

Third Session of the Permanent Forum for People of African Descent

Statement by Miss Tyesha Turner, Deputy Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the UN
and other International Organisations at Geneva

Agenda item 5(a): Thematic Discussion on Reparations, Sustainable Development and
Economic Justice

Thank you, Madam Chair. Jamaica further thanks the panellists for their contributions to this thematic discussion.

The Jamaica delegation welcomes the Permanent Forum's continued advocacy and focus on the theme of reparations and reparatory justice. The unfortunate legacy of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery endures to this day in our current economic, political, social, cultural and environmental realities. Jamaica, as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), continues to grapple with some of these systemic and structural vulnerabilities, including the high degree of openness of our economies, which underpins our over exposure to exogenous shocks.

Many of our productive sectors remain primary extractive industries with very little focus on value added production, through which we can grow our way out of poverty and dependence. This is a vestige of the colonial plantation economy and system, which was characterized by the supply of primary inputs and an overreliance on the metropole for manufactured goods and services. This has not only created structural imbalances in our economies, but has created barriers that are hard to overcome due to the systemic economic injustices that are ingrained within the organization of the global economy.

This injustice cannot be remedied without accountability. The exploitation of black labour and productive resources in our countries was instrumental in driving the development of the Global North, while simultaneously stultifying the development of countries, like Jamaica, by starving them of access to their own wealth and resources.

It is therefore, important, that we note the linkages between the objectives of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (adopted in 2001) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly the commitment through the SDGs to combat inequalities within and among countries, establish just societies, end poverty and hunger everywhere, and to leave no one behind. With six years remaining to our target date, my delegation urges the international community to examine the challenges to achieving the SDGs, particularly for People of African Descent, and to find targeted and effective solutions to remove all barriers to their attainment.

At the national level, the Jamaican Government continues to work on the elaboration of a National Policy and Roadmap for Reparatory Justice as well as the publication of a booklet titled 100 Facts about Reparations as a reader/document for public awareness on this matter.

In addition, Our CARICOM Heads of Government have agreed to broaden the context for reparatory justice, which would include native genocide, chattel enslavement, indentureship and colonialism, and have also agreed on a ten point plan for reparatory justice that underpins our quest for economic justice and sustainable development.

We, therefore, recommend that:

- Reparations be requested for inclusion on the agenda of relevant international development meetings (“agenda advocacy”); and
- Reform discussions in relevant trade and development organisations consider structural reformation towards an empowerment model that can benefit developing countries, many of whom are former colonies.