

## RECOMMENDATION Submitted by Elsie Gayle on Behalf of 'Mothers and Midwives Together across the Diaspora'

To The Inaugural Session of The United Nations Permanent Forum for People of African Descent

05 - 08 December 2022; Palais Des Nations; Geneva, Switzerland

Good Afternoon Everyone. Madam Chair, thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'd like to congratulate yourself as being the Chair of the Permanent Forum for People of African Descent; Madame Nkom as the Vice-Chair and the members of the Forum.

My name is Elsie Gayle, I'm a practising midwife in the United Kingdom and also registered on 3 continents. I am part of the international working group for the Permanent Forum, sitting on the Education and Outreach sub-committee. I am representing 'mothers and midwives together across the diaspora' at this historical launch of The Permanent Forum for People of African Descent.

'Mothers and midwives together across the diaspora' are about policies into action. Those that will repair the disparate deaths, and more importantly the morbidity that we experience. So in many countries across the world we are 4 plus times more likely to die as a result of the childbearing experience. Our babies are 50% more likely to suffer a stillbirth. If we look at the current situation for midwives, in particular black midwives across the diaspora we are diminishing in number. Our little heard voices then are crying out for the simple solutions that will make a significant difference to our communities. Why and how? The first 1001 days from conception to two years sets the human life course, individually and intergenerationally through the DNA.

Appropriate care for the pregnant journey ensures that each of us has the best chance to take our rightful place in society. As Katsi Cook the indigenous midwife says "women are the first environment". Our women are birthing our world we need to utilise all opportunities within this Permanent Forum for People of African Descent to ensure the requisite support to achieve this. Our mothers and midwives look forward with positivity and hope for our future within this forum.

Peace on Earth begins with birth.

Thank you.