

**ITEM 7: AFRICA GROUP STATEMENT 27TH SESSION OF THE WORKING GROUP
OF EXPERTS OF PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT**

GENEVA

3 DECEMBER 2020

Check against delivery

Chairperson,

The mid-term of the international decade for People of African Descent is time to review our efforts, to strengthen national, regional and international cooperation in relation to the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights by people of African descent, and their full and equal participation in all aspects of society.

The mid-term review present an opportunity for all of us to reach out, to revive public awareness on Programme of Activities for the Implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent under the theme, “People of African descent: recognition, justice and development.”

In a Joint reflections, or a letter by United Nations Senior African Officials in support of Black Lives Matter Protests and other Mass Demonstrations against Systemic Racism and Police Brutality the UN Senior officials said, “Almost 500 years after the revolting Transatlantic trade of Africans began, we have arrived at a critical point in the arc of the moral universe as we approach in 2024 the end of the International Decade for People of African Descent, a mere 4 years away. Let us use our collective voice to fulfill the aspirations of our communities that the United Nations will wield its moral power as an institution to effect global change.”

Chairperson,

The socio- economic neglect and marginalization of people of African descent in some parts of the world, partially influenced by historical and present-day developments, must be challenged. The betterment of the position of people of African descent can only be achieved by changing negative mind-sets on all levels and by collectively focusing on inclusivity rather than narrow ideologies of exclusive Nationalisms.

It is of concern to us that five (5) years since the proclamation of International Decade for People of African Descent by the General Assembly (2015-2024) the Programme of Activities for the decade 2015 to 2024 its objectives and full implementation are far from been realized.

The DDPA adopted almost 20 years ago, continues to remain fully valid up to this day. It calls for a consolidated strategy to restore rights and dignity for all. Taking into account recent trends witnessed in some parts of the world we are challenged to counter this

scourge.

The 20th anniversary celebration of the DDPA is thus the perfect opportunity for changing negative mind-sets on all levels by collectively focusing on inclusivity rather than narrow interests. We need to ensure that the wide anti-discrimination message of the DDPA reach the widest possible audience, and mobilise the political will needed, to fully implement its Program of Actions.

Chair

The Africa Group, over the past year, pushed a number of strong initiatives to mobilise the political will needed to tackle racism and racial discrimination. The Urgent debate and Promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Africans and of people of African descent against excessive use of force and other human rights violations by law enforcement officers racism amongst them. The recent IGWG on DDPA held in October, built on that with concrete suggestions of actions that should be taken to ensure the proper buy-in from states and civil society, during the 20th anniversary year in 2021 and beyond.

We worked closely with our partners of other regions, who came onboard, to ensure that the theme of the High-Level mainstreaming panel, at the HRC high-level section, will focus on the 20th anniversary of the DDPA, and its strong and broad anti-discrimination message. We thank all these partners who joined us in writing to the President of the Council, to make this happen.

Chair

The Working Group on People of African Decent has a critical role to play to ensure that the 20th anniversary celebrations of the DDPA is a success, by focusing on broad inclusion, making it possible for as many States and other actors to participate in the activities and debates next year, so that the much needed political will can be mobilised.

The Africa Group looks forward to working with you In this regard.

I thank you.