

1st Session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent

Oral intervention during the session on *Inclusion of People of African Descent in the Sustainable Development Agenda – The Case for Climate Justice*

Congratulations to the Forum members...

Greeting siblings

Lamont Anthony Wells- National President of the African Descent Lutheran Association- the voice of the 55,000 people of African Descent in the ELCA, which is a member institution of the Lutheran World Federation.

I am also a 2021 participant of the UN Fellowship Program for People of African Descent. In solidarity with my sister Katherine, he fellows are an underutilized asset and resource group within this Decade. I hope this Permanent Forum changes that relationship in this future work.

I am speaking today because the relationship between climate change and the human rights of people of African descent often get overlooked.

According to the World Meteorological Organization, noted that 2020 was one of the three warmest years on record and it is getting Hotter each year.

If I were to pull from an urban dictionary term, THE BLOCK IS HOT referring to an area or space of elevated danger or suspicion, well THE BLOCK is literally hot.

The Block is hot with the increasing frequency of extreme weather events and natural disasters, heat waves, floods, droughts, water shortages.

Yes, climate change directly and indirectly threatens the full and effective enjoyment of a range of human rights by people throughout the world, including the rights to life, water and sanitation, food, health, housing, self-determination, culture and development.

The Block is also hot, and getter hotter with violence, particularly gender based violence against all women and girls, especially trans-women. There are many countries, which don't have legal aid for victims of violence, only for the perpetrators—which is a problem.

This violence is getting hotter- that is why each Thursday in solidarity with WCC we bring the world's attention to this problem. #thursdaysinBlack

Controversial rapper Nelly tried to tell us in 2002 that "It's getting hot in here". He recommended we all simply disrobe and take off clothes. I do not agree.

I recommend and call on the Permanent Forum to:

- 1st to organize, recommend, and seek an extension of the decade of people of African Descent to adequately and properly address the impact of climate change and gender based violence for people of African descent and the other unfinished business that we have discussed this week. Get the extension!
- We the people want this Forum to be fully funded – to implement these objectives.

- Promote and advance the inclusion of Black activists who MATTER in international climate change strategies and risk assessments realizing the intersectionality of race and other factors that enhance vulnerabilities to climate change.
- In addition, I would like to support a recommendation of the Permanent Forum to address the issue of mistreatment of climate refugees of African Descent who face a disproportionate risk of forced migration due to climate change and additional support measures that may be required to mitigate the negative impacts of displacement.
- This Permanent Forum must present the cause and case of climate change and racial discrimination together, rather than allowing bureaucracy to treat this issue separately.
- I call on this Permanent Forum to collect evidence and act in support to overcome the rise of online gender-based violence and advance gender justice in and through the media.
- Let us do more than talk about it, please advance recommendations including well-financed disaster recovery programs ensuring that post-disaster resources reach people of African descent EVERYWHERE in ways that are just and equitable.
- This must be done because in the words of James Baldwin... *“we can’t believe what they say, because we see what they do”*... and I’ll add- what they don’t do for and with us.

Thank You.