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Joint Press Release

**Equanomics UK, Runnymede Trust, Centre for Local Policy Studies
and Race On The Agenda**

SENIOR MPS TOLD: 'WE NEED A GREATER FOCUS ON RACE'

A coalition of race equality organisations told senior MPs today that the government is not doing enough to tackle race inequalities in the UK.

They also expressed concern regarding the government's decision last week to re-open its consultation on the Equality Act 2010's specific equality duties, arguing that this could result in a watering down of the legislation. This is the third consultation on the specific equality duties.

The comments were made to the Home Affairs Select Committee as part of its inquiry into equalities. Leander Neckles, Board Member of Equanomics UK, gave evidence on behalf of the group of race equality focused organisations, which is made up of Equanomics UK, the Runnymede Trust, the Centre for Local Policy Studies and Race on the Agenda (ROTA).

During the session, Leander Neckles also argued that the current government structures for tackling race equality are inadequate and in particular called for the Race Equality Minister Andrew Stunell to engage far more closely with race equality organisations in the months ahead.

She also called for the government to make clear why it has decided to re-consult on the specific equality duties, and added that this decision will delay their implementation, originally planned for this April. She also warned that there may be real uncertainty about what public bodies have to do during this extended consultation period.

The Home Affairs Committee also confirmed in the session that its remit has been extended to include equalities, meaning that they may revisit these issues in the long term.

Commenting on the session, Leander Neckles said: "The Home Affairs Committee inquiry is timely and welcome, and we hope that it will assist in raising awareness and developing action on critical race issues. However, if the government wants to live up to its aim of transparency and inclusion in decision making, it needs to make clear why it has decided to consult yet again on the specific equality duties".

Rob Berkeley, Director of Runnymede added: "We welcome the Home Affairs Committee inquiry into equalities, and are particularly pleased that this issue has been included in its long term remit. We look forward to seeing the government's full strategy on race equality when complete, and hope that the Committee will revisit the issue of race equality once this document is published".

Notes to editors

1. Press inquiries should be directed to Vicki Butler:
vicki@runnymedetrust.org, 07534929275.
2. Today's session is part of the Home Affairs Select Committee's short inquiry into equalities. An earlier evidence session took place with Trevor Phillips, Chair of the EHRC, and Lynne Featherstone MP, Minister for Equalities, on 25 January.
3. The coalition of race organisations presenting evidence also submitted a written document to the committee, which is available here:
<http://www.runnymedetrust.org/projects-and-publications/publications/policy-reponses.html>
4. Equanomics UK addresses race equality in the UK from an economic perspective. It seeks to build awareness of the impact of poverty on Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities and develop appropriate action
5. The Runnymede Trust is the UK's leading independent race equality think tank. It aims to generate intelligence for a multi-ethnic Britain through research, network building, leading debate, and policy engagement.
6. The Centre for Local Policy Studies, at Edge Hill University, was established in 1993 as a cross-institutional initiative and research centre to develop and carry out research into public policy and local governance.
7. ROTA is a social policy research organisation that focuses on issues impacting on BAME communities. Our policy priorities are health, criminal justice and education. The ROTA-led 'Winning the Race Coalition' informed the development of the Equality Act 2010.
8. Equality Act regulations: This is the third consultation on the specific

equality duties under the Equality Act. The consultation will take place between 17th March and 21st April. The Government has stated that intends to bring these duties into force in July. Full details are available on the Government Equalities Office website:
[http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality act 2010/public sector equality duty.aspx](http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_act_2010/public_sector_equality_duty.aspx)