

26th Session of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent Regional meetings with civil society 23 November 2020

A. To begin with, it is noteworthy that the UK is amongst the nine countries sent special procedures communications from the **WGEPAD** earlier this year, regarding allegations of human rights violations. Our socioeconomic marginalisation from IDPAD's thematic objective of **development** is a key human rights concern. We have disproportionately low attainment levels in education, and high levels of unemployment, with disproportionately low representation in leadership roles. Moreover, unequal access to **justice** results in disproportionately high levels of our people being incarcerated in mental health institutions, prisons and immigration detention centres.

In the last nine months, recognition of racial disparities in UK COVID-19 infection and fatality rates has led to public furore and subsequently government review of disparities particularly in the health sector. However, this is inadequate as fully disaggregated equality data was not employed. Moreover, although PAD were disproportionately affected, we were not adequately represented.

Over the last five years there has been change in the UK as a result of fiscal austerity as well as policy implementation. The current political regime made extensive cuts to the sector working with immigrant and immigrant communities including PAD, which accentuate European anti-immigrant populist sentiment. Moreover, the Equalities Act 2010 which transposes the EU Race Equality Directive 2000 into domestic law, and replaced anti-discrimination policies, is critiqued by members of British civil society for being a watered-down approach to race relations.

In the last twenty years, some progress has been made through acknowledgement of multiculturalism and diversity in major UK cities such as London, Birmingham and Bristol. For example, the election of PAD to the Mayoralty, House of Lords and other senior positions of civic leadership in Bristol and London is recognition of our presence and participation in British society. However, this does not mask systemic racism illustrated by pervasive inequalities in our access to housing, health, education, employment and other universal human rights which contributes to our continued socioeconomic marginalisation and exclusion.

B. Adopting 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to Post COVID 19 recovery plans in the City of Bristol works.

a. IDPAD Coalition UK illustrates a key achievement in realizing IDPAD's objective of **recognition**, by holding events and projects to raise awareness of IDPAD around the UK including Bristol, and through representation regionally and internationally. For example, IDPAD members participated at the regional level, in drafting the EU Resolution for Fundamental Rights for PAD 2019. Efforts to increase PAD representation in Avon and Somerset Constabulary as well as in the Bristol's magistracy are also an achievement towards IDPAD's thematic objective of **justice**. In that regard, Bristol's One Bristol Curriculum facilitates narratives from educators, community members and place-based thought leaders who are PAD, which is imperative for IDPAD's thematic objective of **development**.

b. The EU Resolution for Fundamental Rights for PAD 2019 demonstrates awareness raising and institutional strengthening activities of the Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup of the European Parliament, the European Commission, and other European civil society. Despite being criticised for having "no teeth," the Resolution provides legal precedence and rhetoric for European institutions and EU member states. Moreover, it is a forerunner to legislation passed in the European Parliament and United Nations in 2020, following the murders of George Floyd and other victims of police brutality. Collaboration and knowledge exchange has been strengthened on the issue of systemic racism, e.g. by such initiatives as the Justice Initiative and UNESCO Masterclasses on Racism and

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Discrimination. Progress made in complaint mechanisms, e.g. WGEPAD country visits and consultations with civil society must not be lost due to fiscal austerity or nationalism.

C. It is imperative that legal measures to combat systemic racism are developed and implemented globally, e.g. anti-racism policies to strategically address Afrophobia in accordance with SDG 16 for peace, justice and good governance.