

On behalf of the government and people of Guyana I re-affirm our commitment and support for the work of this Permanent Forum.

We especially support the development of the draft **Declaration On The Promotion And...Respect Of...Human Rights Of People Of African Descent.**

We recognize among the many compelling principles expressed therein, commitments to freedom of association and freedom from violence.

Guyana commends for the Forum's consideration, including in the Draft Declaration, express calls for non-state actors to respect the rights of people of African Descent who choose to associate politically or otherwise outside of group norms...and to eschew violence in pursuit of political aims.

With respect to Article 14, we publicly salute the contribution of People of African Descent who almost exclusively comprise law enforcement *and the military* in Guyana.

We commend them for defending Guyana against external aggression and likewise commend them for expressly rejecting exhortations to ethnic mobilization and armed action in pursuit of political objectives.

Regarding Article 17, the Right to Development remains a priority for Guyana. For decades government has provided universal free health care including prescription drugs, and free education from nursery to secondary with planned expansion to tertiary level by 2025.

We make available subsidized housing infrastructure to all first-time home or landowners, and we continue to invest in water and sanitation infrastructure in pursuit of universal access to these essential services.

Guyana strongly supports the drive for reparatory justice. We join the call for the international community to take responsibility for and repair the full and equal enjoyment of human rights of people of African descent.

[Consequently, we have established a National Reparations Committee within a framework agreed by the Caribbean Community. We provide an annual financial subvention to this Committee and are proud to have facilitated the presence of its Chair at this Session.]

Excellencies

I conclude by reiterating our support for this Forum and calling for the extension of the Decade so that its valuable work may be continued.