

**Statement Delivered by Mr. Deon Dick (Ras Khafra)  
Commissioner on the Ethnic Relations Commission  
3rd Session of the Permanent Forum on People of  
African Descent  
Thematic Panel: Reparations, Sustainable Development  
& Economic Justice  
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2 mins

Honourable Chairperson and distinguished delegates,

When I stood before this forum last year to address the issue of reparatory justice I spoke about the intent of the Ethnic Relations Commission, in accordance with its constitutional mandate, to initiate a study to identify and analyze the gaps to the full participation of African Guyanese in the social, economic, commercial and financial sectors of Guyana.

My intention today is not to say anything else other than to give an update on the promises made last year. I'm happy to say that since then a terms of reference has been drafted, but more importantly, the financial resources to carry out the study have been acquired with the passing of our budget for this fiscal year 2024 by the National Assembly.

This is evidence that in Guyana, despite some claims of ethnic inequality and discrimination, there exists the political will and consensus to examine all perceptions of discrimination and inequality, through the appropriate mechanism, the Ethnic Relations Commission, which is a constitutional body that requires

a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority in the National Assembly to be reestablished every three years.

Guyana has been among the states in the forefront of supporting processes to address issues of systemic racism and reparatory justice with its support for the DDPA in 2001, launching of the International Year for People of African Descent with a fully funded programme in 2011, annual budgetary allocation of 100 million dollars to African Guyanese Organizations for the International Decade for People of African Descent as recently as last year, one of the few countries to facilitate the visit of the working group of experts, and for 2024 has sent two senior Ministers of Government, Chair of the National Reparations Committee and Vice-Chair of Caricom's Reparations Commission, two Commissioners of the Ethnic Relations Commission, and Stakeholder and Engagement Coordinator, Department of Environment and Climate Change, to attend this 3rd Permanent Forum.

Madam Chair, this is what Guyana means when we say that we support the call for another decade for people of African Descent.

Thank You.