

**First Session of the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent****Fifth Meeting (Wed 07 Dec 2022) – Thematic Discussion (continued): Connecting the Past and Future – A United Nations Declaration on the Rights of People of African Descent****Oral Statement delivered by Christine Murphy on behalf of Geneva For Human Rights**

Thank you Chair,

I will highlight a couple points that I believe should be taken into consideration when drafting the UN Declaration, if we are to truly leave no person of African descent behind.

Firstly, I noticed that the preliminary submission by the Permanent Forum Mentions the **transatlantic** slave trade in paragraph 2 under general remarks, and paragraph 16 under the preamble. However, this geographical boundary overlooks millions of Africans under the Indian Ocean and Trans-Saharan slave trades. In fact, SR Obokata, following his recent visit to Mauritania, stated that slavery has not been completely eradicated and that a lack of reliable data makes it difficult to estimate the number of slaves, but some legal cases show that the problem persists. Therefore I recommend that the final Declaration include an expanded geographical and temporal scope on slavery. Moreover, the Forum could also recommend that mechanisms or special procedures on slavery or African descent further investigate the legacy of historical **and** contemporary forms of slavery in these regions.

Secondly, I want to underscore the term **peoples**. Indigenous peoples, previously indigenous people, without the s, and indigenous populations, had to fight to have their collective nature recognized. This collective nature has allowed them to begin discussions on having a special status within the UN system, distinct from civil society, that would strengthen their right to self-determination. I am not trying to equate the situation of indigenous peoples to that of people of African descent, but the concept of peoples overlaps, and I recommend it be incorporated into the Declaration, because it will affect our participation in the UN system and our countries in the long run.

Thank you