

**AFRICAN GROUP STATEMENT  
GENERAL DEBATE, THIRD SESSION OF THE PERMANENT FORUM ON  
PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT, GENEVA, 16 APRIL 2024**

**Chairperson,**

The African Group welcomes the convening of the Third Session of the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent and congratulates you, the Vice Chairperson and Rapporteur for your appointments.

In December 2023, the global community commemorated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration for Human Rights which affirmed that: *“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”*

75 years since the adoption of the UDHR and 23 years since the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, People of African descent continue to face inequalities in their daily lives and across all facets of life, from education, health, economic development, law enforcement, and the administration of justice.

Chairperson,

On this solemn occasion, we recall the words of the United Nations Secretary-General at the inaugural Session of this Forum when he reiterated that: *“the legacy of centuries of enslavement and exclusion continues to reverberate in entrenched inequalities and injustices.”*

We also recall the commitment made by global leaders during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) held under the auspices of the General Assembly in September 2023, to *“step up our efforts to fight against racism, all forms of discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, stigmatisation, and hate speech, through cooperation, partnership, inclusion and respect for diversity.”*

At the level of the African Union (AU), we recall with appreciation the recognition of the African Diaspora as its sixth region of the continent.

Furthermore, we also recall the declaration by the African Union of the period 2021-2031 as the "Decade of African Roots and Diasporas". Most recently, in February 2024, at its Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the AU declared that the theme of the African Union for the year 2025 shall be *“Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through Reparations.”*

Chairperson,

It goes without saying that notwithstanding high sounding notes of equality and human rights for all in various fora, people of African descent continue to face open and systemic forms of discrimination around the world. Therefore, we eagerly look forward to the conclusion of consultations on the elaboration of the United Nations Declaration on the promotion and full respect of the human rights of peoples of African descent. Through that, we hope all states will take more seriously, their responsibility to take concrete steps to comprehensively address all forms of racism and racial justice.

In conclusion, the African Group reiterates its full commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights for all, and in particular the fight against racism and all forms of discrimination for peoples of African descent. As we approach the end of the first international decade for people of African descent, we support the call for a second international decade for people of African descent to enable us conclude the unfinished business of our common agenda. We further affirm that the Permanent Forum on people of African descent should be firmly based on the reaffirmation of the Durban Declaration on People of African Descent.

**I thank you.**