



Response to Call for Submissions

ENPAD, the European Network of People of African Descent is pleased to make this contribution to the draft United Nations Declaration on the promotion and full respect of the human rights of People of African Descent as per resolution A/RES/76/226. ENPAD thanks the Permanent Forum for facilitating this process as per its mandate outlined in A/RES/75/314

The Promotion and full respect of the human rights of People of African Descent is long overdue. It is disappointing that the year and then the Decade of People of African Descent made very little headway partly because member states like the UK had no **'specific plans'** to mark the Decade whilst others paid lip service to it. The images seen on Social Media of African Students being denied places on trains fleeing the conflict in Ukraine, is a stark reminder that Afriphobia, the prejudice, discrimination, fear, hatred, or bigotry towards people of African Heritage and things African, is an intrinsic part of the current European mindset. When the George Floyd murder played across our screens, there were many complacent and smug voices in Europe, pointing at America, forgetting that the roots of Afriphobia, racism directed at people of African Heritage, has its roots in the Crime against Humanity that was the Transatlantic Trafficking of Africans and Enslavement. That common history and the White Supremacy which is a by-product of it means that no European nation is immune from expressions of Afriphobia.

ENPAD believes that promotion and full respect of the human rights of People of African Heritage cannot be effective without addressing certain fundamentals:

- Afriphobia is the result of learned and taught behaviour. Unravelling it, needs teaching and learning based on the full facts of history and not partial truths. In correcting the historical record, it is important to understand that there will be resistance. Challenging old certainties can be uncomfortable. Coming face to face with a more complete history, will highlight horrors such as the genocide in the so called Belgian Congo where conservative estimates are that 15 million Africans perished as a result of the barbaric treatment of King Leopold and his henchmen.
- Language and vocabulary are important. It is imperative that we avoid the temptation to dismiss the calls to use Afriphobia rather than Afrophobia as mere semantics. Language carries subtleties which cement thinking. **"We make a distinction between Afriphobia and afrophobia because 'afro' as an emphasis, is associated with afro hair and thereby lessens the more serious and complex idea of Afriphobia. Thus, we outright reject afrophobia. Afriphobia provides a link to the African Continent, an important link in terms of identity and belonging."** (Defining Afriphobia, Structural and Institutional racism, 2019)
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- Exclusion from economic and Social life. A lot has been written and done about common forms of discrimination with regards to employment, housing, access to healthcare. Much still needs to be done, especially enforcing the rights enshrined in Law. It is however important to extend our gaze to non traditional areas of campaigning such as finance and Banking where there is emerging evidence of discrimination and less than professional service because of a person's African Heritage. Banks and other Financial Institutions hide behind customers desire for privacy which means their unprofessional behaviour does not often make it into the public domain. Access to financial services is important in modern life so financial exclusion needs to be addressed if we are serious about the promotion and full respect of the human rights of People of African Descent.
- Tackling Institutional Racism. Institutional Racism was defined following investigation that took place after the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence and the Metropolitan Police failing to carry out a proper investigation because of the heritage of the victim.
 - "The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people." The Macpherson report
 - "Institutional racism is that which, covertly or overtly, resides in the policies, procedures, operations and culture of public or private institutions - reinforcing individual prejudices and being reinforced by them in turn." A. Sivanandan, Director, Institute of Race Relations
 - "If racist consequences accrue to institutional laws, customs or practices, that institution is racist whether or not the individuals maintaining those practices have racial intentions." The Commission for Racial Equality
- Deaths as a result of State Violence is a global problem that needs to be addressed. Whether it is immigration detention, mental hospital admission, a routine traffic stop or prisons, those of African heritage are more likely to suffer serious consequences as a result of an encounter with agents of the state. Tackling the Afrophobia guiding actions is essential. Civil Society Organisations have emerged to support families, communities and friends dealing with the traumas as a result of loss of a loved one at the hands of institutions that are meant to protect them.



- **“It is however worth remembering the words of Rev Al Sharpton, as quoted in “African Voices: Quotations by People of African Descent” Kwaku & Ms Serwah BTWSC (2010): “ We have defeated Jim Crow, but now we have to deal with his son, James Crow Jr. Esq” The reality is racism presents differently, but is unfortunately very much part of the landscape, and it is important that we also change our strategies in dealing with the new manifestations. If we fail to recognise its existence, we have already been defeated. It is important that we recognise the subtle and not so subtle manifestations and use equally sophisticated methods for dealing with it” (Defining Afriphobia, Structural and Institutional racism, 2019)**

- Successful promotion and full rights for African People requires a new mindset and language. We all need to recognise and celebrate African identity.
 - We are AFRICAN! All ethnically ‘black’ people of African heritage are AFRICAN. An African Proverb puts it well: **“No matter how long a log stays in the water, it doesn't become a crocodile.”** Using a plant analogy, an apple tree transplanted to another continent does not become a pear tree, a mango tree transplanted elsewhere does not become an apple tree. Recognizing and celebrating African identity is part of the journey that needs to be travelled.

 - We need to develop AFRIPHILIA : a love of Africans and things African

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