

JOINT STATEMENT BY UNITED NATIONS FORMER FELLOWS FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION

We, the United Nations former fellows in the Asia and the Pacific region for People of African descent, collectively acknowledge the commendable efforts and significant contributions made by the International Decade for People of African descent. We, the nine individuals of African descent representing Australia, China, Japan and the Philippines are former fellows between 2013 and 2023. Our tireless dedication has played a pivotal role in advancing the goals set forth by the International Decade for People of African descent.

It is with deep concern that we reflect upon the persistent challenges faced by People of African descent and Africans in the Asia and Pacific region, as well as the recurring issues of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance. The experiences shared by our fellows and their communities mirror the broader struggles encountered by People of African descent in various regions around the world.

In alignment with the International Decade for People of African Descent (General Assembly resolution 69/16), the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA), and other relevant international and regional human rights instruments, we affirm the provisions aimed at addressing issues of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance against people of African descent.

Emphasizing our commitment to the three key themes of the International Decade—Recognition, Justice, and Development—we firmly advocate for the extension of the Decade for People of African Descent. The Asia-Pacific region has been a crucial arena for addressing the specific challenges faced by People of African descent, and the extension provides an opportunity to amplify our collective efforts.

The International Decade has proven to be a timely and unique platform to underscore the invaluable contributions made by People of African descent while proposing concrete measures that promote recognition, justice, and development for this community. As the Decade draws to a close by the end of 2024, it is imperative to acknowledge that much work remains to be done to fully realize the goals set forth, particularly in the context of recognition, justice, and development.

we emphasize the importance of extending the International Decade for People of African Descent. This extension will allow for the continuation of vital initiatives, collaborations, and advocacy efforts needed to address the persistent challenges faced by People of African descent in the Asia-Pacific region and globally.

In light of this, we hereby make the following recommendations:

1. **Extension of the International Decade:** We recommend that the International Decade for People of African Descent is extended by another 10 years to allow for the continuation of vital initiatives, collaborations, and advocacy efforts needed to address the persistent challenges faced by People of African descent in the Asia-Pacific region and globally.
2. **Official Recognition of Important Dates:** We encourage all Governments to officially recognize 21 March as the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 31 August as the UN International Day for People of African Descent, and the United Nations International Decade of People of African Descent (2015-2024).
3. **National Conversations on Race and Discrimination:** We encourage Governments to have national conversations on race, racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia

and that these conversations also acknowledge the experiences of the Indigenous peoples of those countries, such as colonialism.

4. **Embedding Intersectionality:** Governments should embed Intersectionality in the development and implementation of legislation, policies, programs, and service delivery and data collection, analysis and usage.
5. **Recognition of the Vital Role of Young People:** We call for the recognition of the vital role young people of African descent must play in advancing justice and development for their communities. We propose their inclusion in all aspects of the program of activities for the next International Decade.
6. **Capacity Building for Young Leaders:** To empower young people of African descent, we recommend the development of programs aimed at building their capacity to participate effectively in international dialogue. This includes fostering stronger leadership skills to drive positive change at the international, national, and local levels.
7. **Ongoing Support and Opportunities:** We urge the provision of ongoing support and opportunities for young people of African descent to contribute and provide input into international law and policy. This ensures their active involvement in shaping a positive future for people of African descent globally.
8. **Prioritizing Asia-Pacific Region in Fellowship Program:** We encourage OHCHR to prioritize the Asia and the Pacific region concerning the Fellowship Program for People of African Descent with an emphasis on Southeast Asia and Pacific states.
9. **Post-Program Job Opportunities:** We propose the establishment of job opportunities for fellows of people of African descent after the completion of their program with the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights. This will

facilitate their continued engagement in advancing the goals of the International Decade.

10. Inclusive Working Staff: Emphasizing shared experiences, we recommend that teachers and experts for the fellows of people of African descent comprise individuals of African descent. This inclusivity ensures a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and fosters a supportive learning environment.

In conclusion, we stress the importance of extending the International Decade for People of African Descent, recognizing that there is much work to be done to achieve its three key themes: recognition, justice, and development. We stand united in our commitment to fostering a future where people of African descent are afforded the dignity, respect, and opportunities we rightfully deserve.

We are pleased to formally announce that as former United Nations Fellows representing the Asia-Pacific region, we are committed to elevating our contributions to the sustained initiatives of the International Decade. To advance this commitment, we have founded the **Asia-Pacific Network for People of African Descent**. We eagerly anticipate collaborating with all stakeholders to fulfil the intended objectives of the International Decade.