



Statement by Conrad Bryan on behalf of the Association of Mixed Race Irish

Madam Chairperson, Excellencies and Fellow Delegates,

It is an honour represent the Association of Mixed Race Irish at this Session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent in New York. Thank you for this opportunity to speak again. You will remember, at the inaugural Session in Geneva, I talked about the children of mixed African and Irish descent whose childhoods were stolen in Irish orphanages and institutions. I also spoke about Ireland's failure to provide just and adequate remedies. Unfortunately, I regret to say that Ireland continues to deny reparations for the systemic racism children were subjected to in childcare institutions. The redress Bill is still being debated in the parliament, even today, and despite children being subjected to systemic racism and illegal non-consensual vaccine trials in the 1960's, which was in breach of the Nuremburg code, the State continues to deny us reparatory justice.

We see the same denial of justice across European Union States. For example, in Belgium, many Métis children, born of black African mothers and white Belgium fathers, were taken from their African mothers in the Congo and Uganda in the 1960s and transported to Belgium without the consent of the mothers. They were placed in orphanages or adopted out to white families. Some were put into institutions in Africa and are now in Belgium, not only parentless, but are also stateless. Like Ireland, Belgium provided a State Apology in 2019. However, but both States still refuse to provide reparations.

Madam Chairperson, this continuing denial of reparatory justice, in our region, is rooted in the legacy of European colonialism. The Métis children in Belgium came from Belgium's Colonial Territories and the fathers of the African Irish children came from the decolonising African Nations mainly in the 1950s and 1960s. This is not some distant past and the harms are still felt in living people today. The European States and the European Union must reckon with this colonial past. They must recognise that group rights are important, and in particular the group remedies and relief. Structural and Systemic racism directly impacts specific groups and therefore requires systematic responses by States. I ask all States to work with people of African descent for a fairer world.

Thank you