

# **Towards the Second Half of the Decade: Institutionalizing Human Rights Protection and Promotion for People of African Descent at the UN**

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**Dr Michael McEachrane**

*Visiting Researcher at the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law and Co-founder and Consultative Member of the European Network of People of African Descent (ENPAD)*

In terms of officially marking the International Decade for People of African Descent and implementing its programme of activities (Res 69/16), the Decade has not been a success at the national levels. Moving into the second half of the Decade, it will be even less likely that States will pay the Decade much attention at the national levels. However, at the UN level the Decade has shown great promise especially in the decision by the General Assembly to establish a UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent and a UN Declaration on the human rights of people of African descent (as a step towards a binding agreement). This is more than what the programme of activities seem to promise at the UN level.

Given the lack of interest in the Decade at the national levels and its promise at the UN level, I propose that the Working Group and UN at large in the second half of the Decade focus on further strengthening and implementing the Decade at the UN level.

Concretely, I suggest that the WGEPAD work towards:

1. A report on the implementation of the Decade and the protection and promotion of the human rights of people of African descent at the UN level;
2. Promoting a strong UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent which is both institutionally impactful at the UN and properly engages with civil society organizations and experts on the rights of people of African descent across the world;
3. Promoting a strong UN Declaration on the human rights of people of African descent that properly recognizes the insights of Pan-African forbearers that the rights of people of African descent are interconnected across national borders and include issues of global justice, substantial decolonization and reparative justice;
4. Advocate for and elaborate on the establishment of an International Tribunal for Reparatory Justice for the Histories and Legacies of Colonialism, Enslavement, Native Genocide and Systemic Racism.
5. Advocate for the establishment of an International Decade for People of African Descent Expert Committee to (a) recommend and work with UN agencies and mechanisms on how to further institutionalize the protection and promotion of human rights of people of African descent at the UN level, and (b) work with the UN, UNESCO and academic institutions across the world to establish an international expert network on the human rights of people of African descent that will outlast the Decade and, among other things, feed into the UN Permanent Forum of People of African Descent.