# Statement in Response to the Call by the Permanent Forum.

IDPAD Coalition UK (The Coalition) is pleased to note that the Permanent Forum has started work and will ensure that the gains, modest as they may be, made over the Decade will be consolidated.

1. Key human rights concerns of people of African descent in the UK today and how you work to address them

a) Right to fair treatment by referring to Africans as Africans rather than by a colour. Asians in the UK, regardless of where they are born are referred to as Asian, but Africans are referred to by a colour.

b) Equal access to justice, housing and employment. We work to improve situation through advocacy and training.

c) The UK’s decision to leave the European Union could lead to a repeal of the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights 1998 as the Government tries to have ‘a bonfire of rights’. There is a real risk that the progress made since the first Race Relations Act was enacted in 1965 could be reversed with a negative impact on People of African Descent. IDPAD Coalition UK is working to ensure that the current Equality Act is not repealed or that if the current Act is repealed any replacement Act incorporates current Race Equality Legislation and Case Law. In January 2017, IDPAD Coalition UK sent a submission to the Labour Party’s Race Consultation, a mechanism for making certain that Labour Party Policy takes account of our concerns.

d) Our recent Consultation with UK Civil society led to an encouraging response from a wide variety of organisations working in the UK and beyond. Submissions received were as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **RECOGNITION** | **7** |
| **JUSTICE** | **14** |
| **DEVELOPMENT** | **17** |

Our Board assessed the submissions against agreed criteria and the top 15 scores were as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **RECOGNITION** | **4** |
| **JUSTICE** | **7** |
| **DEVELOPMENT** | **5** |

The Board Assessment highlights that in the UK, the issues of Justice are still an outstanding issue which requires attention.

The International Submission we received from South Africa raises concerns about Justice affecting Global Africa through the activities of companies listed on the UK Stock Exchange or with historic UK links. This suggests an area of collaboration between IDPAD Coalition UK and South African Civil Society and NGOs, sharing of Best Practice and meaningful activism which unfortunately, we do not have the resources to develop.

IDPAD Coalition UK member, Ade Olaiya participated in our Interactive Conference on 25th March 2017. He commented[[1]](#footnote-1): “…. social, economic and cultural rights as particular cause for concern. For example, Article 25, UDHR 1948 states “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services”.

Importantly, poor access to maternal and mental health was highlighted at the IDPAD Coalition UK Conference: “African women in the UK have the highest rates of stillborn children”. IDPAD Coalition UK Board Member, Professor Gus John suggested that the Coalition should ensure that information is shared online or otherwise to raise awareness of disproportionate deaths and poor maternal health of African women, in particular communities resulting from their inadequate treatment by particular health service trusts across the UK. African communities have to be mobilised around these issues. In the perception of representatives of civil society “strong actions and community roles specific to people of African descent have disappeared”

In the climate created by Austerity in the UK, the lack of resources for activity in the community is a great concern. Organisations are struggling to survive, making it difficult for them to engage effectively in strategic objectives such as IDPAD because they are obliged to limit their activity to bread and butter issues which impact immediately on communities.

IDPAD Coalition UK member, Ade Olaiya noted violations of the right to education(Article 26, UDHR 1948) occur in UK primary and secondary education. The standard school curriculum therefore favours children from a white mainly middle class background” (CODE: 2017). This perspective is also echoed in the narratives of African youth elsewhere in the UK which include **“the educational curriculum is designed to tell you what to think, not how to think”** (Harrow BHM: 2016). Article 27, UDHR 1948 states **“everyone has the right to share in their community's cultural life: “**. The UK government has not adopted or implemented a strategic Plan of Action. This is in spite of recommendations made by the CERD for it do so, (CERD: 2016). Although official marking of the Decade by the UK government remains elusive, IDPAD has been advocated to representatives of both Houses of the UK Parliament, as well as in the media. Activists, academics and members of civil society have now formed IDPAD UK Coalition, which held its first conference on 25th March 2017. In response to questions about marking the Decade, the UK Government has stated that it has **“no specific plans”** to mark the Decade. Any assistance the WGEPAD can give IDPAD Coalition UK in lobbying and pressuring the UK Government to meaningfully mark the Decade would be welcome.

2. How the Permanent Forum can improve and enhance its engagement with civil society for greater impact on the ground

The WGEPAD can improve and enhance its engagement with civil society by deepening its understanding of civil society and the barriers faced by NGOs and Activists. Sourcing and making available funding to civil society organisations and making more regular country visits to monitor racial discrimination would help the WGEPAD make a greater impact on the ground.

The WGEPAD can put in place mechanisms which foster the sharing of ideas that work, encouraging Best Practice in developing an effective response to the opportunities created by the Decade and supporting meaningful responses across regions.

IDPAD Coalition UK has identified the following actions in response to IDPAD’s thematic objectives[[2]](#footnote-2):

***“Recognition***

* ***Formal acknowledgment of African as the terminology for ethnically ‘black’ people of African heritage.***
* ***Usage of language such as Afriphobia to address anti-African racism.***
* ***Correction and Reversal of the revisionist history that distorts the true role of Africa and its people in world civilisation, and addressing the negative depiction and stereotyping of Africans and African History.***
* ***Respecting the right of Africans to tell their story***

***Justice***

* ***Meaningfully addressing racism, especially in Education, the Police, Prisons, and Health Service, particularly maternal and mental health***
* ***Supporting the Reparations movement and demanding an end to the Maangamizi and Ecocide***

***Development***

* ***We acknowledge that Development must be based on Justice and that Justice needs to be established wherever it is absent. We therefore seek to bring our community organisations together in order to further Recognise the practical problems and solutions that will further enable Justice to determine the goals of Development pursued by our communities in the UK.***
* ***Encouraging Africans to engage with the democratic process so that they are able to influence positive change which reflects the interests of Africans and to become agents of positive change by active participation and engagement in their own interests”.***

IDPAD Coalition UK Member, Ade Olaiya comments: **“WGEPAD should therefore enhance engagement with UK civil society through networking”**. IDPAD Coalition UK agrees that it is important to strategically address Afriphobia. Empowerment is critical and the WGEPAD can collaborate with IDPAD Coalition UK. African youth state: **“the educational curriculum is designed to tell you what to think, not how to think: injustice affects youth through economic exploitation by prison industry: impact is important for the next generation to recognise they have been put in by oppression – it is better to recognise this as a child than as an adult.”** (Harrow BHM 2016).

The WGEPAD should support IDPAD Coalition UK in taking forward Community Concerns and Solutions around collective economic development of the African community. Moreover the narratives of African youth shared in Conference included: **“we must acknowledge we live in poor housing and projects and policies are needed to change this. Despite discrimination in service provision of housing being illegal since the enactment of the Race Relations Act 1976; a recent BBC report highlighted widespread discrimination in housing provision still excludes Africans in the UK. In 2010 two fifths of UK low income households were BME.**” African youth understand **“where we have failed in the UK is the implementation of (anti-discrimination) policies”** (Harrow BHM: 2016).

3. Human rights concerns that the WGEPAD should focus on in the next three years
The WGEPAD should

a) Focus on challenging Afriphobia, which is a major concern. Enough reports have been written and compiled, and decisive action and implementation is now needed. At the IDPAD Coalition Meeting of 3rd December 2016, “**It was agreed although the Coalition would focus on taking research recommendations forward, there is a need and possibility to create revisionist research or create new research/ scholarly knowledge by people of African Heritage.”**

The WGEPAD should always work towards building the autonomous voice of African People.

b) Work with African community providers of African history and fund books that correct history. For example when talking about enslavement, the resistance in Africa, the Sons of Africa, African freedom fighters and the Haiti revolution must be highlighted so that Africans are not presented as amorphous victims, but as agents of their own freedom. The current distortion of history highlights historical European bias in education that paints a false narrative, hides the truth as either a deliberate or unwitting act which belittles Africans and gives little credit for their achievement in the face of unimaginable oppression. Financial resources should be made available to disseminate research and implement recommendations.

c) Fund programmes such as appropriate adults training that enable Africans to effectively support young people in police custody, and African History courses developed and delivered by Africans.

d) Also to take cognisance and offer the alternative spelling Afriphobia as opposed to Afrophobia.

e) Enable International cooperation across Global Africa, by providing resources for practical interaction and sharing of Best Practice. Professor Gus John, one of the 85 professors of African heritage in the UK, highlighted the importance of the relationship between our work here in the UK, and as part of a Global Africa. The Ichirouganaim Council for the Advancement of Rastafari (ICAR - Barbados), and the Caribbean Rastafari Organisation (CRO) has an interest in participating with all relevant bodies towards achieving our goals common with IDPAD coalition UK. Ichiroganaim Council for the Advancement of Rastafari (ICAR - Barbados) is registered as an NGO with the UN since the 2001 World Conference Against Racism (WCAR). ICAR participated in the Conference held in Durban, South Africa.

Nana Asante

Secretary,

IDPAD Coalition UK Board

1. Ade Olaiya Submission to WGEPAD [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. IDPAD Coalition UK Mission statement January 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)