

**Statement Delivered by Mr. Neaz Subhan, Commissioner of the
Ethnic Relations Commission of Guyana during the 3rd Session of
the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent
Thematic Discussion – Culture and Recognition**

April 17, 2024

Madame Chair,

The diverse culture of the people of African descent have and continue to be invaluable to the cultural landscape of Guyana. It is an indispensable and vibrant component of the country's cultural mosaic.

Freedom of worship, including spiritualities, is enshrined in the Guyanese constitution. This is demonstrative of the recognition of all cultures through diverse customs and traditions of the various ethnic groups.

While this obtains in Guyana, the Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC) remains ever mindful of the historical and ongoing challenges people of African descent have and continue to face in the recognition and practice of their culture in some parts of the world.

The Commission firmly agrees that recognition is the way to celebrate and incorporate the cultural wealth of the people of African descent.

The Commission continues to propagate the vital importance of education towards mitigating the challenges faced with recognition.

It believes that education brings understanding which can lead to appreciation, appreciation can lead to tolerance and, by extension, harmony.

This has tremendous potential to directly confront the issue of intolerance and stigma which have unfortunately manifested in the demonization and persecution of people of African descent in some places.

Recognition is therefore foremost especially in multifaceted societies in aiding the promotion of cultural diversity and inclusivity of all involved in the preservation of these rich traditions and those who promote them through various art forms.

In this context, the ERC remains encouraged by the continuous support provided by the government of Guyana to various organizations of People of African descent to aid the preservation and promotion of their culture.

The Commission remains firmly in support of individual and collective efforts to ensure holistic recognition of the diverse culture of the people of African descent.

Thank you.