

Dear President of the General Assembly His Excellency Abdulla Shahid,

Dear President of the Human Rights Council Her Excellency Nazhat Shameem Khan,

Dear High Commissioner of Human Rights Her Excellency Michelle Bachelet,

We, the undersigned civil society organizations across the world who work for the human rights of people of African descent, hereby express our deep and sincere concerns regarding the election by the General Assembly and Human Rights Council of the expert members of the United Nations Permanent Forum of People of African Descent. This includes our views that certain election criteria and qualifications must be upheld for this new mechanism to be deemed legitimate in the eyes of people of African descent worldwide.

Taking note of General Assembly resolution 75/314 on the *Establishment of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent*, and particularly Article 2 that establish criteria and qualifications for members of the Forum: “the Permanent Forum shall consist of 10 members: 5 members to be nominated by Governments, based on equitable geographical distribution, and elected by the General Assembly and 5 members to be appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council following consultation with the Bureau and the regional groups through their coordinators, on the basis of broad consultations with the organizations of people of African descent, membership shall take into account the diversity and geographical distribution of the global African diaspora, ensuring gender parity as well as the principles of transparency, representativity and equal opportunity for all people of African descent, and all members shall serve in their personal capacity as independent experts on issues of people of African descent for a period of three years with the possibility of re-election or reappointment for one further period.”

It is critical to the relevance and legitimacy of the Permanent Forum that the criteria and qualifications expressed in resolution 75/314 be adhered to fully—especially the following criteria:

- (1) An equitable geographical distribution, and taking into account the diversity and geographical distribution of people of African descent in the world,
- (2) Gender parity,

- (3) Principles of transparency, representativity and equal opportunity for all people of African descent,
- (4) All members shall serve in their personal capacity as independent experts on issues of people of African descent.

Regarding the first (1) of these criteria, it should be noted that this is a Permanent Forum *of* People of African Descent. The expectation by civil society is that the members will therefore, in line with the expressed criteria, all be persons of African descent. Moreover, the 10 members to be elected by the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council should not be interpreted as two members for each of the five regional groups of the United Nations. An equitable regional representation of people of African descent across the world, will not be achieved by giving, for example, the Eastern European states and the Latin American and Caribbean states two representatives each. Rather, the regional representation of the Forum should reflect the geographic distribution and concentration of people of the African diaspora. For instance, the fact that the highest concentration of people of African descent is to be found in the Americas and Western Europe should be reflected in the membership of the Forum—while also including other regions where there are significant populations of African descent such as Oceania, South Asia and the Indian Ocean islands. Furthermore, given the critical role of the Caribbean in the history of people of African descent and that there are at least 40 million people of African descent in this region—it should not be subsumed under a regional group of Latin American and Caribbean countries with the risk of lacking proper representation on the Forum.

Regarding the second (2) of these criteria, it should be emphasized that gender equity is critical to the election of Forum members.

Regarding the third (3) of these criteria, we are deeply concerned that already in this first round of nominations there seems to be insufficient transparency, representativity and equal opportunity of all people of African descent. The President of the Human Rights Council has given civil society less than 30 days to nominate candidates. This is too little time for a broad, comprehensive and equal participation of civil society in the nomination process. Furthermore, the election process is *atypical* of processes to appoint Experts to mechanisms under the Human Rights Council—which usually go through several stages, including an interview stage, before reaching the President of the Human Rights Council. We call on the General Assembly and Human Rights Council to extend the deadline for

nominations, ensure that the process is fully transparent, based on clearly defined criteria, and one that includes interviews.

Regarding the fourth (4) and possibly the most important criteria, it is inappropriate for government representatives or persons who recently vacated government positions to be nominated and stand for election to the Permanent Forum. For members of the Forum to serve in their *personal capacity as independent experts* on issues of people of African descent, it is critical that they be from civil society (broadly understood as to also include universities and national human rights institutions). It is also critical that they truly be *experts* on the human rights of people of African descent, including having intimate knowledge of global African diasporas, with a documented and proven track record of having such expertise.

We, the undersigned, are calling on the General Assembly and Human Rights Council to guarantee that members of the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent meet the qualifications established by UN resolution 75/314 and are able to adequately represent the lived experiences of the African Diaspora. In this spirit we call on the General Assembly, Human Rights Council and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to take the necessary time to ensure the integrity of the Forum and a grand opening in 2022.

Signed by,

1. **Africa Solidarity Centre Ireland, Ireland**
2. **African Anti-racism society Finland, Finland**
3. **African Canadian Heritage Association, Canada**
4. **African Centre for Refugees in Ontario-Canada, Canada**
5. **African Futures Action Lab, USA**
6. **Africana Institute for Creativity Recognition and Elevation, USA**
7. **African-European Development Agency, Sweden**
8. **Afro Empowerment Center, Denmark**
9. **Afrodiaspora Global, USA**
10. **AfroPoderosas, Costa Rica**
11. **ARC Gambia, Gambia**
12. **Asociación de afrodescendientes Nelson Mandela ASAFRONELMAN, Colombia**
13. **Asociacion de Mujeres de la Costa de Oaxaca A.C. (AMCO A.C.), México**
14. **Asociación social de negritudes del municipio de arauca (ASOMUNEAR), Colombia**

15. Baderinaa Kokumo, *United Kingdom*
16. Black Alliance for Peace, *USA*
17. Black Archives Sweden, *Sweden*
18. Black German Heritage & Research Association, *USA*
19. Black Lives Matter Sweden (BLMSWE), *Sweden*
20. Brighton and Hove Black Women's Group, *UK*
21. California Black Agriculture Working Group, *USA*
22. Cameroon Network of Women with Disabilities, *Cameroon*
23. Canadian Gambian Youth Development Association, *Canada*
24. Carrefour des femmes et familles, *Canada*
25. Centro de Estudios Afronexicanos Tembembe, *México*
26. Centro Familiar Afro Santeño, *Panamá*
27. Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, *USA*
28. COBA, *Canada*
29. Community Renewal Society, *USA*
30. Comunidad de religiones de matriz afro en la matanza Argentina, *Argentina*
31. Cruz de Mayo Ventura Baluarte y Descendientes, *Chile*
32. Drawdown Markham, *Canada*
33. Ed Consulting UK, *UK*
34. Edfu Foundation Inc., *USA*
35. EHD Advisory, *USA*
36. English International Association of Lund, *Sweden*
37. Equitable Action for Change, *Canada*
38. European Network of People of African Descent (ENPAD), *UK and Europe*
39. Evangelical church Salem, *Benin*
40. Fédération Panafricaine des Associations et Clubs de l'Union Africaine (FEPAC/UA), *Burkina Faso*
41. Five Points Youth Foundation, *USA*
42. Fonsanpotma Forum Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional dos Povos Tradicionais de Matriz Africana, *Brazil*
43. Fundación Deportiva del Pacífico Sur FUNDEPACS, *Colombia*
44. Fundacion Sayra Huellas Humanas, *Colombia*
45. Global Afrikan Congress UK, *UK*
46. Global Black Colective, *Brazil*
47. Global reConnections, *USA*
48. Hand in Hand tegen Racisme vzw, *Belgium*
49. Healing Paradigm LLC, *USA*

50. Ilé Àṣẹ̀ Ọ̀mọ̀lú àti Ọ̀ṣún, *Brazil*
51. Ingwee, *Belgium*
52. Institute of the Black World 21st Century (IBW21), *USA*
53. International Institute of Family Development, *USA*
54. Ishmael Mkhabela, *South Africa*
55. Justice Afrikan History, *UK*
56. Justice Fund Toronto, *Canada*
57. Líderes Unidos La Palma AC, *México*
58. MaCTRI (MEaP Academy Community Training & Research Institute),
United Kingdom
59. Malu Ngalula Chantal, *Belgique*
60. Mano Amiga de la Costa Chica, *México*
61. México Negro A.C., *México*
62. Ministério Público do Trabalho, *Brazil*
63. Mother of peace Regent Park, *Canada*
64. Mothers of peace Regent Park, *Canada*
65. Movimiento Federalista Pan Africano América Latina y el Caribe
(MFPA/ALC.), *Ecuador*
66. Mulika Afrika, *Tanzania*
67. National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC), *USA*
68. National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America - New England
Chapter, *USA*
69. National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA),
USA
70. NH Black Women Health Project, *USA*
71. Observatory of Justice for Afrodescendants in Latin America (OJALA),
USA and Latin America
72. OLLIE Initiative, *USA*
73. Ontario Association of social workers school social work advisory, *Canada*
74. Organización No Gubernamental de Desarrollo de Afrodescendientes,
Chile
75. Oro Negro, *Chile*
76. Oya Black Arts Coalition, *Canada*
77. Parable of the Sower Intentional Community Cooperative, *USA*
78. Pessoa Física, *Brazil*
79. Positive Change Toronto Initiative, *Canada*
80. Red Nacional de Juventudes Afromexicanas, *México*
81. Rede de Matriz Africana (REMA), *Brazil*
82. Rede Nacional de Mulheres Negras no Combate à Violência, *Brazil*

83. Revolutionary Socialist League, *Kenya*
84. Rwandan Canadian Healing Centre - RCHC, *Canada*
85. Salifu Dagarti Foundation (SDF), *UK*
86. Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, *USA*
87. Sons and Daughters of Africa, *USA*
88. Sozo Consulting, *Ethiopia*
89. Sussex Racial Equality Action Project, *UK*
90. U.S. Africa Institute, *USA*
91. Ujeengo Global Community, *Canada*
92. UNA USA – Gainesville Florida Chapter, *USA*
93. UNESCO Inclusive Policy Lab | People of African Descent & the
SDGs, *international online group*
94. United Church of Canada, *Canada*
95. US Human Rights Cities Alliance, *USA*
96. Världskultur [World Culture], *Sweden*
97. Virgin Islands Youth Advisory Council, *Virgin Islands (USA)*
98. Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), *USA*
99. Women Reform Organization, *Nigeria*
100. Women's All Points Bulletin (WAPB), *USA*
101. Yes, *Canada*
102. Your Black Matters, *USA*
103. Youth Now on Track Services (YNOT), *Canada*