



MESSAGE BY

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

H.E. MR. JAN ELIASSON

ON THE OCCASION OF THE COMMEMORATION OF

**THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE
ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS

NEW YORK

21 MARCH 2006

Today, 46 year ago, the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa prompted worldwide condemnation of the apartheid regime. Ever since, the United Nations commemorates this day as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

This year, the theme of the commemoration is “Fighting Everyday Racism”. One of its primary objectives is to encourage interaction of cultures and civilizations through education and raising of awareness in order to promote mutual respect, diversity and tolerance.

The United Nations has responded to racism by the adoption of legal instruments, the proclamation of Decades, and the organization of the Durban World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance that took place in 2001. Its Programme of Action advocates, inter alia, the elimination of racial discrimination in the enjoyment of all human rights.

On 15 March 2006, the General Assembly adopted a resolution establishing the Human Rights Council, as requested at the 2005 World Summit. It is my hope that the Human Rights Council would also have an important role to play in the elimination of racial discrimination.

It is incumbent upon us all to work toward a world free of racism, xenophobia and intolerance – a world truly reflective of the ethnic, religious and cultural diversity of its peoples.

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