



**SOUTH AFRICAN PERMANENT MISSION  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

**GENERAL STATEMENT AT THE 1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION OF THE PERMANENT  
FORUM ON PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT**

**Geneva, 5-8 December 2022**

**11h30**

**(2 Min)**

Chairperson,

South Africa congratulates you and other members of the Forum on your appointment and wishes you every success in fulfilling your mandate.

South Africa aligns itself with the statement of the African Group and welcomes the establishment of the Forum as a consultative mechanism for people of African descent and other relevant stakeholders as a platform for improving the safety and quality of life and livelihoods of people of African descent, as well as an advisory body to the Council.

It is with great joy that we are participating in this inaugural session. We are even more grateful that we have been able to inaugurate the Forum during the Decade.

Chairperson,

The DDPA acknowledged that slavery, the slave trade, and transatlantic slave trade, were appalling tragedies in the history of humanity, because of the extent of barbarism and also their magnitude, organised nature and their negation of the essence of the

victims. It also acknowledged that slavery, the slave trade and transatlantic slave trade were a crime against humanity and should always have been so and that they are among the major sources and manifestations of the source of racism. Africans and people of African descent were victims of these acts and continue to be victims of their consequences.

The DDPA also acknowledges the suffering caused to Africans and people of African descent by colonialism and regrets that the effects and persistence of these practices have been among the factors contributing to lasting social and economic inequalities in many parts of the world today. The contemporary situation of people of African descent must be understood in the context of both the legacy of slavery and continued discrimination, which perpetuates situations of inequality and marginalisation, including contemporary practices akin to slavery that continue today in many places throughout the world.

It is for this reason that my delegation encourages this Forum to bear in mind that the DDPA remains the extensive road map to tackle the scourge of racism and racial discrimination globally. It is through the Durban Follow-up mechanisms such as the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent and the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation and Follow-up to the DDPA that it has been possible to create this Forum. Consequently we should never allow the detractors of Durban to weaken the collective cause and plight of people of African Descent by dissociating this Forum from the DDPA and other follow-up mechanisms.

Chairperson,

The General Assembly has mandated the ***IGWG on the DDPA to draft United Nations Declaration on the promotion and full respect of the human rights of people of African descent.***

The Assembly further invited the Permanent Forum and the Working Group of Experts on People of African descent (WGEPAD) to contribute to the elaboration of the draft Declaration, in accordance with their respective mandates, including with civil society and researchers. South Africa looks forward to your valuable input in this process.

My delegation wishes to conclude with a quote from our late former President Nelson Mandela who at the dawn of democracy and in concluding his Biography the Long

Walk to Freedom encouraged South Africa not to take for granted their new acquired freedom and I quote:

***“I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not ended.”***

Chairperson,

We dare not linger. We dare not take for granted the efforts and the challenges that members states and the African Group have gone through to get us to the point of having this Permanent Forum.

My delegation looks forward to fruitful discussions. We wish you success.

Thank you,