

Esteemed Members of the Permanent Forum

On behalf of the government of Barbados, in its role as Chair of the CARICOM Prime Ministerial Sub committee on Reparations for Native Genocide and Slavery we welcome the establishment of the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent and we fully endorse the CARICOM statement delivered by the Bahamas.

What we have collectively launched today is for our ancestors and for our descendants still to come. It is brave. It is necessary. It is a long time coming. This week the members of the Permanent Forum, in whom we place our trust, will be guiding the debate through a matrix of uncomfortable truths, structural constraints and challenges. But also shedding a light on the enormous achievements of people of African descent and the promise of things to come.

In the Caribbean we have a long history of advocating, articulating and agitating around issues of structural racism, anti-apartheid, and the injustices inherent in post colonial societies. We have championed the role of the United Nations in recognizing and commemorating a difficult history such as through the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition, and through our unwavering support for the establishment of this Permanent Forum.

In CARICOM we have placed these issues very high on the Leaders' agenda. As mentioned, the CARICOM Prime Ministerial Sub committee on Reparations is chaired by the Prime Minister of Barbados the Hon. Mia Amor Mottley, and its core members are: Guyana, Haiti, St Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname. There is also the CARICOM Reparations Commission, comprising chairs of national task forces, which reports to that Prime Ministerial body.

Through this work the region has launched a CARICOM 10 point plan for Reparatory Justice. We urge that this also guides the Permanent Commission's deliberations and informs its output.

The 10 Point Reparation Plan speaks to the need for a:

1. Full Formal Apology
2. A Repatriation and resettlement Programme
3. An Indigenous Peoples Development Program
4. Development of Cultural Institutions that allow our history and culture to be represented and told
5. Recognition of the role and impact of enslavement and post- colonial imbalances on Public Health Crisis
6. And on literacy through ensuring Illiteracy Eradication
7. An African Knowledge Program to 'build bridges of belonging'
8. Psychological Rehabilitation
9. Technology Transfer- and in this current crisis that is not of our making- green technology
10. And Debt Cancellation, recognizing that the economies in the region have some of the highest debt to GDP ratios in the world, partly because of actions and decisions taken by colonial actors in the past and which are persisting today in areas such as lack of access to developmental finance, and discussions around taxation on which we are often at the margins of.

In addition to these areas we welcome a discussion on how we can prepare the next generation to not only stand bold in the truths of their heritage and history but to be advocates for redressing wrongs and reconstituting rights. Engaging the youth will be critical.

Finally we want to thank the Secretariat for their commitment in ensuring this first Permanent Forum has happened and to those countries and agencies that have supported it. We call for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure the secretariat of the Permanent Forum is appropriately resourced and for interested and involved countries to also step in and ensure the necessary resources are there for us to have a results and solution focused outcome.

We look forward to the difficult but necessary discussions over the next four days.

Thank you