



1st Session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent (5-8 December 2022)

Combined Statement on Reparatory Justice and Equality

Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers) welcomes the first session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent. We are glad to have been in the room to feel the energy and determination that got us here and will move us forward.

We represent the concerns of Quakers worldwide, the majority of whom are in Africa. We believe in justice, equality, and truth. We believe that to achieve sustainable peace, we must address the root causes of violence. Racism is an insidious form of structural violence permeating all of society.

Briefly on two topics:

First: we are glad to have heard strong calls for reparations throughout the discussions so far. We support the call of the International Coalition of People of Descent for a clear understanding of reparations as vital towards the overcoming of structural racial injustice - be it legal, cultural, political, or economic.

[I appreciated the comments from about connecting global and local efforts.] We support the framework of retrospective justice advocated by the BlackQuaker Project. This involves:

- 1. Acknowledgement** of an offence formally and publicly.
- 2. Truth telling** to ensure the facts are uncovered, discussed, and properly memorialised.
- 3. Atonement** to make amends in the present to give material substance to expressions of regret and responsibility.

We note the parallels between this and the High Commissioner's four-point agenda for transformation. We welcome the strong calls for reparatory justice so far this week and the concrete ideas that have been shared.

Secondly linking to this panel's theme of equality and drawing on our work on migration: to achieve migration justice, we must dismantle structural racism in migration governance.

Racism, rooted in ethnonationalism, permeates migration narratives, laws, policies, and practices around the globe, leading to further exclusion, stigmatization, and criminalization of migrants of African descent and other racialized people.

If we are serious about racial justice, then migration justice is an essential part of our work and migrants' expertise and experience should be centred in our discussions. We look to the Permanent Forum to play its part, including by:

- Including migration as a specific strand of discussion in each annual meeting
- Consulting with migrants of African descent
- Including commitments on the human rights of migrants of African descent in the UN Declaration on the human rights of people of African descent.

Members of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent we stand with you in your important task and ask how we can best support you, both here at the UN and through connection with our worldwide family of Quakers?

*** ENDS***

Delivered by Nozizwe Madlala Routledge, Director

For the record this statement is a combined statement based on two separate planned statements included in full below:

Item 6: Inclusion of People of African Descent in the Sustainable Development Agenda – The Case for Reparatory Justice

Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers) welcomes the first session of the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent. We support the call of the International Coalition of People of African Descent for the direct representation and participation of the people of African descent, in all their diversity, in the processes of this forum.

We get our mandate from Quakers worldwide, the majority of whom are in Africa. Quakers believe in justice, equality, and truth. We believe that to achieve sustainable peace, we must address the root causes of violence. Racism is an insidious form of structural violence permeating all of society and made visible by the racially defined poor outcomes in health, education, income, employment and rates of imprisonment.

In December 2013, the UN General Assembly proclaimed the International Decade for People of African Descent, with the theme “People of African descent: recognition, justice and development”. The launch of the Decade gave us hope that the contribution made by people of African descent to every society was going to be acknowledged and that we would begin to see an end to racial injustice.

We note that the programme of action included the following:

1. Commitment to upholding human dignity and equality for the victims of slavery.
2. States were urged to ensure that activities and objectives for the decade are planned and implemented in full consultation and collaboration with people of African descent.
3. Request for the Secretary General to convene a final assessment of the Decade, to take the form of a high-level international event, marking the end of the decade.

With only two years left, we echo the call for reparatory justice in the Statement of the International Coalition of People of African Descent, with the aim of confronting structural and systemic racism.

We support the framework of retrospective justice advocated by the BlackQuaker Project. This involves:

1. Acknowledgement of an offence formally and publicly.
2. Truth telling to ensure the facts are uncovered, discussed, and properly memorialised.
3. Atonement to make amends in the present to give material substance to expressions of regret and responsibility.

We note the parallels between this and the High Commissioner’s agenda for transformation. We ask the UN if it will ensure that the Permanent Forum has sufficient resources and power to achieve the aims of the programme to end racial injustice and to right the wrongs of the past? Will the UN be collecting disaggregated data, drawing on the recommendations of the Expert Mechanism on Law Enforcement

and Racism? We stand ready to support the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent in its task and to hold member states accountable for the commitments they have made to end racism.

Item 6: Connecting the Past and the Future – Equality for All People of African Descent

Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers) welcomes the first session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent.

The Durban Declaration notes that discrimination and xenophobia against migrants is one of the main sources of contemporary racism.

To achieve migration justice, we must understand the role racism plays in migration governance.

Our vision of migration justice is grounded in human rights and centers the dignity of migrants. Recognising the common humanity of all of us regardless of the borders we have crossed or why we have crossed them requires the full implementation of the human rights of all migrants. Racism can have no place in just migration governance.

However today impacts of racism on migration governance, and on migrants are pervasive. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerances are rooted in ethnonationalism which deeply permeates migration narratives, laws, policies, and practices around the globe, leading to further exclusion, stigmatization, and criminalization of migrants of African descent and other racialized groups.

We believe that racism must be understood as a systemic issue and seen through the lens of intersectionality. Some examples of how racism manifests in migration governance affecting migrants of African descent include:

- Racial profiling for immigration enforcement purposes
- Racial discrimination in access to health care, legal counseling, and interpretation
- Arbitrary and longer detention lengths for people of African descent
- Differential rates of deportation without due process
- Closure of borders and/or travel restrictions affecting predominantly Black majority African countries (as seen in response to the Covid-19 pandemic)
- Harmful and toxic narratives that fuel hatred, xenophobia, and violence against migrants

Our recommendations to the members of the Permanent Forum include:

- Inclusion of migration as a specific strand of discussion in each annual meeting
- Consultation with migrants of African descent particularly through an intersectional approach to understand various experiences of migration and human rights violations and to inform recommendations.

- Using the UN Network on Migration's Migration Hub and other spaces for migration discussion to deepen understanding of the linkages between systemic racism and migration governance with States, the UN system, and other stakeholders, including migrants
- Inclusion of commitments which focus on the human rights of migrants of African descent in the development of a UN declaration on the human rights of people of African descent.

Our question is which of these steps can you prioritise and what other steps do you think can be taken by the Permanent Forum?