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## ENAR STATEMENT

### 1ST SESSION OF THE PERMANENT FORUM ON PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT GENEVA, SWITZERLAND 5 – 8 DECEMBER 2022

5th December 2022

Madame Chair, Your Excellencies, Fellow Human Rights Defenders,

I honored to make a statement behalf of the European Network Against Racism – ENAR. We are a Pan-European network based Brussels consisting of some 180 grassroots organizations.

Our Network applauded the General Assembly's passing of **Resolution 68/237**. And now welcome in solidarity the historic establishment of this forum. An occasion that ushers a new era in the fight for our rights. We congratulate the members of the Forum and we thank all those that make this day possible.

We celebrate with a simple phrase and say this: "we are humans". We just want to be seen as such. Dot does not label us!!

ENAR is the only pan-European anti-racism network that combines advocacy for racial equality and facilitating cooperation among civil society anti-racism actors in Europe.

One of our focus areas is Afrophobia where we work to end racism and racial discrimination targeting People of African Descent. Discrimination and stigmatising perceptions due to their physical traits or visibility, regardless of their nationality or immigrant status, are often common experiences.

People of African descent experience widespread racism and discrimination across the EU and in all areas of life, including employment, education, policing, and the criminal justice system as our extensive work and reporting demonstrates.

There are an estimated 15 million people of African descent in Europe making them one of Europe's largest marginalised communities.

**As a Pan-European Network headquartered in Brussels we see progress.**

We look back at highlights such as some Member States' adoptions of National Action Plans, our successful lobbying for the EU's first ever People of African Descent Week in 2018 and the European Commission's appointment of a Commission coordinator for anti-racism following the EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025.

**As we now near the close of the Decade in 2024, as a pan-European network of grassroots organizations we would like to draw your attention to the following:**

- There is currently no EU or national policy developed specifically to combat racism and discrimination against people of African descent and Black Europeans. Despite EU and national legislation providing legal remedies for discrimination, Afrophobia in the EU is still a reality.
- We call on EU nations to adopt strong and specific policies that are geared to addressing Afrophobia, including its structural dimensions and impact on economic and social outcomes for people of African descent and Black Europeans including in employment, housing, education, health, political participation, criminal justice, and other sectors.
- We call for national action plans that addresses all forms of racism to be implemented in all EU member states similar to the Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies adopted by EU Member States in 2011.
- The framework will serve to develop targeted and effective strategies to counter the structural and everyday racism that prevents the inclusion of many Black people in European society.

It is time for action and *action* and **action**.

We thank you for your attention.