



August 20, 2022

Permanent Forum of People of African Descent

Call for inputs: United Nations Declaration on the promotion and full respect of the human rights of people of African descent

Greetings:

The Samuel Dewitt Proctor Conference (SDPC) is a 501(c)3 and United Nations Nongovernmental Organization (NGO) located in Chicago, IL (in the United States of America). We are a member of the International Coalition for People of African Descent (civil rights coalitions coordinating global diasporic civil society participation in the implementation of the IDPAD) and we are thankful for this opportunity to contribute to the elaboration of a draft United Nations Declaration on the promotion and full respect of the human rights of people of African descent. We are compelled by the urgency of this work, agreeing with the Executive Director of the UNPF when she states that *“No country in the world has yet uprooted the deep systems of racial inequity burdening communities of African descent – the result of centuries of discrimination, dispossession and enslavement.”*

As an interdenominational network, the mission of the SDPC is to nurture, sustain, and mobilize the African American faith community in collaboration with civic, corporate, and philanthropic leaders, to address critical needs of human and social justice within local, national, and global communities. SDPC represents the concerns of millions of PAD within the U.S as we seek to strengthen the individual and collective capacity of thought leaders and activists in the church, academy and community through education, advocacy and activism.

As we turn our focus from advocacy in support of the formation of a Permanent Forum to drafting a Declaration, we believe that civil society, relevant coalitions, working groups and stakeholder bodies are stronger in one single voice in putting forth a meaningful agenda, demands and priorities in relation to the promotion and full respect of the human rights of People of African Descent. To that end, there are three items included in the founding documents of the Permanent Forum (UN GA Resolution 75/314) and one emergent thematic issue we submit for consideration to be included in the Declaration.

3 Items in the Resolution:

Promotion- In THE forthcoming Declaration, it will be imperative to include the pillar of representation upheld within the UN Decade of PAD as a matter of priority for the international community. For full participation and representation of civil society representing PAD in the formation of this Declaration, transparency and a generous lead-time related to sharing guidelines, notification about deadlines, creation of meeting opportunities and provisions for regional in-person stakeholder consultations will be vital.

Protection- For the attainment of protection as outlined in the resolution, the Declaration of the promotion and full respect of the human rights of people of African Descent should set out the intention of subsidiary bodies to move from a declaration, merely stating certain aspirations, to a full protocol agreement or treaty with signatory's of member states in to illustrate binding obligations to support action oriented outcomes. The cultivation of protocols or a treaty, similar to the framework of ethical and moral authority in alignment with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is imperative is setting forth a foundation for action-based protection and preventative measures as we bypass 2 decades since we have failed to implement the Declaration and Plan of Action of the Durban Conference of 2001.

Full Respect- For the attainment of Full Respect of PAD as outlined in the resolution, the forthcoming Declaration must indicate wraparound oversight and coordination of subsidiary and affiliated bodies to elevate engagement of an international character and best support the targeted intentions of the Declaration. What we have witnessed during the UN Decade for PAD is lack of oversight, follow through and participation due to siloed responsibility to highlight the pillars, programs and actions formed to support relegated to coalitions and working groups of PAD. Full participation, full engagement complete buy-in and mainstreaming with hands-on engagement by subsidiary bodies of the Permanent Forum's role, importance, and relevance of produced declarations to mitigate the collateral impacts of global xenophobia and racism precludes full respect of PAD.

Thematic Consideration for Engagement: Reparations

For nearly two decades SDPC has been committed to confronting, unveiling, addressing, centering, and responding to systemic racism and violations of international human rights law against Africans and people of African descent. Dr. Iva Carruthers serves as the General Secretary of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, is a member of the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent; and, SDPC is a member DELETE has been long engaged in the global reparations' movement.

It is imperative that the forthcoming Declaration names reparations as a priority area for action, and that the Declaration supports an understanding that reparations is expanded SOLELY beyond economic terms. As defined by Dr. Carruthers, "Acts of reparatory justice and reparations represent a process of healing and justice from the prior acts of systemic oppression, dehumanization and trauma suffered by a group of people at the hands and institutions of other peoples. Most effectively, the process is never just about money but includes the requisite steps of atonement, reckoning and transformation which affirms the untold histories, mutual healing and humanity of all parties involved."

The Declaration must highlight board support for member states taking the necessary steps towards reparatory justice which includes harm done around land, cultural arts, language, sacred rituals environmental and health disparities. Atonement, reckoning, and transformation is a part of the process. The SDPC has established an institutional research, data and collection center formed

through a partnership with McCormick Theological Seminary (Chicago, IL, USA), The Center for Reparative Justice, Transformation, and Remediation. The Center for Reparative Justice, Transformation, and Remediation (The "Center"), is a historic venture that joins the church and the academy, theology and praxis, to initiate and support truth telling, sacred memory, reparatory justice, restorative justice, liberation theology and reparations. The Center is a clear signal to what is possible through civil society, institutional bodies and NGOS prioritizing reparatory justice for PAD. Member states can make this same commitment to form cross sector partnerships and institutional investments to undo the harm and forward the promotion, protection and full respect of PAD. The SDPC looks forward to the ways in which The Center will serve as a blueprint for what is possible between NGO and academic partnerships centered on the experience of People of African descent living in various countries across the diaspora.

In North America, in the past year, over 250 municipal and state reparations legislative bills have been passed. These bills represent a humble beginning, and we are hopeful for the ways in which this Declaration will position the need for reparations to be revived and embraced as a priority and necessary global movement for justice.

Historical injustice done during the transatlantic slave trade throughout the African Diaspora and in regions such as the Caribbean where Haiti was forced to pay reparations to French slaveholders following the Haitian Revolution must be confronted. A Declaration that names this and makes way for action-oriented mandates, protocols and treaties that support reparatory justice is our collective hope as PAD. Declarations must stand in alignment with interventions based on the ethical and moral principles of Human Rights and real remedies for transformation. PAD across the globe are deserving of a Declaration that undergirds the formation of new international mechanisms and protocols that provide oversight, accountability and follow through in the areas of protection, promotion and full respect-- in a real sense, our lives and our futures depend on it.