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Agenda item 9

**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related
forms of intolerance, follow-up and implementation
of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

Written statement* submitted by the International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations, a non- governmental organization in general consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[25 August 2014]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).



International Decade for People of African Descent

The statement from the Global Coalition for the International Decade for People of African Descent reproduced below represent the voice of mainstream NGO and peoples activism in support the proclamation of the International Decade, including its theme “Recognition, Justice, Development”.

GLOBAL COALITION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT

The Global Coalition for the International Decade for People of African Descent is established to provide global peoples activism and support for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent as proclaimed by the United Nations for the period 2015-2024 based on the principles of Recognition, Justice and Development.

The Coalition continues the work of the Durban +10 Coalition which following the High Levelmeeting of the UN General Assembly to commemorate the tenth Anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) in 2011 was instrumental in securing the decision by the UN General Assembly to start preparations for the International Decade. The Coalition includes the main civil society actors that campaigned for the convening of the World Conference Against Racism in 2001, who contributed to its success, consistently participated in all international follow up activities and mechanisms in the UN Human Rights system, organised the civil society forum for the Durban Review Conference in 2009 and moved ahead in many dimensions towards the proclamation of the Decade. The Theme of the Decade had originally been proposed by Coalition members for the International Year in 2011. Coalition members worked together with the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent to develop its Draft Programme of Action for the International Decade in 2012 which in 2014 became the basis for the development of a Draft Programme of Activities for the Decade by the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the DDPA of the UN Human Rights Council where Coalition members played an active role, and which has now been transferred to the UN General Assembly for adoption.

The Coalition welcomes and support the Programme of Activities for the International Decade currently under consideration by the UN General Assembly. (*) We were part of its development and contributed to its content during the negotiations in Geneva and view it as important progress and take ownership of its positive elements. First and foremost the DDPA and the follow up declarations from 2009 and 2011 are fully endorsed and their full and effective implementation is called for as an integral part of the International Decade. In different ways it addresses and provides measures for the recognition to the continued after effects of the transatlantic slave trade, slavery and colonialism on people of African descent. It contains a programme with measures to address many of the demands towards the restoration of rights and dignity for people of African descent in the diaspora. The Coalition will exercise maximum efforts for the comprehensive realization of all the positive elements in the Programme of Activities.

However we are also disappointed by the way former slave trading countries have managed to scuttle the overarching and symbolic call from people of African descent for reparations. Its muted form in the Programme of Activities to be adopted by the General Assembly is a testimony that leading countries have a long way to go in living of the the spirit of the programme and the established theme of the Decade: Recognition, Justice, Development. The programme does not give recognition to the verdict from Durban that the Transatlantic Slave Trade was a crime against Humanity – indeed the longest and most enduring of historic crimes which legacies manifests starkly in the global world of today. We also regret that the programme give no recognition to the attachment by people of African descent to Pan-Africanism. We are concerned over the lack of political will from major countries and the disagreements on the UN's ability to provide the necessary resources for implementation of the Decade thereby risking that it will be without effective results. We regret the closed nature of the final negotiations in the General Assembly for the finalization of the Programme of Activities which contrasts to the open and transparent process of its origin in the UN Human Rights system.

The Coalition is determined to continue as a solid partner and primary resource for the Decade. We will cure our disappointment in the failure by official programme to focus on reparations by sensitizing public opinion on this critical issue and the need for a genuine international dialogue for reparations for the crimes of the Transatlantic Slave Trade,

slavery, colonialism and eradicating its current legacies. We stand by people of African descent who are attached to Pan-Africanism. In our work we will recognize the International Decade as the “Reparations Decade” which it must become in order to live up to its theme of “Recognition, Justice, Development”. We view our work as part of the great efforts of all social movements for a more just and equal world.

The International Decade must indeed become an auspicious period of history when people of African descent and indeed the continent of Africa will have their rights fully restored. It is the duty of all people of good faith to join in this great undertaking. The Global Coalition for the International Decade for People of African Descent will shoulder this task with the greatest responsibility. We invite people of African descent, social movements, non-governmental organisations and civil society at large, including individuals, who stand by our principles to join.

(*) as contained in the letter of the President of the General Assembly of 1 August, for later adoption by the General Assembly.

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