



EUROPEAN UNION

Permanent Delegation to the United Nations Office
and other international organisations in Geneva

The Ambassador

Geneva, 17 February 2014

Subject : EU non-paper regarding the International Decade for People of African Descent.

Dear Ambassador Doualeh,

With work approaching for the IGWG on the DDPA to develop a programme of Action for the International Decade for People of African Descent, I am delighted to share with you an EU-non paper with proposals in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

Mariangela ZAPPIA
Ambassador

H.E Mr Mohamed Siad Doualeh
Ambassador, Chairman of the International Working Group on the Effective
Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action
Permanent Mission of Djibouti
Chemin Louis Dunant 19
CH-1202 GENEVA (mission.djibouti@djibouti.ch)

Copies to:

1. Mr Yury Boychenko (YBoychenko@ohchr.org)
OHCHR – Head of the Anti Discrimination Section
48 avenue Giuseppe Motta
1202 Geneva

Regional Groups Coordinators

1. WEOG: Germany, H.E. Mr Hanns Schumacher
2. Eastern Group: Serbia, H.E. Mr Vladislav Mladenovic
3. African Group: Ethiopia, H.E. Mr Minelik Alemu Getahun
4. GRULAC: El Salvador, H.E. Ms Victoria Marina Velasquez de Avilés
5. OIC: Pakistan, H.E. Mr Zamir Akram
6. Asian Group: Kazakhstan, H.E. Mr Mukhtar Tileuberdi

EU non-paper

Developing a programme for the International Decade for People of African Descent

Through resolution A/68/237 “Proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent”, the GA has requested the President of the General Assembly, through the facilitator, to continue consultations with member states and other stakeholders, with a view to elaborating a programme for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent, with a draft programme developed by the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action as its basis, to be finalized and adopted during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly and not later than 30 June 2014 (op.2).

The EU welcomes this mandate given to the IGWG on the DDPA, as we have long been calling for a proper intergovernmental process to elaborate the program for the Decade. Only through true ownership and engagement of States can the Decade be successfully prepared.

The EU intends to engage actively and constructively in the process and would like to take this opportunity to put forward some concrete proposals:

On process

- As the GA has tasked the IGWG on the DDPA to elaborate a draft program before 30 June 2014, the IGWG, currently scheduled for October 2014, would need to be rescheduled for the spring 2014. (Resolution A/68/237 does not foresee additional meeting time allocated for the development of the Program of work of the decade).
- The draft program should reflect the views of the UN membership and should be adopted by consensus, while taking into account input provided in the SG report on how to make the Decade effective as well as the draft program of Action by the WGEPAD.
- Appoint the OHCHR as focal point for the implementation of the decade within existing resources.
- Keep the decade under review and foresee a midterm evaluation as well as a final assessment, while avoiding the creation of new mechanisms.
- Avoid the creation of new mechanisms. Rationalize and streamline the existing ones instead.
- Estimate the PBI related to the PoW for the decade.

On content

- Forward looking practice-oriented actions, while acknowledging the causes and sources of discrimination.
- Strengthen and reinforce national action to fight any racial discrimination and thus ensure equality of and before the law. Ensure the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights for all.

- Ensure that victims of racism and discrimination have access to remedies in line with international human rights law.
- Encourage the establishment of national mechanisms and promoting best practices.
- Sensitize people of African descent and wider society about their human rights.
- Underline the key role of ICERD. Call for universal accession and full and effective implementation.
- Raise awareness at national, regional and international level.
- Invite UN entities and regional organizations to raise awareness about the decade and the problems faced by people of African descent and take this decade into account in their activity planning.
- Underline the paramount importance of cooperation and coordination between UN entities, regional organizations, civil society and other relevant stakeholders on the decade.
- Encourage voluntary contributions to fund the activities of the decade.
- Ensure the participation and consultation of civil society, in particular those led and organized by people of African descent.
- Memorial to honor the memory of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

In drafting the proposals, the EU has taken into account both the report of the SG on how to make the International Decade for People of African Descent more effective and the WGEPAD's draft report on the program of action.

At the same time, it is well known that the EU has some major concerns regarding the draft work program by the WGEPAD, including on the Working Groups general approach to collective rights. The specific EU concerns have been expressed on several occasions, including in a letter to the chair of the WGEPAD (attached).

Looking ahead it is our sincere hope that the IGWG on the DDPA will focus on proposals that unite us, rather than on issues that have divided us in the past. The EU remains willing to engage actively to ensure a successful Decade, focusing on added value and concrete improvements in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related tolerance.