

**Written Statement by  
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**At the 32nd session of the UN Working Group of  
Experts on People of African descent.**

**Theme:**

**Economic empowerment of people of African descent**

**Item 7: Memoirs of Durban by the legends of Durban**

**Date May 4, 2023**

**Geneva Palais des Nations**

Mr Chair, members of the Working Group, Diplomatic Staffs to the United Nations, Participants, Global African Families

Ubuntu connected Greetings.

Thank you Mr Chair for given me the floor to address some words in the context of memoirs of Durban by the Legends of Durban.

I speak on behalf of Tiye International and the National Monument of Dutch Slavery past. I'm a member of the Global Pan African Coalition on Durban Plus 20 and the implementation of the International UN Decade For people of African descents. I'm one of the Leading facilitators of the African Union African Diaspora 6<sup>th</sup> Region Working Group towards the implementation of the African Union African Diaspora High Council. On July this year we will travel to Maputo to commemorate 20 years of the integration of Article 3Q into the African Union Constitutive Act, wherein the African Diaspora has been invited to be an integrated part in the building of the Union. In total we cover the voices of more than 100 million people of African descent.

Mr. Chair,

The UN World Anti-Racism Conference through which the trans-Atlantic slave trade, slavery and colonialism where declared as crimes against humanity, that's in itself was biblical after so many decades of

struggling to get these harms on the Agenda of the United Nations, since its creation in 1945 and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948. Indeed for the record, we must never forget that it was only in 2000 that the United Nations agreed after the denial to put the issue of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, slavery and colonialism on the previous: first and second UN World Anti-Racism Conference-Agenda.

I would also like to bring in memory the global-wide-mobilization process from the side of the Global Pan African & Reparations Movements, Human Rights activist, scholars, lawyers, scientist and hundreds of NGOs on Regional and National Levels, friends and families of good will. This to ensure that this Durban United Nations ANTI-RACISM world conference could take place. It was a matter of almost life and death. We should not burden our future generations with a situation that still had to be settled within the UN, was the opinion. In Dutch we would say that *we alles uit de kast hebben gehaald* to forcome that the UN would decide to cancel the Conference.

I recommend the Durban 400 documentary for a good oversight of the process that led to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. I was there in Durban, before Durban active involved in the Netherlands and Europe. I was elected unanimous by the Dutch involved NGOs to represent them in the Dutch Government

delegation to Durban as their Liaison. An assignment on the basis of which, after 21 years, I have shown that I have taken the mandate seriously. It has become my life's mission to promote the full implementation of the DDPA. This includes the issue of Reparatory Justice.

Within this regards I would like to bring in memory the recently on 19<sup>Th</sup> December 2022 apology by the Dutch Prime Minister, Mark Rutte on behalf of the Dutch State. I quote: “for the actions of the Dutch state in the past: posthumously to all enslaved persons who have suffered worldwide from that act, to their daughters and sons, and to all their descendants to the here and now [.....] I apologize for the role and commitment of our historic, administrative predecessors in allowing, enabling, promoting, perpetrating and profiting from the slave trade and slavery that have long and structurally undermined human dignity [....]. Furthermore, I apologize for the fact that successive governments after the abolition in 1863 of the slavery too little has been done to acknowledged that the history of slavery had and still has a negative impact” end of quote.

In not one single word the Prime Minister Rutte make a connection with the Durban declaration and Program of Action (DDPA) as an act of implementation the respective paragraphs 100, 101 and 102 of the

DDPA, there where the basis for the apology and reparations has lay down. How historic it would have been if the Prime Minister had done so,...showing respect for a document laying down the basis for the implementation of the action programme and would have been a good example in the spirit of the apology to all countries that have not yet implemented the DDPA agreements.

Because even in the spiritual sense of the apologymaking the Prime Minister did not refer to the DDPA. Can one imagine, that the structural undermining of the DDPA is so deep rooted in the policies of governments? This structural undermining of the DDPA is a blow in the face of all those who campaigned for the holding of the 3rd World Conference against Racism by ensuring the adoption of the DDPA through a broad-based democratic process. Without the DDPA we would not have been as close as we are today in having a global platform positioned to recognize the unfulfilled rights of Africans and people of African descent at the United Nations and global society. But our position is crystal clear, we will not accept any denial of the DDPA in the name of people of African descent neither shall we settle for anything less than our birth right and our human rights.

Mr. Chair I wonder how many lives could have been saved if the UN General Assembly resolutions on DDPA information and outreach programme had been implemented by the nation states and the DDPA been known in its content to people everywhere?

With this question I leave it to the Working Group and all other UN Mechanism to answer. In the trust and the believe that the Working Group know what to do. That the Permanent Forum on people of African descent knows what to do. That the Global African Reparation Movements, The Global Coalition on Durban Plus 20, knows what to do. The Caricom Reparations Commission and the African Union knows what to do.

I thank you for your attention