**UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT IRELAND**

**IRELAND UNDPADI SUBMISSION REPORT TO THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL REPORT ON**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF DECADE**

**Introduction**

Reflecting on the history of mistreatment of people of African and African Descent globally from Slavery and Colonialism through to contemporary times; the United Nations member states highlighted since the 2001 Durban (South Africa) United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, the 2011 United Nations International Year of People of African Descent and in the current United Nations International Decade for People African Descent - 2015 -2024, a need to focus on the specific needs of people of African Descent in all countries where they live.

It urged and called upon national governments in these countries to commit to address and remedy deficits in treatment of People of African Descent which is the result and arising from past global history and current circumstances continued by structural and social racial discrimination practices. The United Nations required the states to address the mistreatment and discrimination under the three theme of the international decade declaration: Justice, Recognition and Development for the People of African Descent.

In Ireland the UNIDPAD specific activities started since February 2019, when on 25th February 2019, at the Fitzwilliam Hotel, Dublin, the Government began engaging the stakeholders and members of the African and African Descent Community to discuss the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (UNIDPAD) and its implementation in the republic. This was followed with Irish government convening and leading a public consultation meeting with the African and African Descent Community and other stakeholders which took place on 3rdApril 2019 at Department of Justice Meeting Hall. On the 16th of March 2019 in the public meeting held at the Teachers Club in Dublin the African Descent Community present formed a Steering Committee to represent the African Community in discussions with Irish government on the implementation of Decade and mobilize the African community and publics in Ireland on the UNIDPAD.

The Steering Committee began the discussion with the Irish Government through the Justice and Equality Department to adopt the program for the Decade and its implementation to address issues facing the African descent people in Ireland as the UNIDPAD 2015-2024 requires. It also engaged the African community in joint open public meetings and in the counties, asking members to engage their city and county councils and other key public and private stakeholder to implement UNDPAD. In December 2019 the Steering Committee also made a presentation on behalf of the People of African Descent at the United Nations Committee on for Elimination of Racial Discrimination at CERD’s 2796th meeting, held on 10 December 2019 in Geneva where the Irish Government also reported on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)- which is United Nations convention that commits all its members to the eliminate of racial discrimination and the promote understanding among all races in their states and among nations.

The seven thematic sub-committees have been created by the UNIDPAD Steering Committee to follow up and do research and present recommendation in the seven key sectors and thematic areas in the lives of people of African Descent in Ireland. They will examine the laws, policies and practice for equality and fairness for the People of African Descent in thematic sector of their remit. They will identify and make actionable recommendations on the gaps in rights and laws and practices in existence for equality of people of African Descents in Ireland.

**Implementation of the Decade in Ireland**

The implementation of the Decade in Ireland begun in earnest in 2019. The following are key activities that have been implemented by Government working with civil society organizations more specifically the Steering Committee.

1. Government ran a public consultation on the International Decade for people of African Descent. A public meeting held by the Department of Justice and Equality 3rd April 2019 was the main platform of consultation of people of African descent and other stakeholders on the Decade. About 100 participants from People of African Descent communities, Irish NGOs, and experts in the fields of Business, Health, Education, Tech, Advocacy, African Culture and Human Rights, took part in the discussion.

The consultation report has not been launched yet.

1. Establishment of Civil Society Steering Committee to link with the Government on the implementation of the Decade resolutions in Ireland. The Steering Committee was formed in March 2019.
2. Funding: Since 2019 the government promised an annual funding of euro 150,000( One hundred thousand euro) but this funding is yet to be announced and given to civil society to promote the Decade activities in Ireland. The government is planning to launch this fund in national event to mark the Decade in Ireland on Africa Day – the 25th of May 2023.
3. Funding the Steering Committee work: The Government since 2020 has been funding the work of the Steering Committee which has included hiring a project officer to support the work of the Steering Committee composed of 10 members representing African descent organizations and community in Ireland.
4. The Irish Government through Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth working with Steering Committee on the Decade are planning national event to mark the Decade on the 25th of May 2023. This will be the second major event organized by the government on the Decade since the public consultation meeting.
5. The Steering Committee has been able to raise awareness on the Decade among the African Descent communities, Members of the Irish Parliament ( The Dail) also key organizations which it has established partnership to promote the Decade including the Irish Network Against Racism, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and Dublin City Council.
6. The Steering Committee has commenced research in seven thematic areas:

Representation and Civic Engagement, Employment and Business, Legal and Justice, Children, Youth and Parents, Heritage and Art, Education, Health, Wellbeing and Welfare. The research reports will form the basis of recommendations and action plans and strategy to address challenges the people of African Descent face in Ireland.

**Recommendation toward the implementation of the Decade in Ireland**

1. Extending the Decade activities beyond 2024

As the government began engaging with Decade late , that is in 2019 and also there was interruptions of Covid 19. It is imperative that consideration is made to extend the support of activities of the Decade after the Decade ends in 2024. This recommendation applies to Ireland but also it applies also at international level, that is as civil society in Ireland requests the United Nations extend the Decade as many governments, like here in Ireland for reason or the other, begun the engagement with Decade late and also COVID interfered the momentum of activities to be implemented.

1. As a legacy of the Decade, itself an important global milestone in acknowledging the injustice done to the people of African Descent over centuries, it is important for Irish government and other governments global to evolve national policy and strategy to continue to address the specific needs of people of African Descent as stipulated by the Decade. 10 years dedicated by the United Nations will be wasted if national policy and strategy is not put in place for the people of African descent as the legacy of the Decade. We congratulate the UN for setting the permanent forum for people of African descent. We call upon national governments to set up such bodies and adopt Decade legacy policies as this.
2. There are general and specific areas where compensations and reparations need to be made. In case of Ireland this will include individuals and sectors that benefited from slavery and colonialism. As well as members of people of Irish and African descent who have composed their association Mixed Race Irish, they are demanding reparation and compensation for mistreatment during their childhood they got while under the care of state and other institutions they state could have intervened on their behalf.
3. As the United Nations established throughout its communication on the Decade, Ireland (seen in census forms) and other governments should stop naming the people of African descent using Apartheid and racist schemes of colour for ethnic classification of people as there is not an ethnic group of Africans and People of African descent whose ethnicity name is black. As equally there is no individual or group of people whose is ethnicity is black, white, brown, yellow or people of colour. Each individual and groups of people have their ethnic names which derive from their country, continent, district, region, locality or cultural group of origin. Racism should be combated for what is it is: a crime of discrimination and mistreatment of another person for no reason but for the person they are in appearance, their country of origin and ethnicity and any other personal natural attributes. As the UN emphasised in the Decade resolution 68/237 - that ‘’all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and have the potential to contribute constructively to the development and well-being of their societies, and that any doctrine of racial superiority is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous and must be rejected, together with theories that attempt to determine the existence of separate human races’’.

We argue Ireland (in census forms) and other the states should stop use of racist and Apartheid colour schemes in categorization of people in many cases forcing people to classify themselves under these categorizations which itself is violent racist crime. We argue that continued use of these labels in some case even by people of African descent does not stop racism it rather entrenches racism, and it has done so for all along since these labels were invented and used in the United States of America, Apartheid South Africa, Colonial Africa and the Americas.