



Third Session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent

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Statement by the International Decade for People of African Descent Assembly-Guyana

Panel #4: The Second International Decade for People of African Descent: Expectations and Challenges

I speak today on behalf of the International Decade for People of African Descent Assembly-Guyana (IDPADA-G), a network of seventy eight (78) community-based organizations of African descendants in Guyana.

We join all here today in renewing the call for a second decade as necessary for our survival in Guyana.

Funding is critical and should come directly from the UN and its agencies. Organisations working towards fulfilling the goals of the Decade should not be subject to the whims and fancies of governments who only pay lip service to its goals.

The current Government of Guyana never articulated a plan, or instituted any new policy nor did it promote any dedicated programme for the decade.

As evidence of the government's disregard for the Decade, it has arbitrarily and vindictively suspended funding for IDPADA-G – a community-based institution focused on the goals of the decade. It instead offered cash grants to some IDPADA-G member organizations, sidestepping the overarching transformative purpose of the Decade while mimicking the colonial divide and rule strategy.

Instead of pursuing the goals of the Decade, the Government of Guyana has chosen to preside over the increased oppression and marginalization of African Guyanese through

extrajudicial killings¹, bulldozing and demolition of homes and businesses, displacement of African Guyanese from their communities and land grabs² among other atrocities.

In lieu of the preservation and teaching of our history and culture, we have witnessed their suppression and the imposition of a demoralizing, contrived narrative such as “Overview - The Road Guyana Has Traversed”³ submitted as part of the Government’s response to a UN Special Communication on the marginalization of African Guyanese. The Special Communication was sparked by an IDPADA-G complaint to the UN.

Instead of economic development we have seen poverty wages⁴ for the public service in whose ranks African Guyanese are the majority; refusal to negotiate with their unions⁵, and discrimination in contracting⁶. Most African Guyanese are experiencing rising poverty in the midst of Guyana’s booming oil economy.

In this new decade, we urge the speedy declaration of the resolution on the promotion, protection and full respect of the human rights of people of African descent. It is essential for the protection of all Guyanese of African Descent. Among other constant threats to the human rights of our entire community, we are particularly concerned that the persistent and continuing sexual abuse and harassment of African Guyanese women by high ranking male ministers of the Government in their official and unofficial capacities in the parliament and in social media⁷ continues to enjoy the support of the Government which has continuously failed to condemn this vile and abusive conduct.

The protective mantle of a second decade is urgently needed to save the African Guyanese community.

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¹ See submission to the UN Human Rights Committee

² Affidavits of Cane View victims of demolition and displacement

³ Response to REF: AL GUY 1/2023 Joint Communication of the Special Procedures Sent by the Working Group of Experts on Peoples of African Descent in response to IDPADA-G complaint <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TmSearch/Results>

⁴ Chart comparing teachers’ salaries among CARICOM member states

⁵ Stabroek News Article on High Court decision re legality of teachers’ 2024 strike

⁶ PowerPoint presentation detailing disparities in contract awarded

⁷ Newspaper articles re disrespect and sexual harassment