

18th session of the
Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent
April 11 – 15, 2016, Geneva

Item 6: Continued Combatting Racial Stereotyping:

Date: April, 14th 2016

Contribution by
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Chair, diplomatic missions, members of civil society, greetings.

First,

I would like to express, on behalf of participants of the International Roundtable that took place on March 19th and 20th in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, and our grave concern about the slow progress of the implementation of the Program of Activities of the International Decade for People of African Descent with the Durban Declaration and Program of Action at the centre. The International Rotterdam Roundtable, the first to commemorate 15 years of the Durban process that was linked to the Decade for people of African descent was organised by civil society NGO's and initiated by the Global Coalition for the Implementation of the UN Decade for People of African Descent. It was in cooperation with: LPS (National Platform Dutch Slavery Past, This includes The African European Women's Movement 'Sophiedela'); Tiye International; CC_IDPAD (Global Coalition International Decade for People of African Descent); PANAFSTRAG (Pan African Strategic and Policy Group); ENGOCCAR (European NGO Consultative Council on Afrikan Reparations); PADU (Pan African Diaspora Union); Durban+15 (Civil Society Coordination & Monitoring Working Group); WARN (World Against Racism Network); ATI (Afro Atlantic Theologies & Treaties Institute); Ebukhosini Solutions, South Africa and was supported by the Drammeh Institute and people and organisations of good will with who their experiences from before the WCAR (world conference against racism, xenophobia and related intolerance) until to date, was shared.

We thank the members of the Working Group to recognise our work and to give us space on this Panel to contribute to the exchange activity on the issue of stereotyping.

Chair,

already in 1978, during the first WCAR that was organised in Geneva, the UN Member States decided to take measures to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind on grounds of race, colour, descent, nationality or ethnic origin. The Member States agreed on measures: to abolish delusions from the one race to the other, racial prejudice, racism and racial discrimination. These includes racial and racist policies, racial institutional profiles & stereotypes and racial languages. The 2001 WCAR should have been an attempt for practical steps to eradicate racism, including measures to prevent exclusion for example in the field of education and legal protection.

Mary Robinson

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The former High Commissioner on Human Rights, Mary Robinson, during her opening speech on August 31th, 2001, stated that: if the world wants to make a difference, if third WCAR, wants to make

a difference it should not only raise awareness about the scourge of racism, but it should also lead to positive actions at national, regional and international level that can bring a relief for those who have had suffered their whole lives of the hardest form of racism and racial discrimination. [...Durban will only be a landmark if there is substantial text adopted here and meaningful follow-up. The task which we must achieve before we leave is to have a clear understanding about the follow up which must be accomplished, about who is responsible for the necessary actions and how we can measure progress...], she emphasized. She recalled the Universal Declaration that proclaims that [..All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights ... and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood..... Some of you, like me, would rather call it a spirit of sisterhood. But whether brotherhood or sisterhood....] she said , [...let that spirit inform our discussions over the coming week as we strive for a world where the principles of equality and non-discrimination are honoured, not merely in words, but in fact...].

Kofi Annan

Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan on the occasion of the celebration of the International day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on March 21th, 1999 in the context of some developments on the acts of racism, said: "[... Bigotry, hatred, prejudice -- these are the ugly symptoms of a sickness humanity. Our mission, therefore, is to confront ignorance with tolerance, bigotry with knowledge, and isolation with the outstretched hand of generosity. Racism can, will and should be beaten. ..] ".

Chair,

We are now 15 years respective 17 years further after the call of Mary Robinson and Kofi Annan, in this 21th century, what we are experienced is that racism especially, the specific forms of multiple racism on black African People, on their African origin, didn't beaten yet. On top of that, the false propaganda of some states and some NGO's on the DDPA has not coming to its end yet. Some States, do not even refer to that document as an instrument to combat Afrophobia.

Fourth WCAR

De WGPAD country visit report regarding the situation of people of African Descent in the Kingdom of the Netherlands; the press release regarding the WGPAD country visit results of the situation of People of African Descent in the US; the research report of Professor Womack regarding the situation of Panel statement by Dr. Barryl A. Biekman date: April, 14th 2016, 18th session WGPAD (info@platformslavernijmonument.nl ; www.platformslavernijmonument.nl)

People of African Descent in the US has delivered enough evidence that black African People until to date are suffering on the hardest forms of Afrophobia. What makes it acceptable to adopt the proposal of the CERD member, Pastor Murillo, for the organising of a fourth WCAR with the focus on the Global situation of People of African Descent? The proposal since 2008/2009 to realise a well-resourced Permanent Forum of Experts on People of African Descent as has been adopted for Indigenous Peoples must receive immediately high priority.

Chair,

Racism, Racial profiling, Racist language, institutional racism in policies, denial of the effects of the Trans-Atlantic slavery is so ingrained in culture historical traditions in some countries that they did not realise that inherent on the tradition is the promotion of racism.

But what is racism, how do we define it? From who's perspective?

According to the Famous (African) Professor Ibekwe Chinweizu's definition racism is a system of domination, of one race by another race of people. It is a system of institutionalized delusions of one race over the other human race. That delusions are especially reflected in racial profiles, in language, in symbols, in traditions and the standards and values which one gives to the other human race. It is a system in which people are ranked on a variety of characteristics. For instance on color. What he defined as colorarchie. The black colour on the lowest hierarchical ladder. White at the top, brown, yellow and red in between. It is then permissible to give black people not much more than a role or function as a servant. In the worse situation as slave. (Racism –a residual legacy of Slavery? 2006).

The Sinterklaas culture historical (Christian) Dutch tradition is a good example of which one can say that it fits perfectly in the Chinweizu's description of racism. In the view of the Sinterklaas designer (Jan Schenkman, 1850) and his followers, Sinterklaas is always white and the servant a-priori black. Not red, not brown and also not yellow, but always black, because it must reflect the living legend of the master-slave condition. Another feature, according to Chinweizu concept of racism, is that of the racial structure of social economic domination and exploitation. Practices of violence, conquest and repression including torture, genocide and terror are permitted. For example, the objectionable slavery system. The Sinterklaas tradition fits perfectly in this racial structure of social economic domination and exploitation.

According to the Famous Dr. Frances Cress Welsing's (psychiatrist in the US) description, racism is a local and/or world system of power, structured and maintained by persons who classify themselves as white, either consciously or unconsciously. The system consists of patterns of perception, logic, formation, thoughts, pronunciation symbols, action and emotional response, as well as simultaneous action in all areas where people are active (economics, education, entertainment, labour, justice, politics, religion, sex and war). The ultimate aim of the system is to bring about white genetic destruction on earth (The Isis Papers, 1991). This highly educated Dr. is an expert in the so called White studies. Her analyses are based on alarming conclusions during observations.

Merlin Stone, another Famous US author, wrote in "Three thousand years of racism" (1981) about racism that it is a process that is initiated into an economic aspect motivated by greed and rationally explained in cultural terms. What she called as cultural racism. In this sense she mentioned some criteria: for instance that it is not forbidden to steal property for example land from others; mineral resources. This also applies unpaid work. Cultural racism is the image that one has over the other, e.g. the appropriating of land in Africa, and the Americas in the view of the racist was not forbidden. Because in the perception of the so-called European conquerors the residents that they meet were immoral, bad, demons, cannibals, head-hunters, wanted, bloodthirsty, Gentiles, Devils, criminal, sexually perverse etc.. It was therefore permitted to kidnap Black African people to become first negers and slaves. And these are the stereotypes that you will find in the grammars for instance in the Netherlands. Institutional racism arises from the ideology of racism also aimed to set up for instance African people against each other, to take off their dignity, to enslave them in such a way that their descendants will never overcome the conditioned traumas from the European consumption society and warfare.

I have deliberately chosen to use these conceptual frameworks of racism for the analysing of the Sinterklaas tradition and in particular the figure Black Pete. Experience has shown that the use of the conceptual framework from a Eurocentric perspective will bring us nowhere. It is clear that the Eurocentric standards of racism is one of the reasons that the Sinterklaas tradition with Black Pete figures is still in existence. Those who are victims of this racist delusions will always remain the victim because the only thing that matters for the offenders including the Dutch Government is to keep this racist tradition alive by propagating that Black Pete is not racism or doesn't mean to be racism. In the opinion of the Dutch Government this symbolic violence has to solve by the society on basis of dialogue.

Vision of the Dutch Government

It is indisputable that my organization along with many other activists including people of GOOD WILL have taken many efforts to reiterate that Black people of African descent living in the Netherlands, no longer wish to suffer under the yoke, that is called Afrophobia after decades of struggle.

It is indisputable that we have appealed to the: - National and local governments, - The Prime Minister – The responsible Ministers, - The Parliament, - Dutch Centre for Popular Culture and Intangible Heritage (VIE), - The Dutch agencies responsible for the Elimination of Racism (Anti-Discrimination Bureaus and the Federation of Bureaus), - The National Commission on Human Rights, - The Federation of the Mayors and local Governments. A petition was presented to the various commissions of the Dutch Parliament (in 2005) the vision of the Dutch Government is that the discussion has to realize within the sphere of the society. While they know that Black African people will always be in the minority. Others of the defenders of the Tradition are of the opinion that because of the debate the Black Pete figure will undergo the necessary changes. Letters have also been sent to relevant International Institutions such as: - The African Union, Diaspora Directorate - The UNESCO Paris - The Head of Special Procedures of the UN - The CERD - The UN Working Group of Expert on people of African descent. The action towards the UN Head of Special Procedures has resulted in a letter to the Dutch Government and a Country visit to the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

According to the Amsterdam's Dutch Court, July, 3rd, 2014, in its verdict - following on a complaint by defendants against the decision of the Mayor of the city of Amsterdam regarding the so called entry of Santa Clause accompanied by Black Petes on 17 November 2013 - I Quote: Black Pete is a racist phenomenon that unnecessarily hurts black people of African descent. The Court has ruled on the basis of, inter alia, article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The Court also considered its verdict based on a declaration of the Dutch College for Human Rights that Black Pete is a racist part of the Santa Clause Tradition.

Chair,

Until to date the Back Pete tradition is still a live and imagine how hard and complex it is to combat this form of Afrophobia in the Netherlands. Imagine what it means if even the Call of the CERD that asked for serious attentions from the State of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in their conclusions in the Country Review Report on the Kingdom of the Netherlands, August, 28th, 2015, did not receive the attention that it should have. We Call again for the international community to do something.

<p>Dia 1.</p> <p>If you look at this picture what do you see? It is no doubt that you see what are people are seeing and Black African people are feeling and experiencing.</p> 	<p>Dia 3.</p> <p>And to make sure that the Black Petes fulfill the criteria to function as a competent Black Pete there are special schools where people can be trained to become a professional Black Pete.</p>  <p>18th session WGPAD April 14th 2016 contribution dr. Biekman</p> <p>4</p>
<p>Dia 4.</p> <p>Speaks for itself. This is only one example. For almost 40 years African people and others of Good Will are protesting against the Black Pete figure. Until to date without success.</p> 	<p>Dia 5.</p> <p>Speaks for itself. This picture reflect the examples of what can happen with people who are protesting against the Black Pete figure. Examples of police brutality by the arresting of a black activist. The only what the activist did was standing in a crowd with a t-shirt with the inscription "Zwarte Piet is racisme" (Black Pete is racism). Protesters can be sure of receiving hate mails and/or dead wishes. In worse case an arrest by the police. A t-shirt with the inscription Black Pete is racism was enough for this extreme police brutality.</p>  <p>18th session WGPAD April 14th 2016 contribution dr. Biekman</p> <p>7</p>

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Dia 8.



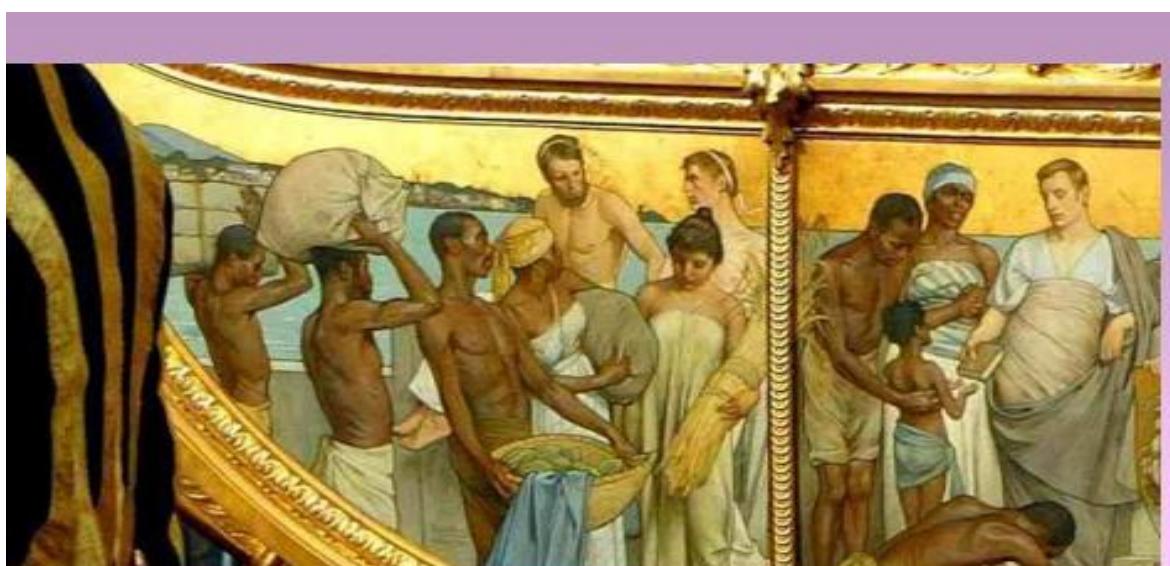
This is a picture from left to right: a representative of the Piet Gilde; the director of the National Commission Immaterial Cultural Heritage (the executive semi-governmental body for the implementation of the UNESCO convention), & a representative of the Saint Nicholas Federation, showing the certificate that they just (=January 2015) have signed to put the Saint Nicholas tradition, including the Black Pete figure and its attributes on the National Dutch list of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The process to do so started before 2015. This, all despite the Amsterdam's Court of Justice decision and the UNESCOS Convention that has ratified by the Netherlands the VIE has decided to honouring the nominations of the Black Pete Coalition for placing the Sinterklaas Dutch cultural historical Tradition, including all the elements of the tradition what means including the Black Pete Figure on the National list of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

In the Netherlands we have done everything that is necessary to create awareness so that the Netherlands including the Government who has the authority & power to act, could have understand what trauma this Cultural Historical Saint Nicholas tradition is causing in general for Black Citizens in the Netherlands and particular to black children during this so called "children fest".

We therefore call for a strong statement from the International Community.

Dia 9.

The Golden Carriage is a symbol of the Dutch Monarchy wherein, through the painting on the Side Panel of the Carriage, the criminal colonial history of oppression and exploitation is being glorified. It is a tradition that every third Tuesday of September the Golden Carriage is used by the Royal Family to ride in the streets of The Hague. Thousands of Dutch citizens and tourists are than coming to the Royal residence to catch an eye for the Royal family (King and Queen) and their relatives/companionship. The Side Panel 'Tribute to the Colonies' is evoking strong counter-pressure for a large group of citizens in the Netherlands, both of African and Indonesian descent and other citizens of Good Will and solidarity. Every year that the Golden Carriage is riding with the relevant offending Side Panel, the painting evoked memories of a horrific period in Dutch history by maintaining the permanent indication, to the African and Indonesian community in the Netherlands, that they are and always have been inferior human beings.



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Chair,

Why I have brought this to your attention?

Last year it has been pronounced by the Government Information Service that the Carriage will not ride for about four years because of major maintenance. According to the Government Information the wood carving will receive a makeover. The maintenance of the coach focuses on four components: the base, the closet, the upholstery and the buck. Nothing has been announced about the Side Panel ' Tribute to the Colonies ', what African and Indonesian People in the Netherlands experienced as disrespect. Not one single word has referred to our Calls in the years 2011, 2012 and 2013. No one word has referred to our letters that has send to the responsible State authorities - according to the Dutch Constitutional Law set out in ministerial responsibility -, to contrive that:

- * The painting on the Side Panel of the Golden Coach "Tribute to the Colonies ", which are expressions of the crimes against the African and Indonesian humanity, be removed;
- * The offending Side Panel will be placed for instance in a Dutch museum where similar paintings, which refer to the Dutch colonial history are exhibited. This, in the belief that a Dutch museum is the best place where from the perspective of the education of the past and human rights education information on the Dutch Slave Trade, Slavery and Colonial Past and its effects can be provided.

Chair, Members of the Working Group, Diplomatic missions and members of the civil society

A key objective of the UN Decade for People of African Descent is to fight all multiple forms of racism, institutional discrimination, xenophobia, apartheid and related intolerance towards Africans and People of African Descent. In order to effectively combat Afrophobia it is important that we define what must be understand by this term or articulate how we operationalise this term so that together with our national governments we can effectively tackled the multiple form of this horrible crime against African People. We observe with great satisfaction the term is now being used by many people of African descent globally. But it is important to have consensus about the conceptual framework of the term. That is the reason why in the Netherlands the Decade Coordination Working Group organised a consultation Roundtable as well as online consultations to reflect and deepen the topics covered by the conceptual framework of Afrophobia. The exercise has resulted in a long list of issues that in the opinion of the respondents, reflecting the conceptual framework of Afrophobia. The advice to the Dutch government was to support a scientific research to reach consensus about the conceptual framework of the term on basis of what sustainable policies and effective measures can developed towards the implementation of the Decade programme of activities in the spirit of its Theme:

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Recognition, Justice and Development. Nevertheless we as a community have, to take the lead in formulating the issues that we want to be part of the conceptual framework.

I'm happy to inform the Working Group that the Dutch Government and some institutions are willing to facilitate the Research. It is very important. The used definition on Afrophobia in the ENAR shadow Report (2014-2015) about Afrophobia in Europe is a good example that there is an urgent need to reach consensus about the conceptual framework of Afrophobia. As long as we do not reach consensus it will remain a problem to combat the multiple forms of Afrophobia to the root.

I thank you for your attention.