



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 43rd SESSION

#OnePageFromUN

Panel discussion on the midterm review of the International Decade for People of African Descent
(Commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) – 13 March 2020

Opening Statements:

Ms Michelle Bachelet, High Commissioner for Human Rights, Coordinator of the International Decade for people of African descent¹: The midterm review of the International Decade, to be convened in 2020, is an opportunity to assess progress, share good practices and further actions, one of which could be establishing the Permanent Forum on people of African descent. Several important initiatives were undertaken by the African Union, the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Network of High Authorities and the European Parliament. The work of the WG of Experts on people of African Descent, and the Annual Fellowship Program for people of African descent is commendable. Need to tackle disproportionate police violence, racial profiling, mass incarceration, structural racial discrimination in health, employment, education and housing.

Ms Tamara Mawhinney (on behalf of Mr Greg Fergus, Member of Parliament for Hull-Aylmer, **Canada**): There are over 1 million Canadians of African Descent, with over 200 ethnic or cultural origins. Multiple steps were taken by the Government to tackle discrimination: annual Black History Month campaigns, investments in fellowship programmes, a new National Strategy on Housing, a new Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics, a new Anti-Racism Secretariat. In 2018, \$ 9 million were provided over 3 years to the Canadian Heritage Fund helping young black Canadians. In 2019, \$ 25 million were granted over 5 years to build capacity in Black Canadian communities, and Anti-Racism Strategy was launched with a \$45 million investment.

Panellists Statements:

Ms Susana Matute Charún, Director of Public Policies for the Afro-Peruvian Population, Ministry of Culture of **Peru**: Centuries of slavery created social inequalities for the African population and led to the eradication of a wealth of cultural expressions. People of African descent in Peru still experience racial discrimination and social exclusion. Important work has been done by the National Plan for the Development of the Afro-Peruvian Population (PLANDEPA). In 2009, Peru extended an "historical apology" to the Afro-Peruvian people for the abuse, exclusion, and discrimination they had been subjected to. Gathering an official data on the Afro-descendant population is of an utmost importance.

Ms Monica Ferro, Director of the **United Nations Population Fund Office in Geneva**: People of African descent, in particular women and girls, often experience overlapping forms of discrimination and bias. Importance of working with faith-based organizations and women's groups representing people of African descent. The Fund will build on the work of the Nairobi Summit, the San Jose Declaration, and the Montevideo Consensus. The Fund also works on the comprehensive management of the sexual health of youth of African descent. Key conclusions: increasing visibility through disaggregated data, strengthening partnerships with stakeholders, and building capacity to secure meaningful participation.

Ms Elisabeth Kaneza, Founder and Chair of the Kaneza Foundation for Dialogue and Empowerment, **Germany**: The adoption of a National Action Plan placed a stronger focus on the racism in Germany. In Europe, although the Parliament had adopted a resolution on the rights of people of African descent, racism and discrimination are on the increase. States have to invest in education and raising awareness.

Ms Nadia Adongo Musah, Deputy Director of Diaspora Affairs, Office of the President of the Republic of **Ghana** (video message): Thanks to the International Decade, the Office of Diaspora Affairs was established, and set up the Year of Return Initiative programme in 2018 to invite people of African descent to return to Ghana, followed by a new programme Beyond the Return.

Interactive dialogue: Peru (o/b of a Group of Countries), EU, Haiti (o/b of CARICOM), South Africa (o/b of the African Group), Azerbaijan (o/b of the NAM), Guyana (o/b of a Group of Countries), Costa Rica, Ecuador, Pakistan, South Africa, Brazil, Namibia, IMADR, RIDH, International Youth and Student Movement for the UN, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Indonesia, Qatar, Nepal, China, Cuba, Senegal, Angola, Belgium, Human Rights Society of Maranhão, IHRAAM, International Council Supporting Fair Trial and Human Rights

¹The International Decade for People of African Descent, 2015–2024, was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in a Resolution (68/237) adopted on 23 December 2013.