

Greetings all. My name is Michael R. Fisher Jr. and I represent the United Church of Christ based in the U.S. Today I speak on behalf of the World Council of Churches of which we are member communion.

Recognizing that people of African descent around the world are not a homogenous group and keeping in mind the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the World Council of Churches (WCC) strongly encourages the Permanent Forum to use an intersectional human-rights-based approach in its work. Intersectionality will specifically acknowledge and pay attention to people affected by intersectional discrimination, thereby making sure that no one is left behind.

We hope the Permanent Forum will pay specific attention to marginalised communities of Afro-descendants belonging to minority groups, not adequately protected from human rights violations, experiencing intersecting discrimination, and lacking visibility due to their social exclusion. Migratory people of African descent such as refugees, undocumented migrants, stateless people, and victims of human trafficking, are particularly vulnerable.

The availability and analysis of disaggregated data is an important element of this intersectional approach because it helps with the development of tailored policies that recognize and respect diversity while simultaneously ensuring the exercise of human rights.

Regarding reparatory justice, since its recent Assembly, the WCC has embarked on a pilgrimage of justice, reconciliation, and unity of which restorative justice will be an important component. The failure of societies to seek and admit the truth about crimes against humanity committed in the past and their lingering effects, and specifically slavery and colonialism, perpetuates and deepens the trauma experienced by people of African descent, and other marginalised communities.

Social reconciliation is only possible if there is an end to impunity. The granting of impunity, de jure or de facto, to those who have committed grave crimes against humanity is not acceptable and should no longer be possible. Thus, a human rights framework is very essential as we move forward with this work.

Acknowledging the meaningful collaboration these past years with various UN experts, the WCC stands ready to work with and support the Permanent Forum in its work.

Finally, we call on all States attending the Permanent Forum today to translate their support for this body into reality by financially supporting this body.

Thank you.