Concept Note

Ensuring Recognition, Justice and Development

Monday December 9, 2019, 10am- 5 pm
Room XVII, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

Organized by: The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
The United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent
The Permanent Missions of Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, OECS and Trinidad and Tobago

In order to combat racism, xenophobia, Afrophobia and structural discrimination faced by people of African descent and promote full respect of their human rights, the United Nations General Assembly, through resolution 68/237 proclaimed the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024), with the theme “People of African descent: recognition, justice and development”. The General Assembly also adopted a Programme of Activities for the implementation of the Decade.

The launch of the International Decade was an acknowledgement that people of African descent, whether as descendants of the victims of the transatlantic trade in Africans or more recently as migrants and refugees, are faced with intersecting forms of discrimination based on race, age, sex, skin colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, social origin, property, disability, birth, or other status. Studies and findings by international and national bodies demonstrate that people
of African descent still have limited access to quality education, health services, housing and social security.

The International Decade provides a solid framework for the United Nations, Member States, civil society and all other relevant actors to join with people of African descent and take effective measures for the implementation of the Programme of Activities in the spirit of recognition, justice and development.

With this in mind and the end of International Decade fast approaching, CARICOM Member States alongside the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent invites you to a one-day event to raise awareness, exchange views and galvanize support among member states, civil society organizations and the general public for the International Decade for People of African Descent and the development of a United Nations Declaration on the Promotion and Full Respect of Human Rights of People of African Descent.

The keynote speaker at this meeting will be Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, the current Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies and chairman of the CARICOM Reparations Commission, who has been engaged on the issues which intersect with the theme of the International Decade for the past three decades. As one of the Caribbean’s most eminent intellectuals, and a speaker of international repute, his is a voice that should be heard in this context. We have also secured the participation of Rt. Hon. David Lammy, Member of Parliament, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The event is open to all Member States, civil society representatives and general public.