

Dear members of the Permanent Forum

I write in my capacity as a civil society member of the African Permanent Forum Working Group, the Advocacy subcommittee. I would like to contribute to the celebrations of this historic achievement. It has been a hard and long-fought process prosecuted in part by the concerted efforts of the international civil society alliance convened at the 2017 Regional Meeting for Europe, Central Asia and North America on the International Decade for People of African Descent.

As a grassroots activist based in the UK, I am witnessing a fast erosion of our human rights as Peoples of African Descent, most notably via our current Windrush debacle. I would like to recommend that the Forum has not only the ability to make recommendations to CERD (and other UN instruments) in order to trigger formal inquiries of member states to account for their human rights records on the specific cases brought forward but also to use the evidence collected in the Forum to assist with strategic litigation (actioned by third parties). To this end, the Forum should provide (contribute to) legal assistance to those wishing to pursue strategic litigation alongside the Forum's recommendations.

It is important that the Forum has additional teeth to its declarative ones, even if borrowed, if it is going to be fully useful in upholding the Human Rights of Peoples of African Descent across the globe.

Best wishes

Ornette