



Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through Reparations

Africa Dialogue Series 2025

A CALL TO ACTION





Introduction

- The 2025 edition of the Africa Dialogue Series (ADS) from 5 to 30 May 2025 consisted of diverse activities dedicated to the theme, “Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through Reparations.” ADS 2025 aimed to stimulate informed reflection and meaningful dialogue on reparatory justice for Africans and people of African descent. It provided a platform for partners and stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of current international strategies and frameworks concerning reparatory justice for Africans and people of African descent, and advocate for policies to boost initiatives that enhance reparatory justice, which fully encompasses financial, environmental, economic and social dimensions.
- As in previous years, ADS 2025 sought to amplify a new narrative on Africa, for Africa, from Africa, engaging a wide range of stakeholders to contribute to innovative policymaking and actionable solutions to accelerate the achievement of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union’s Agenda 2063.
- The co-organizers – the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations – partnered with the United Nations Office of the President of the General Assembly (OPGA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the African Union Economic, Social and Cultural Council (AU-ECOSOCC), the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to deliver ADS 2025.
- The Youth Stages were a vital component of the Africa Dialogue Series and provided a dynamic platform for young people to actively engage with Africa’s development priorities and reflect on the continent’s future.
- The month-long ADS 2025 culminated in a High-level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on 30 May 2025. The HLPD featured discussions from high-level representatives from Member States and partner entities on the multifaceted challenges of reparatory justice for Africans and people of African descent and the potential for opportunities going forward.
- Throughout the month and during the HLPD, speakers and participants from Africa and the African diaspora collectively called for urgent action and reparatory justice to address past injustices and promote the robust socioeconomic development that Africa needs to be a strong global player in the twenty-first century.



A Call to Action

- We call for the integration of reparatory justice into Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for long-term sustainable solutions. Multilateral institutions must examine and reform structures that perpetuate historical inequities. Further, we must address climate justice, recognizing Africa's disproportionate vulnerability to climate change despite its minimal contribution to the causes.
- We call upon governments of former colonial powers, African governments, multilateral organizations, international financial institutions, civil society, the private sector and communities of African descent worldwide to collaborate in advancing a comprehensive reparatory justice agenda.

Learning from the Past: Transatlantic Slave Trade, Colonialism, Extractive Economies and Institutions in Africa

- We call for a structural transformation that empowers African States, asserts economic sovereignty and drives inclusive prosperity. The enduring legacies of slavery, colonialism, apartheid and extractive institutions continue to shape Africa's development, political stability and socioeconomic realities. These systems were built on exploitation, but like all constructions, they can be dismantled. Reparatory justice must not be a symbolic gesture or a quick fix but deliberate, systemic and structural.
- We call for targeted efforts to address the lasting impact of colonialism, which dismantled indigenous governance, erased centuries of African knowledge, and restructured economies to serve external powers. We must confront neo-colonialism, where the international financing and development architecture too often perpetuates the continuity of extractive economic relationships. And slavery should be defined as a crime against humanity, with its historical and contemporary consequences well documented.
- We call for resource sovereignty and the revamping of partnerships and financing for development paradigms as a priority to ensure Africa's wealth benefits its people. The international financial architecture must be reformed to end exploitative debt arrangements and ensure that African countries are able to benefit from their extractive industries. Unity among Africans and people of African descent is imperative in advocacy efforts for structural reforms in global governance systems to rebalance global power and ensure that Africa's voice is properly reflected.

- We call for reparatory justice that is deliberate, systemic and structural - not technical, or financial. Reparatory justice must empower African nations to repair their economic, social, and cultural foundations, buttressed by structural transformation that shifts from extractive economic models toward inclusive prosperity by capitalizing on regional integration initiatives like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).
- African voices, knowledge and leadership must be at the centre of reparatory justice solutions. We call for stronger civil society engagement, closer collaboration and greater cultural connections between Africa and its diaspora, and reparations as defined by Africans and people of African Descent through global solidarity. Governments must decolonize education and reform curricula to accurately document Africa's history and contribution to global development. We must invest in women's education, recognizing that intellectual liberation is key to socioeconomic transformation.
- We call for reparations that go beyond financial compensation and address economic, ideological and cultural injustices through: 1) **ethical reparations** – reaffirming the dignity and rights of Africans and people of African Descent; 2) **historical reparations** – documenting slavery and colonialism as crimes against humanity; 3) **educational reparations** – reforming history curricula to end the silence around Africa's exploitation; 4) **socioeconomic and political reparations** – restoring rights, resources and agency to African nations; and 5) **cultural reparations** – celebrating and protecting African identity, heritage and historical narratives.

Understanding the Present: Economic, Social and Cultural Justice for Sustainable Development

- We call for economic justice through structural change. Due to colonial legacies, Africa's economies remain heavily dependent on exporting raw materials, limiting industrial growth and job creation. Breaking this cycle requires Domestic Resource Mobilization (DRM), renegotiated trade contracts, transparent governance, and the development of sustainable beneficiation from African resources by Africans. Without these, economic dependency and debt cycles will continue to hamper sustainable development.
- We call for reparatory justice that targets economic inequities caused by historic dispossession, including debt cancellation, fair access to capital, financial sovereignty and ownership of African resources. Economic independence is inseparable from psychological and political liberation. African nations must reclaim their agency and mobilize resources beyond Official Development Assistance. Self-reliance, intra-African

and South-South trade, infrastructure and education must be prioritized. Citizens must unite to challenge unjust global systems and demand structural reforms.

- We call for cultural and linguistic justice. Efforts towards reparatory justice must include promoting and reviving African cultural heritage, languages, and narratives to dismantle centuries-old stereotypes and foster pride. Incorporating indigenous knowledge and diverse African languages counters colonial legacies embedded in education and public discourse.
- We call for cultural reparations as pillars of healing. We demand the return of cultural artefacts and acknowledgement of indigenous knowledge beyond symbolic acts, but to restore African pride, identity and narrative sovereignty. Traditional social protection mechanisms and cultural dignity must be incorporated into development approaches to ensure holistic justice that nurtures well-being and counters historical erasure.
- Reparatory justice must be at the centre of the sustainable development agenda for Africa and the world. Reparatory justice takes a rights-based approach towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063.
- We call for sustained investment in enterprises owned by Africans and people of African Descent and empowering people in Africa and its diaspora, particularly women, youth and rural communities. It is vital that we reimagine and reconfigure partnerships, anchoring them firmly in human rights and restructuring Africa's extractive economic model rooted in the legacies of colonialism and dependency.
- We call for maximum utilization of the continent's natural resources to promote sustainable industrialization and diversification, which contributes to job creation. This is critical for the creation of decent jobs.
- We call on developed nations to fulfil their long-standing obligations and commitments, from climate finance to development aid, and support the United Nations process toward fair international tax cooperation. We also call for systemic global mechanisms to address asset recovery and repatriation in the context of tackling Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs). With Africa losing nearly \$90 billion a year in IFFs, the continent needs to develop global instruments to bring those crucial funds back into its development process. For this reason, extractives and IFFs must be viewed within the broader context of Africa's self-reliance.
- We call for the strengthening of African States' capacity to control their own economic and financial flows as a critical step towards reparatory justice. This means empowering African state institutions in DRM to allow them to direct their resources towards their development priorities. Digital technologies can be a key tool to deliver this transformation.

Building the Future: Healing and Reparations towards Socio-Economic Justice for Africans and People of African Descent

- We call for reparations that also encapsulate climate justice built on the principles of Common but Differentiated Responsibility and 'polluter pays.' We call for payments towards loss and damage that go beyond transforming policies to improve the material conditions of people whose soil, water systems and forests have been destroyed. We urge investment in climate resilience and adaptation that fosters inclusion and sustainable livelihoods. Reparatory frameworks must transcend aid, delivering technology transfers, debt relief and the empowerment of African-led climate resilience strategies that emphasize green industrialization, job creation and preservation of natural ecosystems.
- We call for trade and economic sovereignty and a more just and equitable global trade system. This entails full implementation of the AfCFTA and scaled-up South-South cooperation, particularly with full engagement with people of African Descent.
- We call for educational and technological justice. We must invest in youth and women and develop skills in Artificial Intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, and emerging technologies. This is a way to restore Africa's knowledge systems, its languages, and its intellectual heritage.
- We call for youth empowerment and inclusion to harness Africa's demographic dividend. Young people are agents of transformation and key drivers of justice and reforms. Inclusive policies must give youth meaningful participation from inception within governance and development frameworks to unleash innovation, advocacy and leadership.
- We call for strengthening solidarity among people of African Descent, empowering women, and protecting and celebrating our living global legacy.
- We call on Africans and people of African Descent to bridge the gap between Africa and its diaspora for unified action. Establishing structured partnerships, shared histories, and digital platforms can foster coordinated advocacy around reparations and sustainable development, transforming fragmentation into a global Pan-African movement. The synergy between African States and diaspora communities strengthens advocacy and builds the political capital necessary to confront systemic marginalization in global governance and financial institutions. Institutionalizing diaspora engagement at the continental level can amplify these efforts.
- We call for the continued strengthening of the partnership between the African Union and CARICOM nations and look forward to the convening of heads of state of the two bodies to further advance the case for reparatory justice for Africans and people of African descent.

- We call for bridging the gaps between policy formulation and grassroots action. Effective reparations require translating global policy dialogues into actionable local programmes involving youth-friendly platforms, internships, education reforms, and community mobilization. Closing the gap between civil society, academia, and governments ensures that reparations reach all layers of society.
- We call for a comprehensive approach, developed with the participation of affected communities, to achieve accountability and redress. We must be clear that attempts to repair the past ring hollow unless they also seek to dismantle its manifestations in the present, from racism to the extraction of African resources to the injustices embedded in structures, institutions, and global governance.
- We call for the recognition and support of creative industries as economic catalysts. Africa's vibrant creative sectors, including music, arts and storytelling, are under-recognised economic engines. Supporting youth-led creative enterprises through funding, intellectual property protection and integration into national development can reshape global narratives, promote cultural pride, and generate inclusive, sustainable livelihoods.
- We call for partnerships to reform global governance and advance sustainable development. We must keep pushing for fair representation within international institutions, including permanent African representation on the United Nations Security Council. Partnerships are also critical to making progress on sustainable development commitments made in the Pact for the Future, including advancing a Sustainable Development Goal stimulus and reforming the international financial architecture, including urgent action on debt.