

27th Session of the Working Group of Experts of People on African Decent

General Statement

Statement on Behalf of the African Group

Madam. Chair,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group.

The adoption of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action, at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban in 2001, called for the then Commission for Human Rights to consider establishing a working group or other mechanism of the United Nations to study the problems of racial discrimination faced by people of African descent living in the African Diaspora and make proposals for the elimination of racial discrimination against people of African descent". The Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent was subsequently established in 2002 and its mandate subsequently extended and renewed by resolutions of the Council

The Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent thus forms an integral part for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action, and as such the Africa Group thanks the Working Group of Experts for the various reports, on topical issues effecting people of African Decent it has produced, the most recent being presented at HRC45.

The Africa Group appreciates that the discussions this week, under the theme "*The Urgency of Now: Systemic Racism*

and the Lessons of 2020", will build on the WGEPAD's report COVID-19 at HRC45, on *systemic racism and global protests*, and set the scene for the *mid-term review of the International Decade for people of African descent* and the 20th anniversary of the DDPA.

We took note, with concern, the findings in the abovementioned report that structural racial discrimination exacerbates inequality in access to health care and treatment, leading to racial disparities in health outcomes and increased mortality and morbidity for people of African descent. The Durban Declaration and Program of Action recognized that social biases and discrimination prevailing in public and private institutions continued to create barriers for people of African descent, including in the realization of human rights. States must recognize the specificity of needs in particular communities, or risk deprioritising people of African descent as a matter of law and policy

Madam. Chair,

The Africa Group thus welcomes the opportunity, during this Session, to further engage with the Working Group of Experts, and the other participants on how to effectively address the issues of systemic racism and the exasperating effect COVID19 has on the resurgence of racism and hate speech against Africans and People of Africa decent. These discussions should help to focus preparations for the 20th Anniversary of the DDPA in 2021, starting with the discussions at high-level panel on human rights mainstreaming in 2021, with the expected theme of "*The state of play in the fight against racism and discrimination 20 years after the adoption of the DDPA and the exacerbating effects the COVID19 pandemic has had on these efforts*". (The theme will be proposed by the President of the Council, and likely adopted on 7 December)

The Africa Group further encourages the Working Group of Experts, assist in finalising the overdue *midterm of the International Decade for People of African Descent*, and to call for the publication of the Programme of Activities for the International Decade for People of African Descent in an easy accessible brochure format in the official languages of the United Nation, for wide dissemination, which will greatly assist in creating awareness of the Decade.

Thank you.