

**Statement delivered by
Ms. Sasha Dixon, Counsellor,
Permanent Mission of The Bahamas to the United Nations Office and other
International Organizations in Geneva**

on behalf of the CARICOM Group in Geneva

at the

Third Session of the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent

General Debate

Tuesday 16 April 2024

Madame Chairperson,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) represented in Geneva.

At the outset, we congratulate you, Dr. Soomer, a CARICOM national, on your assumption of the Chairmanship of this important Forum and thank all Forum members for their ongoing, critical work. We further convey our support for the very pertinent and topical themes that are to be addressed during the panel discussions at this Third Session, and look forward to engaging on these issues.

In our view, this Forum offers the needed space to harness our collective efforts towards a truly transformative agenda to address the past and present impacts of systemic racism. As we approach the end of the International Decade for People of African Descent and the upcoming Summit of the Future, we must be deliberate about *what type of future* we are working towards. Hindsight paints a grim picture of legacies of historical injustice that permeate our contemporary realities, making the full achievement of the sustainable development goals increasingly elusive for People of African Descent. The climate crisis and escalating debt burdens, for example, continue to disproportionately impact People of African Descent.

We must therefore redouble our efforts toward a *better* future for People of African Descent.

Speaking time allocated: 2 minutes / approx. 260 words

We note the urgent call by the UN Special Rapporteur on racism, for a radical transformation of the overall international development paradigm within which the Sustainable Development Goals are embedded. Notwithstanding some reforms toward more human-centred approaches to development, the Special Rapporteur concludes in her report on the SDGs, that dominant economic paradigms continue to contribute to systemic violations of human rights, with devastating consequences for developing countries and for racially and ethnically marginalized groups and individuals. For this reason we consider the Bridgetown Initiative to be an important driver toward much-needed reforms and addressing inequalities.

For CARICOM States, our work continues toward the implementation of the Ten-Point Plan for Reparatory Justice. We also recognise the important outcomes of the Accra Reparations Conference in November 2023, including the Accra Proclamation on Reparations, which highlights common efforts between Africa and the Caribbean, aimed at securing reparations. CARICOM Heads of Government, in February of this year, further proposed to strengthen partnerships with the African Union and to broaden the context for Reparatory Justice to include native genocide, chattel enslavement, indentureship and colonialism, while also exploring avenues to engage overseas territories in the Region in relation to Reparatory Justice.

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the international community resolved to “leave no one behind”. However, the rise of racist and xenophobic rhetoric have shown that we have much work to do in order to achieve full equality where all people, including People of African Descent, can both contribute to and benefit from the results of our collective human progress. CARICOM commits to working constructively with the Forum and the international community towards these important ends.

I thank you.