

Third session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent

My name is Anya James. I am here as a former assistant headteacher, now a senior education advisor for the UK local government and the co-founder of the Brown Skin Girls Network. I am a leader in educational policy and strategy, which is ironic since I, as a young girl, experienced racial discrimination, adultification and poor safeguarding within the education system this resulted in teenage pregnancy and a need for me to teach myself up until degree level.

It is an honour to be before you today addressing one of the most pressing challenges of our time - the urgent need for an anti-racist charter for education. Education is not only a fundamental human right but a powerful tool for shaping minds and determining the future of our societies.

However, Black and global majority students across most societies are too often negatively impacted by systemic and institutionalized racism - and upholding these systems directly affect their educational attainment and outcomes for progression. For example in the UK outcomes for British Black Caribbean students were and have been significantly lower than most other ethnic groups which has meant that of the 43000 Black students accessing higher education only 6000 of these were Black Caribbean students. Only 9% of Black students are accepted into prestigious UK universities

In London Hackney we are actively implementing strategies to decolonise our curriculum increasing representation at leadership level and have introduced our own anti-racist charter across our education system

We must recognize that education systems worldwide have too often been complicit in perpetuating racism and perpetuating inequality.

My recommendation of an anti-racist charter for education would provide clear guidelines and principles to ensure that schools and educational institutions are truly inclusive and free from racial prejudice.

This charter would call for the revision of curricula to include diverse voices and perspectives, the training of educators to recognize and address implicit bias, and the establishment of accountability measures to track progress and ensure that all students have equal opportunities to succeed.

By developing an anti-racist charter for education, we not only commit ourselves to creating a more just and equitable future, but also empower future generations to be agents of change and advocates for racial equality.

Let us come together in unity and determination to pave the way for a more inclusive and anti-racist education system that will shape a brighter future for all. Thank you.