



Global Afrikan Congress uk (GACuk)

Submission on the United Nations (UN) Permanent Forum on People of African Descent

Global Afrikan Congress (GAC) is an international network of organisations formed after the work by Afrikans at the UN World Conference Against Racism 2001 who successfully encouraged nation states to recognise our enslavement as a crime against humanity. Our key objective is to achieve Reparations for these crimes which still continue today, including neo-colonialism, genocide and racism.

GAC organises from the grassroots offering local, regional and international community solidarity, co-operation and empowerment. It offers organisations and Afrikans across the world the opportunity to work together in a unified fashion to demand Reparations. We aim to mobilise the human, economic, political, spiritual and cultural resources of Afrika and the Afrikan Diaspora in the interest and to the benefit of Afrika and her people.

GACuk is the UK Chapter of GAC. This statement is submitted on behalf of over 20 Afrikan organisations in the UK.

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The term 'Afrikan' in this document refers to the indigenous people of Afrika and their descendants throughout the Diaspora in all corners of the world. We spell Afrika with a 'k' based on the following insights:

- it is a Pan-Afrikan spelling which relates both to the Afrikan continent and the Diaspora;
- it reflects the spelling of 'Afrika' in Afrikan languages and
- it includes the concept of 'ka', the vital energy which both sustains and creates life, as expressed in ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) teachings

GACuk Submission on the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, April 2021

Global Afrikan Congress (GACuk) is the uk Chapter of an international Reparations organisation formed by Afrikans who helped achieve the UN Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA). This written submission builds upon our participation in the one-day Consultation on the United Nations (UN) Permanent Forum on People of African Descent on 10th May 2019.

We found the InformationNote2019 'Human rights Fora serviced by OHCHR' very helpful in showing which other fora exist, their mandates, structures and how they work. It has informed this submission and we believe should be key in any deliberations.

GACuk believes that the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent must operate for the benefit of Afrikan people as well as UN structures and member states to improve 'the quality of life and livelihoods'¹ of Afrikan people. That means it must have a size and structure that maximises input from Afrikans with the ability to communicate, liaise and consult with those on the continent and in the Diaspora.

GACuk believes that the Forum must not be restricted in its ability to alert and advise the UN and member states on the plight and needs of Afrikan people. To achieve this it must be located where it is able to work across all the UN structures. Its focus should be on realising a UN Declaration on the Rights of Afrikan People but it must also be able to support work such as the implementation of the DDPA; nation states reporting on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD); the CARICOM 10 Point Reparations Action Plan; the NGO 12 Point Reparations Action Plan and Sustainable Development Goals.

GACuk supports the suggestion of funding '9 experts and 25 civil society participants. Based on 73/262 (see A/C.5/73/15)'¹ as a minimum. We believe that participants should come from regional representation which takes account of the size of the Afrikan population within each region. Participants should serve for a maximum 3 years with the opportunity to serve for a further 3 years. Regional Fora should be established for support, liaison and succession planning.

Participants must be Afrikan with 50% women and 50% men as both have specific gender issues. The Forum should elect its own Officers with consideration given to having two Co-Chairs for gender balance. Membership should include reserved seats to ensure the inclusion of youth, elders, disabled advocates and other facets of Afrikan people's experience.

Although GAC has ECOSOC status we believe that this should not be the only criteria for membership of the Forum. We recognise that ECOSOC status would be a barrier for Afrikans in countries where it is difficult for them to organise or to establish organisations and bank accounts.

GACuk believes that the Forum should meet for 5 days minimum twice a year as there is so much to be done and we are near the end of the Decade. These days should not come from existing Durban follow-up mechanisms. More of this work needs to be done in Afrika so a choice between New York and Geneva isn't acceptable to us as part of an international Afrikan civil society body. We need the positive statement of an annual gathering of delegates in Afrika as a minimum with participants' expenses reimbursed so resources are not a barrier to attending.

Meetings must avoid days special to Afrikan communities so participants are able to maintain links and work at home, eg Emancipation Days, Afrikan Liberation Day, International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition and International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In this way Forum participants can use Afrikan community events organised on these days to publicise and consult on the work of the Forum.

We believe that the Forum should primarily meet in places with large Afrikan populations to increase the opportunity for Afrikan civil society participation. Potential problems obtaining visas must be taken into account when deciding venues as this is clearly a barrier for Afrikan people. We welcome the suggestion of meeting at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa and believe that other Afrikan states with no or easier visa requirements should be considered.

We thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement on behalf of Afrikans in the uk in over 20 organisations who look forward to working with others on the development of our Permanent Forum.

¹ Human rights Fora serviced by OHCHR