



EUROPEAN UNION
Permanent Delegation to the United Nations Office
and other international organisations in Geneva

3rd session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent
16-19 April 2024
Geneva, Palais des Nations

EU Intervention

Mr/Madam Chair,

The European Union welcomes the convening of the 3rd session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent. We thank the members of the Forum and the different speakers for their opening remarks this morning.

The EU continues to be strongly committed to the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, whether perceived or actual. Racial discrimination not only inflicts profound harm on individual victims, but also undermines the very fabric of peaceful and democratic societies.

As we have said before, we acknowledge and profoundly regret the untold suffering inflicted on millions of men, women and children as a result of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. We underline our full support to the related principles and elements contained in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, including the acknowledgment that slavery and the slave trade, including the transatlantic slave trade, were appalling tragedies in the history of humanity not only because of their abhorrent barbarism but also in terms of their magnitude, organized nature and especially their negation of the essence of the victims, and that slavery and the slave trade are a crime against humanity.

Looking forward, we believe in the importance of reconciliation and reckoning with the past. In reconciliation processes, it is also essential that the voices of those affected are heard. The Permanent Forum can play a role in this regard.

Conversations about the past can open doors and help us find ways to grasp with past injustices. They can provide opportunities to pay tribute and to reflect on the sacrifices and the loss.

In addition, if we are to find concrete solutions that are acceptable to all, we will have to build trust. A safe space to exchange views, answer questions, jointly develop solutions and take action.

We will listen with great attention to the different panels over the coming days. Many of the topics mentioned in the concept note are dear to our heart, from investing in education, bridging skill gaps, alleviating poverty and empowering women, to ensuring equal access to employment, healthcare and housing, bridging the digital divide, protecting cultural heritage and realizing sustainable development. We pursue these priorities not only in our internal policies, but also externally.

I thank you.