

Statement from Tracy Matulu

Thank you for the opportunity given by the United Nations allowing me to speak. I am Tracy Matulu from Canada, here with the Black Francophone Coalition of Ontario, a spokesperson organization for the issues and needs of Black Francophones primarily in the province of Ontario. I am an active member in the Francophone community, while wearing many hats as a public speaker, mental health advocate, youth worker and Executive Director of Documentation Francophone for short, I am presently focused on the well being, self development and mental health of Black Francophones a minority group in Canada within the Black community.

Once a black person is born, in so little time, they will quickly learn that they are treated and perceived differently to the rest of the world. Being seen as “less than” because of the appearance of your skin colour is not only traumatizing but mentally draining. For you need to do more, be better, work harder to simply be deemed worthy to enter professional spaces that are deserving of others working less hard.

It's important to create ample spaces for black people to express themselves through art as a way to connect with cultural roots that have been lost for many. And as a way to keep Black people connected to their origins no matter where they may be around the globe.

This includes different forms of Caribbean and African dance spaces, drumming, storytelling, expressions through art depictions and safe spaces for emotional expressions for Black people to be heard. This needs to be continual programs and not just for a short period of time for the issues stemming from racial discrimination is not a quick fix, but could be a lifelong journey.

We need to understand that it takes time, a long journey that many fought for, keeping the vision without seeing results and have died for others to continue the race. It's a process that requires patience, determination, perseverance and teamwork. I also want to stress the importance of creating more scholarship programs for Black Youth, enabling them to further their education and break the cycle of generational poverty many Blacks face. The list is long and the challenges are many, but as we are all being heard here today in the presence of the United Nations, let's connect, join forces and continue to make real change.