

**Regional meeting for Europe, Central Asia and North America on the International Decade for
People of African Descent**

Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, 23-24 November 2017

Representatives of States from Europe, Central Asia and North America participated in a regional meeting which took place in Geneva on 23 and 24 November 2017, with the participation of experts from UN bodies, civil society organizations and academia, in the framework of the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent:

- i. They expressed their appreciation for the opening statement made by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Coordinator of the International Decade for People of African Descent. They also expressed their gratitude to his Office for hosting the regional meeting and organizing the different panels. They welcomed the active participation of representatives of UN bodies, civil society organizations as well as academia in the meeting and thanked them for their contributions.
- ii. They reaffirmed that all peoples and individuals constitute one human family, rich in diversity. They have contributed to the progress of civilizations and cultures that form the common heritage of humanity. Preservation and promotion of tolerance, pluralism and respect for diversity can produce more inclusive societies.
- iii. They recalled General Assembly resolution 68/237 of 23 December 2013, by which the Assembly proclaimed the International Decade for People of African Descent 2015-2024, with the theme "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development" as well as General Assembly resolution 69/16 of 18 November 2014, in which the Assembly adopted the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade.
- iv. They reaffirmed the principles of equality and non-discrimination in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and encouraged respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
- v. They underlined the importance of the full implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and its universal ratification as a central and effective instrument to address racial discrimination affecting people of African descent.
- vi. They reaffirmed the commitments contained in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action with regard to people of African descent.
- vii. They recognized that, despite the progress achieved, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance persist in all regions of the world and continue to impact significantly people of African descent, which leads in many cases to multiple and intersecting forms of inequality and discrimination, including in the fields of education, employment, housing, health, justice and political participation.
- viii. They expressed their concern at the material progression of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including their contemporary forms and

manifestations, such as the use of the new information and communications technologies, including the Internet, to disseminate ideas of racial superiority. They also reiterated their condemnation of the persistence and resurgence of neo-Nazism, neo-Fascism and violent nationalist ideologies based on racial or national prejudice and they restated that these phenomena can never be justified in any instance or in any circumstances.

- ix. They shared their experiences and good practices in implementing the International Decade for People of African Descent and its programme of activities and they welcomed the various activities organized by States in this context. They also welcomed the valuable role played by the OHCHR, the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, the Fellowship Programme for People of African Descent, national human rights institutions, equality bodies as well as CSO's in the implementation of the International Decade. They stressed the need to accelerate efforts of all stakeholders in this regard.
- x. They reiterated the importance *inter alia*:
 - a. to ensure effective implementation of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and, as appropriate, adopt or strengthen legislation in this regard;
 - b. to recognize the value and diversity of the cultural heritage of people of African descent and to ensure their full integration into social, economic and political life with a view to facilitating their full participation at all levels in the decision-making process;
 - c. to adopt and implement policies and programmes that provide effective protection for, and review and repeal all policies and laws that could discriminate against, people of African descent facing multiple, aggravated or intersecting forms of discrimination based on other related grounds, such as sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, social origin, property, birth, disability or other status;
 - d. to ensure that people of African descent have full access to effective protection and remedies through the competent national tribunals and other State institutions against any acts of racial discrimination, and the right to seek from such tribunals just and adequate reparation or satisfaction for any damage suffered as a result of such discrimination;
 - e. to implement and enforce effective measures to eliminate any practice of "racial profiling";
 - f. to collect, compile, analyse, disseminate and publish reliable and disaggregated statistical data, in accordance with national legislation, at the national and local levels and take all other related measures necessary to assess regularly the situation of people of African descent who are victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
 - g. to establish or strengthen, as appropriate, local, national and/or regional mechanisms to promote and protect the human rights of victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
 - h. to combat effectively prejudices and harmful and wrongful stereotypes which may lead to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

and, in this regard, to implement educational, cultural and awareness-raising programs aiming at promoting a greater knowledge of and respect for the diverse heritage, culture and contribution of people of African descent to the development of societies while stressing the importance that textbooks and other educational materials reflect historical facts accurately as they relate to past tragedies and atrocities, in particular slavery, the slave trade, the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism.

- xi. They expressed their continued engagement to dialogue in an open, constructive and transparent manner with all relevant stakeholders, particularly with States from Africa and other regional groups, with regard to the implementation of the programme of activities of the International Decade for People of African Descent, including on the establishment of a Forum to serve as a consultation mechanism, to be provided by one of the existing Durban follow-up mechanisms, as well as the consideration of the possible elaboration of a draft United Nations declaration on the promotion and full respect of the human rights of people of African descent.