



SOUTH AFRICAN STATEMENT

**3RD SESSION OF THE PERMANENT FORUM ON PEOPLE OF AFRICAN
DESCENT**

Education: Overcoming Systemic Racism and Historic Harm

GENEVA

16-19 APRIL 2024

2 minutes

Check against delivery.

Chairperson,

My delegation thanks the panellists for their insightful contributions.

At the outset, South Africa recalls the words of the late global icon, President Nelson Mandela when he said: *“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”*

Education, therefore, has the potential to transform societies, allowing them to break from the cycle of poverty and inequality.

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action recognises *“that education at all levels and all ages, including within the family, in particular human rights education, is a key to changing attitudes and behaviour based on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and to promoting tolerance and respect for diversity in societies.”*

It is therefore critical that at national, regional and international levels, we actively work towards dismantling entrenched racial disparities which continue to disproportionately impact people of African descent, including in education systems.

Chairperson,

SDG 4 seeks to ensure inclusive and quality education to promote lifelong learning for all. In this context, quality education without racism should aim to preserve and promote tolerance, pluralism, and respect for diversity.

It should further ensure the participation of people of African descent in the design, implementation, and development of educational systems and programmes, while adequately resourcing them. Furthermore, people of African descent should live as equal citizens without discrimination of any kind and contribute to ensuring equal enjoyment of all human rights.

Lastly, the establishment of evaluation mechanisms to assess the impact of measures implemented, as well as the collection of disaggregated data to effectively monitor the situation of people of African descent, in this regard, is fundamental.

I thank you.