

Concept Note on the Thematic Discussions

1st session of the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent

5 – 8 December 2022

Room XVIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

Overview

The first session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent will take place from 5 to 8 December 2022 in Room XVIII in Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland. It will bring together human rights activists of African descent, Member States, United Nations organs and bodies, intergovernmental and regional organizations, national human rights institutions, civil society representatives, and other relevant stakeholders, for four days of thematic discussions, side events and special events. The session will contribute to guiding the actions of the United Nations in addressing systemic racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; to identifying and analysing best practices, challenges, opportunities and initiatives to address the issues of climate justice, reparatory justice, and equality for all people of African descent; and to the discussion on the draft United Nations Declaration on the promotion, protection and full respect of the human rights of people of African descent.

1. The Fight against Systemic Racism – *Future Policymaking for People of African Descent*

Monday 5 December 3pm - 6pm

Among the challenges of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent will be to develop guidelines and recommendations towards effectively measuring, recognising and addressing systemic racism. This panel is a first step towards these ends. It will focus on concrete actions being taken around the world on these issues, and will explore ways in which the Permanent Forum can support more concrete actions in the coming months. A number of UN experts will look into the importance of political commitments to fight systemic racism; developing an understanding of systemic racism and how to effectively address it, including how the UN Declaration for people of African Descent may be developed to address systemic racism. The discussion will also cover the challenges and opportunities that data collection offers to the fight against systemic racism.

2. Inclusion of People of African Descent in the Sustainable Development Agenda – *The Case for Climate Justice*

Tuesday 6 December 2022 10am-1pm

The discussion will focus on the disproportionate impact of the climate crises and environmental injustices on people of African descent. It will shed light on the interconnections of environmental, economic and social sustainable development for people of African descent and the barriers that exist in the realization of the 2030 Agenda. The discussion will aim to raise awareness on the effect of the climate crisis on people of African descent; analyse the need for stronger climate actions for people of African descent; consider ways to shape climate change policies to reduce the vulnerability of people of African descent; and how to work towards more sustainable international finance, trade, production and consumption. The discussions will also highlight lessons learned, good practices and success stories on the inclusion of People of African Descent in climate actions and further the ongoing debates about bringing racial and economic justice to the forefront of 21st century

environmentalism. The discussion will offer recommendations to advance climate justice discourse and promote the human rights of people of African descent in countries and communities hardest hit by the climate crisis.

3. Inclusion of People of African Descent in the Sustainable Development Agenda – *The Case for Reparatory Justice*

Tuesday 6 December 3pm-6pm

Among the challenges of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent will be to develop guidelines and recommendations towards operationalizing the growing calls for reparatory justice. This includes placing reparatory justice within in the context of sustainable development, developing a comprehensive human rights-based approach to reparatory justice, and creating spaces for global conversations and cooperation on the subject. This panel is a first step towards these ends. It will be results- and solution-oriented and focus on action-oriented outcomes, recommendations and policy making within the context of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It will also be the opportunity for the participants to share their perspectives and experiences in confronting legacies; to address the barriers in achieving reparatory justice; and to discuss the role of reparatory justice in the lives of people of African descent and correcting structural inequities at the international as well as domestic levels.

4. Connecting the Past and Future – *A United Nations Declaration on the Rights of People of African Descent*

Wednesday 7 December 10am-1pm

As the Permanent Forum has been entrusted by the UN General Assembly to consider the elaboration of a United Nations declaration on the promotion, protection and full respect of the human rights of people of African descent, the objective of this panel is to discuss the path towards the adoption of the Declaration. Including, by analysing the contents of such a draft Declaration and the expected contributions of the Permanent Forum; evaluating the progress made in the drafting of the Declaration; identifying strategies to ensure the adoption of the Declaration within the framework of the International Decade for People of African Descent; and discussing ways to ensure an inclusive and comprehensive consultation process, including with civil society and researchers.

5. Connecting the Past and the Future – *Equality for All People of African Descent*

Wednesday 7 December 3pm- 6pm

Multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination have a compounded impact on people of African descent. This panel discussion will focus on the particular situation of women, children, youth, LGBTQI+, and migrants of African descent, and the intersectional discrimination they face based on race, colour, descent, sex, gender, disabilities, national and social origin, and economic status, among others. The panel will endeavour to make recommendations to close the inequality divide perpetuated by racial discrimination and offer real world solutions in support of the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms of people of African descent.

6. The future work of the Permanent Forum: *Feedback from participants*

Thursday 8 December 10am-1pm

The focus of this panel is to receive feedback and suggestions from session participants about the topics the Permanent Forum should have on its future agenda.
