**55th session of the Human Rights Council**

**Commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

***Theme: A decade of recognition, justice and development:   
implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent***

*Concept note (as of 21 March 2024)*

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| **Date**  **and venue:** | **Wednesday, 27 March 2024, 3.30 to 5.30 p.m.**  **Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva**  *(The commemoration will be broadcast live and archived at* [*https://webtv.un.org*](https://webtv.un.org)*)* | |
| **Objectives:** | The panel discussion will focus on the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent and facilitate deliberations on good practices, recurrent challenges and lessons learned. In view of the final year of the Decade, it will enable speakers to make action-oriented suggestions for further measures to be implemented at local, national, regional and international levels. The discussion will further contribute to developing recommendations on practical steps to be taken to make a Second International Decade effective, in line with General Assembly resolution 78/234. | |
| **Chair:** | **H.E. Mr. Omar Zniber**, President of the Human Rights Council | |
| **Opening**  **statement:** | **Ms. Nada Al-Nashif**, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights | |
| **Panellists:** | * **Ms. Barbara G. Reynolds**, Chair of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent *(video message)* * **Ms. June Soomer**, Chair-designate of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent  *(video message)* * **Ms. Mame-Fatou Niang**,Associate Professor of French and Francophone Studies, and Director-Founder of the Center for Black European Studies and the Atlantic at Carnegie Mellon University * **Ms. Isabelle Mamadou**, Regional Coordinator for the Movement for Peace, Valencia | |
| **Outcome:** | The panel discussion is expected to contribute to:   * Increased awareness of good practices and key challenges with regard to implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent; * Enhanced understanding of required practical steps for an effective Second International Decade; * Renewed commitment to effectively eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in line with international human rights norms and standards and political commitments. | |
| **Mandate:** | The General Assembly, in paragraph 54 of its resolution 78/234entitled “A global call for concrete action for the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action”, requested the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Human Rights Council to continue to convene annual commemorative meetings of the Assembly and the Council during the commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, with the appropriate focus and themes, and in this context encouraged the participation of eminent personalities active in the struggle against racial discrimination, Member States and civil society organizations in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Assembly and the Council, respectively. | |
| **Format:** | The panel discussion will be limited to two hours. The opening statement and initial presentations by the panellists will be followed by a two-part interactive discussion and by conclusions from the panellists. A maximum of one hour will be set aside for the podium, including the opening statements, panellists’ presentations, their responses to questions and concluding remarks. The remaining hour will be reserved for two segments of interventions from the floor, with each segment consisting of interventions from 14 States or observers, 2 national human rights institutions and 4 non-governmental organizations. Each speaker will have 1.5 minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions. Panellists will respond to questions and comments during the remaining time available.  The list of speakers for the discussion will be established through the online inscription system and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups of States will be moved to the beginning of the list. Delegates who could not take the floor due to time constraints will be able to upload their statements on the online system to be posted on the HRC Extranet. Interpretation will be provided in the six United Nations official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish). | |
| **Background:** | In its resolution 78/234, the General Assembly recalled the proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent, as contained in its resolution 68/237 of 23 December 2013, and the celebratory launch of the Decade on 10 December 2014. It also recalled the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent, as adopted in its resolution 69/16 of 18 November 2014.  Furthermore, the General Assembly recalled that the Secretary-General would convene a final assessment of the Decade, to take place within the framework of a high-level international event, marking the closure of the Decade in 2024.  It requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly, before the end of its eightieth session, on practical steps to be taken to make a Second International Decade effective. It also requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Department of Global Communications of the Secretariat to continue awareness-raising efforts and public information campaigns in support of the International Decade for People of African Descent through the use of social networks and digital media, including the wide distribution of user-friendly, concise and accessible versions of material in this regard.  In its resolution 69/16 on the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent, the General Assembly recognized that the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action is a comprehensive United Nations framework and a solid foundation for combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and represents a new stage in the efforts of the United Nations and the international community to restore the rights and dignity of people of African descent.  The implementation of the programme of activities is an integral part of the full and effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and in compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination as the principal international instruments for the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.  The programme of activities underlines that States should, at the national level, take concrete and practical steps through the adoption and effective implementation of national and international legal frameworks, policies and programmes to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance faced by people of African descent, taking into account the particular situation of women, girls and young men. These concrete and practical steps would focus in particular, on the right to equality and non-discrimination, education on equality and awareness-raising, information-gathering, participation and inclusion, access to justice, special measures, right to development and measures against poverty, education, employment, health, housing and address multiple or aggravated discrimination. | |
| **Background**  **documents:** | * General Assembly resolution [78/234](https://undocs.org/A/RES/78/234) of 22 December 2023 entitled “A global call for concrete action for the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action” * General Assembly resolution [76/1](https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/76/1) of 22 September 2021 entitled “United against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance” (Political declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action) * General Assembly resolution [69/16](https://undocs.org/A/RES/69/16) of 18 November 2014 entitled “Programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent * Human Rights Council resolution [47/21](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/47/21) of 13 July 2021 entitled “Promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Africans and of people of African descent against excessive use of force and other human rights violations by law enforcement officers through transformative change for racial justice and equality” * [Durban Declaration and Programme of Action](https://waps.ohchr.org/en/publications/reference-publications/durban-declaration-and-programme-action) (2001) * [Outcome Document of the Durban Review Conference](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Press/Durban_Review_Conference_outcome_document.pdf) (2009) * Report of the Secretary-General, “Implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent” ([A/78/317](https://undocs.org/A/78/317), 2023) * Report of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent on its first and second sessions ([A/HRC/54/68](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/54/68), 2023) * Reports of the High Commissioner, “Promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Africans and of people of African descent against excessive use of force and other human rights violations by law enforcement officers through transformative change for racial justice and equality” ([A/HRC/47/53](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/47/53), [A/HRC/47/CRP.1](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Racism/A_HRC_47_CRP_1.pdf), 2021; [A/HRC/51/53](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/51/53), 2022; [A/HRC/54/66](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/54/66), 2023) * High Commissioner, “Four-point Agenda Towards Transformative Change for Racial Justice and Equality” (annex to [A/HRC/47/53](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/47/53), 2021) * Report of the Secretary-General, “Our Common Agenda” ([A/75/982](https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf), 2021) |