To: Chair and Members
Social Services Committee

From: Joseph L. Rinaldo
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Re: Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism (FCS06101) (City Wide) – Outstanding Business Item G of Social Services Committee

Council Direction:
This report is presented for the information of Council.

Information:
On March 21, 2006, the Social Services Committee dealt with a report about the Strengthening Hamilton Community initiative and approved their request for initial funding for the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion.

During that meeting, a request was made by members of the Committee for information about Canada’s Action Plan against Racism as well as the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism 10 point plan.

A Canada for All: Canada’s Action Plan Against Racism was announced by the Department of Canadian Heritage in 2005, and outlined the vision of Canada as a “society free from racism” (A Canada for All: Canada’s Action Plan against Racism, p. 3). The document reviews Canada’s legal framework for addressing racism and discrimination outlining the many pieces of legislation, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which address equal protection and benefits of every individual and the historical and treaty rights of Aboriginal peoples. In addition, the Action Plan details the impact of racism currently facing Canadians who are affected by racism in many ways and the reality of Canada’s changing demographics.

The Action Plan is framed around the core principle of achieving “Equality of outcome – not simply equality of opportunity…” (A Canada for All: Canada’s Action Plan against Racism, p. 5), and sets out three key areas with initiatives to be set: To strengthen social cohesion, to further implement Canada’s human rights framework and to demonstrate leadership in the international arena to address racism and hate-motivate crime. The Coalition’s commitment is to build partnerships with civil society, employers, associations, and police.
We have been in contact with the manager of the Action Plan Against Racism, Multiculturalism & Human Rights Branch, Canadian Heritage and was informed that updates on the progress of the initiatives will be made available to stakeholders very soon.

The Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism is being initiated as a result of the efforts of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in partnership with human rights commissions and a number of municipalities across the country. In 2004, UNESCO started an international coalition of cities in order to share experiences and to work together to increase their ability to fight racism, discrimination and xenophobia. Over 40 European cities as well as many other international cities are involved.

The call for A Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination came out of the January 2005 Roundtable on Combating Urban Racism held in Ottawa. With its initial partners, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO set out a draft of ten commitments, and a sample action plan against racism and discrimination. The working group established to draft the action plan include the Aboriginal Youth Network, the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, the City of Toronto, the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the University of Montreal.

Consultations seeking input and support for the draft set of commitments and the action plan have been held around the country with stakeholders representing various levels of government, institutions, researchers, consultants and a variety of communities.

The reason that the coalition is focused around municipalities is directly related to the fact that cities are ideal places to develop policies, strategies and actions to eliminate racism.

Municipalities are urged to take steps to have Council pass a resolution to sign the Declaration of the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination and in so doing support the Common Commitments (listed below). Each municipality will develop their own Plan of Action to implement the commitments.

The 10 areas of the action plan are as follows:

**Guardian of the Public Interest**

1. Increase vigilance against systemic and individual racism and discrimination.
2. Monitor racism and discrimination in the community more broadly as well as municipal actions taken to address racism and discrimination.
3. Inform and support individuals who experience racism and discrimination.
4. Support policing services in their efforts to be exemplary institutions in combating racism and discrimination.

**An Organization in the Fulfilment of Human Rights**

5. Provide equal opportunities as a municipal employer, service provider and contractor.
6. Support measures to promote equity in the labour market.
7. Support measures to challenge racism and discrimination and promote diversity and equal opportunity in housing.


8. Involve citizens by giving them a voice in anti-racism initiatives and decision-making.

9. Support measures to challenge racism and discrimination and promote diversity and equal opportunity in the education sector and in other forms of learning.

10. Promote respect, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity and the inclusion of Aboriginal and racialized communities into the cultural fabric of the municipality.

Staff will continue to liaise with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and will report back to Council for consideration, additional details about the implementation and resources needed for an action plan.

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