

Madam Chair,

The European Union welcomes the convening of the 1<sup>st</sup> session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent. We congratulate you on your appointment as Chair and thank the different speakers and the members of the Forum for their opening remarks this morning.

The European Union is firmly committed to the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance. We continue to condemn racism in all its forms and manifestations, whether perceived or actual, and will always do so. There is indeed a need to show more political will and to accelerate the pace of action if we want to bring about a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality prevail. Racism is on the rise, and the EU does not take this disturbing trend lightly, as it goes against the principles of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and human rights on which the European Union is built.

Over the years, within the European Union, we have built a legal framework addressing all forms of discrimination that we continue to review and refine. Our work is furthermore guided by a wide range of policy documents including the [EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025](#) which contains concrete proposals aimed *inter alia* at better enforcing the legal framework; promoting fair policing; tackling underreporting; ensuring the protection of victims; addressing racial and ethnic stereotypes; addressing inequalities in access to employment, education, healthcare and housing; tackling extremism and hate speech, improving data collection; and setting up a more regular consultation dialogue with civil society actors on the ground because we hear the call “Nothing about us, without us”.

Madam Chair,

We look forward to actively contributing to the discussions and engaging constructively in the sessions of the Permanent Forum in order to make concrete progress. Racism must not only be addressed, it must be eliminated, in all its forms and across all strands of society, and we will continue to actively work towards that goal.

Thank you.