

**Opening of the second session of the  
Permanent Forum of People of African Descent**

**H.E. Mr. Václav Bálek - President of the Human Rights Council**

**Tuesday 30 May 2023 at 10:00 a.m. GA Hall UNHQ (via video message)**

Distinguished Members of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent,  
Excellencies,  
Dear participants,

It is a great honour and a pleasure to address you today, in my capacity as President of the Human Rights Council, at the opening of this second session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent.

In March of this year, the Chair of the Inter-governmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, in her annual report to the Human Rights Council, provided an update regarding the progress made on the draft United Nations Declaration on the Promotion and Full Respect of the Human Rights of People of African Descent. She highlighted in particular, the role of the Permanent Forum in contributing to the elaboration of the draft Declaration.

I thank all of the stakeholders that contributed to the Forum's first session and made concrete proposals. Allow me to recall that last October, the Human Rights Council adopted the resolution entitled "From rhetoric to reality: a global call for concrete action against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance".

The outcome of the Forum's first session held last December, as well as the work that you will be doing this week, will be presented later this year to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly. The concrete recommendations made by the Permanent Forum in its reporting are intended to guide the Member States in undertaking important legislative and policy measures which effectively address racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

I am pleased to hear that so many people from around the world are participating in this session. I urge all stakeholders to actively and constructively engage in the discussions that will take place over the next four days, in an atmosphere of sincere respect, in which we all value the expertise and experiences of each other.

I also invite all States to ensure the full and effective implementation of the mandate of the Permanent Forum. It is through this proactive involvement with HRC mechanisms that we can achieve the full inclusion of people of African descent in the societies in which they live as equal citizens without discrimination of any kind, and through which we can contribute to ensuring their equal enjoyment of all human rights, as envisaged in the mandate of the Permanent Forum.

I wish you an engaging and impactful session.

Thank you

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