



Promoting the well-being of the African Diaspora: Strategy for the Second Decade of People of African Descent

14 February, 2025

9:00 - 12:30

In person: UN House floor 7 (Boulevard du Régent 37-40, Brussels 1000) and online

Concept Note

The Second International Decade for People of African Descent is an opportunity to build on the achievements of the first decade, focusing on recognition, justice and development. This concept note outlines a strategic plan to address the challenges and opportunities for people of African descent in Belgium and beyond.

The proclamation of the [International Decade for People of African Descent \(2015-2024\)](#) by the United Nations emphasized the need to promote the respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights for people of African descent (PAD). During the first decade, key milestones included the establishment of the [UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent \(PFPAD\)](#), visits by the UN [Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent](#), and national efforts such as Belgium's 2019 and 2023 initiatives.

In October 2024, PAD communities in Belgium held a post-election consultation to assess the results of the first decade and strategize for the second. This was followed by three pre-decade consultations, which highlighted the need for an independent, professional council led by PAD to sustain these efforts.

An Independent Council

A key outcome of these meetings was a strong and widespread call for an independent, professional body led by people of African descent. This council would act as a unifying body to coordinate community initiatives, bridge the gap between younger and older generations, and develop sustainable strategies for long-term progress.

Mission

To advance the well-being, rights, and development of the African diaspora by providing robust institutional support to local, regional, national, and European Union institutions on the advancement, protection, and promotion of human rights for people of African descent.

Aims

1. Resource and Expertise Hub - Act as the primary source of support for institutions serving Africans and people of African descent.
2. Implementation of Declarations - Ensure commitments from the [UN Proclamation of the Second Decade for People of African Descent 2025-2034](#) are translated into actionable programs and benefit communities.
3. Leadership Development - Strengthen institutions led by people of African descent.
4. Advocacy and Representation - Provide a unified voice on global and regional platforms.

Operational Framework

- Independent Governance

Operate independently from national governments and global agencies, guided by the principles of the Permanent Forum and international human rights frameworks.

- Strategic Collaboration

Forge alliances with diaspora networks, academic institutions, and global partners to drive meaningful change.

- Evidence-Based Approach

Use data and research to inform decisions, policy recommendations, and programme development as well as promote the generation of data on racial discrimination at the national and local level.

Key Pillars

1. Advisory Services: provide expert advice tailored to the needs of the diaspora, focusing on social equity, legal protections, and economic empowerment.
2. Training and Development: deliver capacity-building programmes, workshops, and leadership development initiatives to strengthen institutional operations and community outreach.
3. Technical Assistance: develop and disseminate standardised frameworks to align services with the aspirations of the diaspora and ensure consistent practices across institutions.

Alignment with the mandate of the Permanent Forum and the African Union 2025 Theme

The work of the Council will be closely aligned with the objectives of the Permanent Forum and the African Union 2025 Theme, ensuring a unified and strategic approach to advancing the rights and development of people of African descent. This includes:

- Promoting recognition, justice and development for people of African descent in line with the UN and AU frameworks.
- Strengthening international and regional partnerships to address systemic challenges faced by diaspora communities, particularly through collaboration with African institutions.
- Promoting cultural preservation and sustainable development through innovative programmes and instruments that reflect both the mandate of the Permanent Forum and the African Union's 2025 vision for the continent and its diaspora.

This alignment will ensure that efforts at the global and regional levels are mutually reinforcing, promoting meaningful and impactful progress for people of African descent worldwide.

Vision

Over the next decade, the Council aims to create a harmonised support system for institutions serving Africans and people of African descent, ensuring their collective prosperity, cultural resilience, and human rights are upheld.

Agenda

Moderator:

Eduardo-Datcha Ribeiro - Journalist

Misozi Linda Nyirenda - Poet/Writer/Actress

Session Schedule

09:00 - 09:10: Welcome and opening - Christina Meinecke, Representative, OHCHR Regional Office for Europe

09:10 - 09:20: Introductory remarks - H.E Ambassador Awad SAKINE Ahmat, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the African Union to the EU and to the OACPS (tbc)

09:20 - 09:30: Key Insights from Community Consultations: Findings & Reflections - Bwalya Mwali

09:30 - 09:50: Review of the First International Decade for People of African Descent & Introduction to the Second Decade - Barbara G. Reynolds, immediate past Chair of the UN-WGEPAD

09:50 - 10:10: Workings of the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent - June Soomer, Chairperson, PFPAD

10:10 - 10:25: Questions and Answers

10:25 - 10:35: Tea Break

10:35 - 11:30: An Independent Council: Panel Discussion with Members of the Reference Group. Panelists: Shaquille van Throo, Kesheniwa Aghaji, Aicha BACHA, Kossi AGBEKO, Floribert KAPUTU, Noel Zihabamwe

11:30 - 12:00: Questions, Answers, and Discussion

12:00 - 12:30: Way Forward and Closing - Janine van Throo

12:30 - 13:30: Networking Session

Bibliography

- [Durban Declaration and Programme of Action \(2001\)](#), adopted at the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance.
- [Group of Independent Eminent Experts on the Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action](#)
- [Intergovernmental Working Group on the Durban declaration and Programme of Action](#)
- [Reports on country visits of the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent](#)
- [Proclamation of the 2nd International Decade for People of African Descent](#)