

# Norwegian Center against Racism - Statement to the general debate

Madame Chair, distinguished members of the permanent forum and working group on people with African Descent, colleagues from civil society and representatives from the delegations of member states that has taken time to be here.

The Norwegian Center against Racism are very pleased to be able to contribute to this conference and the work on rights, status and position of people of African descent globally. We look forward to welcome the working group to Norway in 2023.

As we have experienced through meetings leading up to the conference the challenges and obstacles facing people of African descent are similar across borders and continents, although to different degrees and varying severity.

People of African descent are overrepresented in statistics on poverty, unemployment and imprisonment. There is a lack of visibility and representation both politically and in societies as a whole, and there are a need for statistics on sheer numbers of people of African descent in most countries. The lack of macro-statistics on the demographic make-up, pose challenges to establishing a black-identity, and are a hindrance in organizing both politically and as a community.

To quote brother Malcolm X, Malik al-hajj al-Shabazz "Black people are fed up with the dillydallying, pussyfooting, compromising approach that we've been using toward getting our freedom. We want freedom now, but we're not going to get it saying "We Shall Overcome". We've got to fight until we overcome."

We in countries like Norway that can use or right of free-speech with relative security need to promote this not only with our own perspective, but to also highlight the perspectives of our colleagues who will put themselves at risk when speaking up, or people of African Descent denied their right of free-speech. As we are here the FIFA World Cup is taking place in Qatar, one of the countries we know people of African descent are living in slave-like conditions, in both Gulf-countries, and in Europe often as farmhands. In addition we as an NGO from a relatively rich country will work for funding of the forum, and urge NGO from other countries that are rather well-off to work with their governments, and also appeal to members states in particular those whom have benefited on racism towards people of African descent through colonial and post-colonial exploitation.

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The need for a global discussion on understanding of blackness and anti-blackness is in dire need. And the Norwegian Center against Racism are strongly supporting the work on a United Nations declaration on the rights and status of People of African Descent, and must stress that it will be of immense importance that the work leads to concrete recommendations that can be measured, for instance repatriations of colonial archives and artifacts, and quantitative data on people of African descent.

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