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March 21, 2022

The United Nations designated March 21 as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (IDERD) to annually commemorate the Sharpeville Massacre, where South African police murdered 69 women, men, and children (and injured 180 others) as they peacefully protested apartheid “pass laws” in 1960.

UTFA joins the world-wide community to observe this day. Despite a half-century of legal advances in the fight against racism and racial discrimination, UTFA members continue to experience racism in our workplaces and communities, including racial profiling, anti-Black racism, anti-Asian racism, Islamophobia, and antisemitism. These experiences are a result of systems that maintain privileges for some groups of people over others, as well as individual racist acts. During the COVID-19 pandemic, white supremacist groups have exploited a context of deepening socio-economic precarity, racism, and xenophobia to fuel intensified discrimination and violence toward Black, Indigenous, and other racialized communities across global societies. In particular, racial harassment and assaults against Asians have increased since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In recognizing the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, UTFA reaffirms the importance of full respect for the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and the importance of protecting civic space. We stand in solidarity with individuals and organizations that stand up against racism, racial discrimination, and intolerance in all forms and manifestations. UTFA reaffirms its commitment to fight injustice, and to work tirelessly to ensure a safe, collegial environment for all members of the university community.

On this March 21 day of remembrance, we specifically acknowledge the ongoing labour of Black, Indigenous, and other racialized and allied faculty who have, for some time now, been speaking out against racism in its myriad forms across all three campuses of the University of Toronto. In solidarity with these colleagues, UTFA resolutely recommits to strengthening its efforts to speak out against racial discrimination and to advance equality and social justice in university life.

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