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Address to the United Nations Permanent Forum for People of African Descent by Executive Director Nicholas Marcus Thompson. May 30, 2023

GLOBAL REPARATORY JUSTICE

Madam Chair it is an honour to address this forum again following the first session in Geneva.

My organization represents thousands of Black Canadians who have faced and continue to face anti-Black racism working in the federal public service of Canada. We have filed a landmark class action seeking billions in reparations, legislative and policy changes, due to anti-Black discrimination which remains rampant in all Canadian institutions.

In fact, in March of this year Canada ruled that the body that it created to protect and promote human rights, the Canadian Human Rights Commission, was discriminating against its Black employees. This represents a violation of the Paris Principles and other UN treaties, which member states are required to adhere to meet its international obligations.

Despite over four hundred years of anti-Black racism in Canada, we still do not have permanent structures to combat this oppression, while other equity deserving groups advance, People of African descent continue to face significant oppression in Canada, with the state playing a major role as the oppressor.

As part of global reparatory justice, Canada and other member states must create permanent structures such as a Ministry of African Affairs, Black Equity Commissioners and employment equity legislation that define people of African descent as a distinct group. It is time that people of African descent are recognized.

There also needs to be more UN oversight to address issues of institutional racism with member states, this oversight should also apply to the UN itself too.

Finally, as part of reparatory justice, Canada and other members should adopt a reconciliatory approach toward litigation brought by people of African descent seeking reparations for anti-Black racism and discrimination. Thank you.