



**International Day for People of African Descent
31 August 2023**

“The time for taking action towards a world free from racism is now”

Statement by the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent

On the 3rd International Day for people of African Descent, the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent reiterates its appeal for justice, solidarity, and equality.

Racism and racial discrimination – structural, institutional, and other forms including related intolerance – as well as prejudice that permeate the lives of people of African descent worldwide are deeply embedded in political, economic and socio-cultural structures, locally and globally. The increased visibility of people of African descent in the years following the murder of George Floyd is symptomatic of a much broader, more pervasive and disturbing reality for people of African descent, across continents and generations, and the extreme vulnerability of those on the move, which requires a comprehensive, intersectional and urgent global commitment. This commitment must be followed up with immediate and sustainable actions that rise above localised interests.

As we mark the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), we must acknowledge that while we have enshrined global standards for human rights, we are still striving to achieve those rights in a lasting and meaningful way for people of African Descent.

People of African descent pursue the full enjoyment of dignity, respect, equity and freedom. They express weariness of resilience as the survival mechanism in a world where they disproportionately encounter barriers to access their human rights and advancements including in governance, finance, health, cultural expression and identity, technology, emancipation of women, integrity of their families and communities, protection of children and young people, and safe pathways for mobility.

We are collectively capable of repairing the harm caused to people of African descent by the legacies of the trade and trafficking in enslaved Africans, colonialism and apartheid; we are collectively capable of rectifying the lies that set hierarchies among humans and societies, and collectively capable of effectively implementing the commitments made by the international community to people of African descent in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA).

As we mark the 3rd International Day for People of African Descent, we recall that just days before this significant day we also commemorated the 60th anniversary of the

March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, where Martin Luther King Jr delivered his “I have a dream” oration, one of the most significant speeches against racism in history.

Sixty years on, the struggle for justice, solidarity and equality for people of African descent is still a burning matter, and the time for taking far-reaching action towards a world free from racism must be now.

It is the moral obligation of all humans, governments and international organisations to ensure the safety of all, to prevent people of African descent from being brutally murdered at seas and oceans, deserts, borders, refugee camps, police stations, detention centres, correctional facilities, schools, hospitals, or simply on the streets either deliberately, from negligence or ignorance.

On the 3rd International Day for People of African Descent, the Working Group appeals to all actors to stop being complicit, to show solidarity and start acting now, for the universality of all human rights to become a reality for people of African descent. The universality of all human rights benefits humanity as a whole.

We reiterate our [request to the UN General Assembly to proclaim a second International Decade for People of African Descent](#).

ENDS

*The [Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent](#) was established on 25 April 2002 by the then Commission on Human Rights, following the World Conference against Racism held in Durban in 2001. The Working Group is composed of five independent experts: **Barbara G. Reynolds (Chair), Bina D’Costa, Dominique Day, Catherine Namakula and Miriam Ekiudoko.***

The Working Group is part of what is known as the [Special Procedures](#) of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council’s independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms. Special Procedures mandate-holders are independent human rights experts appointed by the Human Rights Council to address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. They are not UN staff and are independent from any government or organization. They serve in their individual capacity and do not receive a salary for their work.