

**Statement by**  
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**At the Opening of the UNGA High Level  
Meeting on**



**With the Theme: “Reparations, racial justice and  
equality for people of African descent”.**

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Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished guest

Greetings,

I feel much honored to have been selected to deliver the keynote address on behalf of civil society when the United Nations and all people committed to the elimination of racism are proudly commemorating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the landmark Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. For me personally it was one of the greatest events in my life to be part of the adoption 20 years ago of the DDPA in Durban in a spirit of solidarity and which gave voice to and protected the rights of all victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms.

People of African descent no doubt treasure the DDPA most as our ordeal was recognized as the first victims group and the transatlantic slave trade and slavery was recognized as a crime against humanity.

The DDPA is a peoples document based on a thorough preparatory process and broad participation in the preparatory committee meetings. The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its adoption indeed deserve to be commemorated.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the civil society friends from international NGOs in particular those members of the Global Pan African Coalition on Durban plus 20 including the December 12<sup>th</sup> movement who campaigned for the decision to be taken to hold the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference Against racism.

Mr President, My heart Cries,

And I would like to demonstrate this by using the expression **“Truth has the inherent power to produce the promised effect”**. This is to emphasize that we can only be successful in the fight against all forms of multiple racism if we do

what we have promised. To defend and promote the fully implementation of the DDPA which is the strongest universal document of the United Nations' programs to realize the rights of all victims of racism in intersectional perspective including Afrophobia, racial discrimination, and reparatory, restorative and climate justice.

Because of the structurally persistent negative campaign to defame and undermine the DDPA and its implementation as the DDPA in no way shows that it proclaims racism in particular anti-Semitism. 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 (WCAR) by ensuring the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action 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. President

While we are assembling to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of a great UN Programme we cannot be silent on the undermining and defamation of the DDPA that has taken place during the past 20 years and now escalated to the extreme.

We wonder why no senior official of the United Nations has stood up and spoken out against the disinformation and false propoganda against the DDPA that has preceded the anniversary and now caused the absence of different countries, including mine, from the commemoration.

**We wonder how many lives could have been saved if the UN General Assembly resolutions on DDPA information and outreach programme had been implemented and the DDPA been known in its content to people everywhere.**

Mr. President,

I close by saying that my heart is crying but my heart is smiling too.

Because of the importance of paragraph 1. of the Political Declaration whereby the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference, adopted in 2009, as well as the Political Declaration of the tenth years anniversary of its adoption, has been reaffirmed.

We do think however that a special paragraph should be devoted to 'Reparations' as it is already mentioned in the DDPA.

**The very heart, soul, spirit and the essence of the WCAR and the DDPA is the demand for Reparations.** Reparations is a very simply payment for a debt that is owed for crimes against humanity which were committed and, in various degrees and forms, have continued into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The DDPA embodies the demand of the masses of African people past and present.

20 years after Durban we will continue to fight. The DDPA will not be disappeared. Reparations will be received. As we said in 2001:

**THEY STOLE US! THEY SOLD US! THEY OWE US! REPARATIONS NOW.!**

**I thank you for your attention**