

**UK statement: General Debate of the Second Session of the
Permanent Forum for Persons of African Descent
Tuesday 30 May 2023**

Thank you

The UK is proud of our rich and diversity society. We are making great strides towards becoming a fairer, more inclusive one. However, we recognise the need to continue to tackle, as in all societies, negative ethnic and racial disparities affecting some groups. In the UK that includes people with African and Caribbean heritage as well as other ethnic and religious minorities.

Last year we announced an ambitious Inclusive Britain action plan which aims to increase trust in our institutions; promote equality of opportunity; and encourage a greater sense of belonging.

Work is underway. For example, on criminal justice, where we will deliver a new national framework for how policing powers can be scrutinised by local communities. And education, with a new model history curriculum.

In parallel, through our Online Safety Bill, the UK will be the first country to hold social media companies to account for vile racist abuse online.

As we take this work forward, it is right that we reflect on our national journey. From an era of empire and colonialism to one of pride in a diverse, modern society. It is a complex history.

The transatlantic slave trade is a scar on global history. British citizens and institutions played an important role in ending it. But like nationals of many countries represented here, Britons were also implicated in it. We recognise that the victims of slavery were primarily persons of African descent. And we continue to express our deep sorrow that it could ever have happened.

The United Kingdom believes that we must respond to the cruelty of the past by ensuring that current and future generations learn from it. We are committed to combatting all forms of racism and building a fairer world today.