

América Nichte-Ha López Chávez

Statement to be read at the Latin America and the Caribbean, session on 24 November

Good afternoon, my name is América López, I am an Afro-descendant from Guerrero in southwest Mexico. I joined a public regional meeting of the working group three years ago, in April 2017, my colleague and I spoke about our concerns regarding the situation of extreme poverty and poverty as well as a lack of a good health, education and public services system, which exemplifies the social inequalities suffered by Afro-descendants of the south of Mexico, I am speaking of that from Guerrero, Oaxaca or Chiapas.

These concerns have become supposedly more apparent in the last 20 years as we have been recognized in the local and national constitutions, we have gained spaces in political institutions, and we have been added to the latest national census, so we will figure in the next population count. In short, there have been apparently *Recognition*, but there has not been any justice and development.

Why do I say so?, because all this recognition, spaces and policies that have been gained are limited. It sounds very promising in paper but when it comes to practice nothing happens. They are not really intended to actually include us. They are just another mechanism to contain the angry Afro-Mexican movement. Many many talks have taken place regarding Recognition, Justice, Development, Racism, Inclusion, etc,etc. But that is it, just talks and not really action.

I believe the core issue is that in the last five years, the legislative measures, the implementation of national actions plans or policies, have failed to achieve an inclusion because they haven been carried out without recognising Racism and Racialization as the origin of the structural violence, which turned States such as Guerrero and Oaxaca into a marginalized and negatively racialized (Indigenous and Afro-descendants of black) area, impoverished, pushed towards migration, where privilege and structural disadvantage are unfairly and unequally distributed between positively racialized subjects (whites and mestizos) and negatively racialized subjects (Indigenous and Afro-descendants or blacks).

As a result, complaint mechanisms, awareness raising and institutional strengthening activities, research, data collection, community engagement, etc, or other measures or activities undertaken by Member States, national human rights institutions and equality bodies, civil society, and UN agencies, funds and programmes are not properly working. There will not be real Justice and Development with an equal distribution without the awareness of the origin of this from the bottom to the top and viceversa.

Therefore, what do I want to see prioritized in the next 5 years is to recognise and take into account that racism and racialization are the origin of this structural violence, inequality and structural disadvantages, and that policies, programs, etc, will not work and have real impact until there are awareness and recognition of it in Mexico. Perhaps other countries and regions have already passed this phase but Mexico has still a lot of work to do.