

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION AGAINST TORTURE (IAAT-AICT)
ASOCIACION INTERNACIONAL CONTRA LA TORTURA (AICT)
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Item 5 General Debate

To the Members of and Participants in the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent”

As the Trojans so painfully learned, “Beware of Greeks bearing gifts.” In other words, we must be careful in implementing the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent. And we cannot do this without a historical context.

For over 30 years, the International Association Against Torture and our sister NGO, the December 12th Movement international Secretariat, have fought to bring the human rights violations suffered by people of African descent in the U.S. and throughout the African Diaspora to the Human Rights Council and its predecessor Commission on Human Rights. That work bore its most significant fruit with the issuing of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action in 2001 - the first international declaration that the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery were crimes against humanity for which reparations are due the victims' descendants.

Do not forget that the U.S. walked out of Durban rather than be connected to any document approving reparations. The rest of the Western countries began moonwalking on the DDPA from the day after they had signed on to it. Since then the WEO Group [Western European and other countries] have done everything possible, both bureaucratically (with the help of the U.N. Human Rights Secretariat), financially (through lack of funding) and ideologically (by misportraying the DDPA as Anti-Israel and Anti-Semitic, which have become synonymous) to discredit, undermine and disappear the DDPA. The Permanent Forum, which in and of itself is not a bad thing, is being lauded and attempted to be controlled by the West as their latest weapon to cut the heart out of the DDPA

What We Must Do

Those of us participating in the Permanent Forum must see it as and demand that it be an important instrument to uphold the primacy of the DDPA, the bodies it set up (i.e.. the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent; the Group of Eminent Experts) and the international legal precedent it has set for African peoples' just struggle for Reparations.

Roger Wareham, International Secretary General AICT