)
- Haïti SOS Crisd’Enfants International ONG/Chapter Holland
 - African Diaspora Community Council
 - JABRIJO Administratie
 - D-Differenz! Projectontwikkeling - en Begeleiding
 - IBUNTU Events
- Saramaccaanse Gezagsdragers Collectief in Nederland
 - Stichting Haïti Progrès
 - Stichting Alma/Simpla Projecten en Advies
 - Stichting Podium Kwakoe
 - Vereniging Bigi Famirie Amsterdam
 - Maranatha Nederland
 - Stichting VOSAW
 - Stichting Moederhart
 - LERAMAN Kunst & Culinair
- Stichting Belangenbehartiging Surinaamse Ouderen “Moria” Utrecht
 - Stichting DDYammie
 - Stichting Black Intellectual Gathering
 - Stichting No Limits
 - Stichting Keti Koti
 - Stichting Kinki Liba



Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken

Mevrouw Drs Barryl Biekman
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Onze referentie
DMH/MR-055/11

Datum 7 februari 2011
Betreft 2011 Internationaal jaar voor mensen van Afrikaanse Afkomst en VN
WCAR Durban +10

Geachte mevrouw Biekman,

Hartelijk dank voor uw schrijven van 7 december jl. aan de Minister-President. Hij heeft mij verzocht hierop mede namens de minister van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, te reageren.

De Regering hecht grote waarde aan de bestrijding van discriminatie, ook op het gebied van ras of etnische afkomst. Door achtereenvolgende kabinetten zijn de afgelopen jaren diverse maatregelen getroffen. Ik verwijs bijvoorbeeld naar de medio 2009 in werking getreden Wet gemeentelijke antidiscrimatievoorzieningen, die voor alle Nederlandse burgers laagdrempelige toegang tot een onafhankelijke antidiscrimatievoorziening regelt.

De Nederlandse Regering heeft voorts politieke en financiële steun gegeven aan de oprichting van een internationaal monument ter herdenking van de slavernij, dat in 2012 zal worden gerealiseerd op het terrein van het VN-hoofdkantoor in New York. Tevens heeft Nederland eerder dit jaar 300.000 euro bijgedragen aan het werk van de anti-discriminatie-eenheid van het bureau van de Hoge VN-Commissaris voor de Rechten van de Mens, in te zetten voor de ondersteuning van staten bij het opstellen van nationale actieplannen tegen racisme.

U refereert aan de wereldconferentie tegen rassendiscriminatie (WCAR) in 2001 in Durban en het uitvoeringsprogramma (DDPA) en aan de recente AVVN-resolutie ter herdenking van de conferentie in Durban. Uit bovenstaande voorbeelden blijkt hoe belangrijk de Regering racismebestrijding vindt, maar het standpunt ten aanzien van de herdenking van de wereldconferentie wordt mede bepaald door het feit dat het racismedebat door een aantal landen wordt misbruikt om Israël in een kwaad daglicht te stellen en het concept 'godsdienstlastering' ("defamation of religions") te introduceren, dat niet ter zake doet en bovendien het respect voor de rechten van de mens ondermijnt. De Regering zal daarom niet deelnemen aan de herdenking van de WCAR als geheel.

U refereert voorts aan het VN-jaar voor mensen van Afrikaanse Afkomst. In dit kader hecht ik er aan te benadrukken dat dit kabinet het integratiebeleid gericht op specifieke etnische doelgroepen zal beëindigen. Ook de daarop gerichte subsidies worden beëindigd. Dit betekent dat, bij het bestrijden van discriminatie op gebied van ras of etnische afkomst, een speciale focus op mensen van Afrikaanse afkomst wat het kabinet betreft niet aan de orde is. Bovendien is



Nederland in algemene zin geen voorstander van VN-decennia, -jaren en -dagen, maar richt het zich liever op de implementatie van het internationaal beleid. Dat Nederland geen poging heeft gedaan het betreffende VN-jaar te voorkomen, heeft te maken met het grote belang dat de Regering hecht aan de bestrijding van discriminatie.

Onze referentie
DMH/MR-055/11

Uiteraard gaat de Nederlandse Regering door met het anti-discriminatie- en anti-racismebeleid. Conform hetgeen mijn Directeur Mensenrechten, Emancipatie, Goed Bestuur en Humanitaire Hulp – zoals u zelf aangeeft – op 12 oktober 2009 aan u heeft medegedeeld, zal de Regering uitvoering geven aan de aanbevelingen uit het DDPA die verband houden met racismebestrijding. Graag verwijs ik u naar de brief 'actieprogramma aanpak discriminatie', die vorige zomer naar de Tweede Kamer is gestuurd en die dit voorjaar zal worden geactualiseerd. U kunt er tevens zeker van zijn dat Nederland zich in bilateraal en multilateraal verband zal blijven inzetten voor de bestrijding van discriminatie, ook op basis van ras of etnische afkomst, alsmede voor de bescherming van minderheden. Hopelijk weet de Regering zich bij haar inspanningen gesteund door u en het overige maatschappelijk middenveld.

Hoogachtend,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'U. Rosenthal', written in a cursive style.

Dr. U. Rosenthal
Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken

English translation

Of the letter of Dr. U. Rosenthal Minister of Foreign Affairs Netherlands
to Mrs. Drs. Barryl Biekman
Chair Stichting Nationaal Monument Nederland Slavernijverleden

Date February 7, 2011

Subject: 2011 International Year for People of African Descent and UN WCAR Durban +10

Dear Madam,

Thank you for your letter of December 7, 2010 addressed to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister asked me to respond on behalf of the Minister of Internal Affairs and Kingdom Relations.

The government firmly emphasizes great importance to combating discrimination, including in the area of race or ethnic origin. By successive governments in recent years various measures have been taken. For example, I refer to the Act came into force in mid-2009 local anti-discrimination law provisions, for all Dutch citizens easy access to an independent anti discrimination Law provision.

The Dutch Government has also support politically and financially the establishment of an international monument to commemorate slavery, which will be achieved in 2012 at the building site of the UN headquarters in New York. Also, the Netherlands donated earlier this year 300.000 Euro contributed to the work of the anti-discrimination unit of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, to support actions of countries towards the development of national action plans against racism.

You referred to the World Conference against Racial Discrimination) WCAR "in 2001 in Durban and the implementation program) DDPA 'and the recent UNGA resolution commemorating the conference in Durban. The afore mentioned examples show the importance of the Government to combat racism, but the position regarding the commemoration of the World Conference is determined by the fact that the racism debate is being misused by a number of countries to put Israel in a bad light and the concept of religious blasphemy (Defamation of Religions) to introduce the irrelevant and also to undermine the respect for human rights. The Government will therefore not participate in the commemoration of the WCAR as a whole.

You refers to the UN year for people of African descent. In this context I firmly emphasize that this government will end integration policies aimed at specific ethnic groups. The subsequent targeted subsidies will also be terminated. This means that the elimination of discrimination related to race or ethnic origin, a special focus on people of African descent, what the government concerned, is not an issue. Furthermore, the Netherlands in general is not in favour of UN decades - years and days-, but rather it focuses on the implementation of international policy. That the Netherlands has made no attempt to prevent the UN-year is because of the importance the Government attaches to the fight against discrimination.

Of course, the Dutch government will continue with the anti-discrimination and anti-racism policy, in accordance with what my Director Human Rights, Emancipation, Good Governance and Humanitarian Assistance - as you indicate, on October 12, 2009 has communicated with you, the Government will implement the recommendations of the DDPA that are related to combat racism. I refer you to the letter "action program to combat discrimination", which was sent last summer to the Dutch Parliament and will be updated this spring. You can also be sure that the Netherlands will continue to combat discrimination on bilateral and multilateral level, including discrimination based on race and ethnicity, and the protection of minorities. We hope that the Government's efforts are supported by you and the rest of the civil society organisations.

Sincerely

Dr. U. Rosenthal
Minister of Foreign Affairs