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Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE)
Statement:
World Conference Against Racism Preparatory Conference

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The Durban Programme of Action set out a range of targets and goals aiming to end racism and racial discrimination. Seven years later, we enter the exciting process of assessing the successes and setbacks which have faced those working on Durban implementation.

Speaking here today, the High Commissioner made important reference to statistical data and other documentation to assess the situation of victims of racism, as well as to evaluate corrective measures.

In the field of housing, we hope that the Durban follow-up process will be seized upon by all stakeholders to examine in detail the impact of racial animus in the realization of fundamental rights to adequate housing, including:

- Forced evictions and other forms of displacement, including displacement related to coercive acts by governments and others, as well as due to rising costs of housing;
- Access to housing, land, water and sanitation, including but of course by no means limited to the frequently compound harms to migrants, as a result of the blurred boundary of race and ethnicity on the one hand, and nationality on the other;
- Slum creation and maintenance, including the studied inaction of governments in acting to bring slum housing up to standards protective of the dignity of inhabitants;
- The disparate impact of environmental harms on ethnic minorities;
- The particular impact of racism and racial discrimination in processes related to housing restitution, particularly following or in the context of ethnic conflict.

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COHRE is registered as a Non-Profit Foundation (Stichting No. 4186752) in the Netherlands and has 501 (c) (3) non-profit status in the United States.

COHRE is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (UN) and with the Organization of American States (OAS).

In a number of areas, these forces have particular impact on vulnerable groups within ethnic groups, including women and sexual minorities.

COHRE laments some aspects of the high and low politics which went on at Durban, as well as the fact that the event was itself marred by expressions of racism. COHRE believes that the Durban follow up should above all be a human rights conference aimed at assessing the impact of racism and racial discrimination, and focusing on victims of these forces.

COHRE stands in solidarity with all vulnerable groups, including Roma, Muslims, Jews, Palestinians, Afro-Descendants, and other ethnic minorities, Indigenous persons, Dalits, and others affected by the pernicious forces of racism and racial discrimination. We would also call attention to the need to identify victims of racism who may not belong to large or well-known groups, but who may nevertheless be impacted by these forces.

Madame Chairperson, as repeatedly affirmed, racism is a problem of all societies. In the early phases of the Durban follow-up process, COHRE hopes that procedures will be swiftly developed to assess the impact of the Durban Programme of Action in all jurisdictions.