



REGIONAL MEETING FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION ON THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT

Organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Concept Note

BACKGROUND

In the framework of the programme of activities for the implementation of the [International Decade for People of African Descent](#) (General Assembly resolution [69/16](#)), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is requested to organize regional meetings in each of the five regions to address the three themes of the Decade: recognition, justice and development. The final regional meeting is planned to be take place for the Asia and the Pacific region in 2024.¹

The Decade, proclaimed by General Assembly resolution [68/237](#) and to be observed from 2015 to 2024, constitutes an auspicious period of history when the United Nations, Member States, civil society and all other relevant actors join together with people of African descent and take effective measures to promote respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by people of African descent, as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The presence of Africans and people of African descent in Asia and Pacific region has long contributed to the diversity and enrichment of the region and continues to do so, notably through migration flows and increased cooperation with African countries. The Asian and Pacific societies also share with Africans and people of African descent the common heritage of colonial and post-colonial experiences.

Like in other regions, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance occur in countries of Asia and the Pacific region and prevents population groups that are racially discriminated from fully enjoying their human rights. The [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) to which all States of the region are signatories proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set out therein, without distinction of any kind, in particular as to race, colour or national origin.

The Decade and its programme of activities provide concrete recommendations to realize this commitment and build multicultural societies that are peaceful, socially harmonious, and economically prosperous. It is a unique opportunity to underline the important contribution made by people of African descent and to promote their equal enjoyment of all human rights, in accordance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

¹ Four meetings have been held for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2015, for Europe, Central Asia and North America in 2017, for Africa in 2019 and for the Middle East region in 2022.

OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

The meeting will aim at:

- Raising awareness in Asia and the Pacific region about the aims and objectives of the Decade and its programme of activities;
- Raising awareness about the various manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in Asia and the Pacific region, including as faced by Africans and people of African descent;
- Identifying existing initiatives and opportunities for promoting equality, non-discrimination, inclusion, tolerance and social harmony in Asia and the Pacific region, with the view to eliminating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including as faced by Africans and people of African descent.

METHODOLOGY AND FORMAT

The regional meeting for Asia and the Pacific will be held from 15 to 16 January 2024 in hybrid format at the [Centre International de Conférence Genève](#), in Geneva, Switzerland.

The regional meeting will be a two-day event including:

- a. Opening session
- b. Three thematic panel discussions
- c. Closing session

It will be with the participation of Member States from the region, international and regional organizations working in the region, United Nations experts and civil society representatives.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The expected outcomes of the meeting are:

- Improved awareness of Member States, regional organizations, national human rights institutions and civil society of Asia and the Pacific region, including Africans and people of African descent, about the Decade and its programme of activities;
- Improved awareness of Member States, regional organizations, national human rights institutions and civil society of Asia and the Pacific region, including Africans and people of African descent, about the manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in Asia and the Pacific region, including as faced by Africans and people of African descent;
- Identification of existing initiatives and opportunities for promoting equality, non-discrimination, inclusion, tolerance and social harmony in Asia and the Pacific region, with the view to eliminating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including as faced by Africans and people of African descent.

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME OF WORK

MONDAY 15 JANUARY

7:45 – 8:30 Registration

8:30 – 10:00 **OPENING SESSION**

10:00 – 11:30 **PANEL DISCUSSION 1: RECOGNITION – Building strong frameworks to promote equality, non-discrimination and social harmony in the Asia-Pacific region**

Under the pillar “recognition,” the first panel discussion will focus on the legal, institutional and policy frameworks to promote equality, non-discrimination, inclusion, tolerance and social harmony with a view to eliminating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in Asia and the Pacific region. It will provide an overview of the international anti-racism framework and take stock of national and regional measures in place in the region, including education and awareness-raising and information gathering. It will further identify opportunities for strengthening existing frameworks at national and regional levels.

12:30 – 13:30 **SPECIAL EVENT – Voices of the Decade (1)**

13:30 – 15:00 **PANEL DISCUSSION 1: RECOGNITION (continued)**

15:00 – 16:30 **PANEL DISCUSSION 2: JUSTICE – Understanding manifestations of racism and racial discrimination in Asia and the Pacific region**

Under the pillar “justice,” the second panel discussion will discuss the ways in which racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance occur in countries in Asia and the Pacific region, reflecting on the representations and experiences of Africans and people of African descent since early settlements until present day.

TUESDAY 16 JANUARY

08:30 – 10:00 **PANEL DISCUSSION 2: JUSTICE (continued)**

10:00 – 11:30 **PANEL DISCUSSION 3: DEVELOPMENT – Addressing challenges in the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development**

Under the pillar “development,” the third panel discussion will highlight existing initiatives and identify opportunities for promoting economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, for Africans and people of African descent in Asia and the Pacific region, notably through strengthened cooperation in the areas of social and economic development. It will highlight challenges and discuss contributions of Africans and people of African descent to the development of societies.

12:30 – 13:30 **SPECIAL EVENT – Voices of the Decade (2)**

13:30 – 15:00 **PANEL DISCUSSION 3: DEVELOPMENT (continued)**

15:00 – 16:00 **CLOSING SESSION**