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PERMANENT FORUM ON PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT

United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent

Report of the regional consultation for Brazil on the draft United Nations declaration on the respect, protection and fulfilment of the human rights of people of African descent

Brasilia, Brazil

26 November 2025

I. Executive Summary

The Permanent Forum held its third regional consultation with civil society in Brazil to gather inputs to feed the draft Declaration. Discussions centered on systemic and structural racism; reparatory justice; collective rights; sustainable development; and emerging and pressing human rights concerns for people of African descent.

Participants underscored that people of African descent in Brazil face **systemic and structural racism** and intersecting forms of discrimination, with violence a predominant outcome. There are also persistent and cumulative barriers to the enjoyment of economic, social, and cultural rights, including accessing quality health care, education, employment, land, and economic resources. They recommended that the draft Declaration: (i) recognize the lasting impacts of colonialism and enslavement on the lives and rights of people of African descent; (ii) explicitly incorporate intersectionality as a framework; and (iii) reinforce affirmative policies.

On **reparatory justice**, participants stressed the pervasive and persistent impacts of centuries of colonialism and enslavement. Key recommendations included: (i) affirmation of reparatory justice as a guiding principle of justice; (ii) adoption of measures for truth and memory, recognition, healing and spirituality, territorial rights, drug policy reform, institutional transformation, and monetary and financial compensation; (iii) adoption of specific measures for favelas, peripheries, Quilombola territories, riverside and traditional communities.

Regarding **collective rights,** participants affirmed that the absence of formal recognition of people of African descent as Peoples is a contributing factor to the invisibility of the violation of their rights. They recommended: (i) recognition of people of African descent with guarantees of the protection of their collective rights; (ii) prohibition of land grabbing, deforestation, monoculture expansion, and extractive activities in territories of people of African descent; (iii) recognition of these territories as key contributors to biodiversity conservation and climate resilience.

On **sustainable development**, participants highlighted that current conceptualization and implementation of development reinforces violence against traditional populations of African descent. They called for: (i) adopting SDG 18 on Racial Equality; (ii) promoting sustainable development and climate justice by valuing traditional sustainable practices; (iii) declaring that the preservation of biomes is part of the global agenda.

Finally, participants raised concerns about **emerging and pressing human rights concerns**, including climate change and environmental degradation, that disproportionately affect people of African descent as a result of historical dispossession and spatial segregation; as well as algorithmic bias. Recommendations included: (i) recognizing the climate agenda as inseparable from the racial justice agenda; (ii) consolidating the category “Peoples of African descent” as an analytical framework in climate, environmental justice, and vulnerability assessments; (iii)

establishing comprehensive digital legislation to prevent racial discrimination, surveillance abuse, and the dissemination of harmful content.

II. Background

As outlined in General Assembly resolution 75/314 of August 2021, the Permanent Forum was tasked with giving consideration to the elaboration of a draft United Nations Declaration on the promotion and full respect of the human rights of people of African descent. Subsequently, General Assembly resolution 76/226 of December 2021 invited the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent to contribute to the elaboration of such declaration.

Drawing on its mandate to serve as "a consultative mechanism for people of African descent and other relevant stakeholders" and "a platform for improving the safety and quality of life and livelihoods of people of African descent," the Permanent Forum convened its third regional consultation for Brazil to gather input, feedback, and insights from people of African descent on the forthcoming UN declaration on the respect, protection and fulfilment of the human rights of people of African descent. This consultation built on the first and second regional consultations, held for the CARICOM region in Bridgetown, Barbados, on 12 December 2024; and for Spanish-speaking Latin America in Bogotá, Colombia on 19 September 2025.

The consultation aimed to ensure that the voices and experiences of people of African descent in Brazil, including women, LGBTQI+ persons, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, and others, reach States negotiating the text of the Declaration. States are encouraged to heed their calls and craft an instrument that truly represents their aspirations and responds to their needs.

III. Introduction

On 26 November 2025, the Permanent Forum held a one-day consultation with eighty civil society participants from twenty regions[1] from Brazil, with a view to solicit contributions to the draft Declaration on the human rights of people of African descent. Discussions focused on five key areas in which contributions were sought, including: addressing systemic and structural racism; exploring reparatory justice concerning histories and legacies of colonialism, enslavement, apartheid and genocide; collective rights for people of African descent, sustainable development, and pressing and emerging human rights concerns, such as artificial intelligence, climate change and environmental injustice and the reform of the international economic order.

[1] Alagoas, Amapá, Bahia, Brasilia (DF), Ceará, Espírito Santo, Goiás, Maranhão, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Pará, Paraná, Pernambuco, Piauí, Rio de Janeiro, Rondônia, Roraima, Santa Catarina, São Paulo, Tocantins

This report outlines the conclusions and key recommendations drawn from both the written contributions of participants and the discussions held during the consultation day.

IV. Key takeaways

1. Recognizing and addressing systemic and structural racism

Participants highlighted Brazil as a continental country, with the largest population of people of African descent, accounting for approximately 57% of the overall population. They noted, however, that Brazil faces the challenge of recognizing and addressing the multiple forms of systemic and structural racism that operate across interconnected fields hindering the human rights of people of African descent.

They presented violence a predominant outcome of this deeply rooted racism. It is embedded within a system whose laws, institutions, and practices normalize and reproduce violence against racialized populations. When it comes to daily violence, cis and trans women of African descent are the primary victims. When it comes to police violence, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, and mass incarceration, including within the context of drug control policies, people of African descent living in marginalized territories, such as favelas, are disproportionately exposed. At the same time, there is a systemic pattern of impunity and racial selectivity in the handling of cases of violence, including police killings, that leaves to the families of victims pushing to ensure that such incidents are investigated, prosecuted, and witnesses are protected.

Participants said that in political spaces, people of African descent, in particular women, are systematically underrepresented. In addition to structural barriers, people of African descent face threats, harassment, and intimidation when engaging in politics. Their underrepresentation perpetuates a cycle in which policies affecting communities of African descent are designed and implemented without their perspectives.

Participants noted that systemic and structural racism also manifest in persistent and cumulative barriers to the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. They provided examples of structural obstacles faced by people of African descent in accessing quality health care, education, employment, land, and economic resources.

They added that the health of people of African descent reveals profound social inequalities and injustices, as seen in the early occurrence of deaths, high maternal and infant mortality rates, obstetric violence, higher prevalence of chronic and infectious diseases, as well as mental conditions.

In education, they noted that children and adolescents of African descent face elevated dropout rates, disruptions caused by police operations in their communities, and structural barriers to

accessing higher education and vocational training, limiting future employment prospects and perpetuating cycles of poverty and exclusion.

They emphasized that economic disparities remain an obstacle to living a life in dignity as well as social mobility. The denial to populations of African descent of the right to their traditional territories and to productive land, through evictions, denial of access to bank credit and technology, and public agricultural policies, contribute to chronic food and nutritional insecurity, leaving many people of African descent without the means of production nor the purchasing power, leading to the perpetuation of the cycle of poverty.

They stated that domestic work continues to be shaped by the country's slave-owning past in its informality and disproportional presence of women of African descent. These women often lack of social protection, and are excluded from maternity benefits, further exacerbating their vulnerability. Furthermore, income levels are insufficient to ensure basic needs or provide equitable opportunities for children, reinforcing intergenerational inequality.

Finally, participants noted that systemic and structural racism also manifest in attacks against Afro-descendant belief systems, including through the destruction of sacred spaces, the criminalization of religious practices, and the instrumentalization of the legal system in family law disputes, where the practice of African-based religions by one parent is used to justify the removal of children from their care.

Considering the above, participants recommended that States should take into consideration the following recommendations:

- **Recognition of the lasting impacts of centuries of colonialism and enslavement on the lives and rights of people of African descent.**
- **Explicit incorporation of intersectionality as a framework for understanding how race, gender, class, territory, religion, and other identity factors overlap to produce specific and aggravated forms of discrimination and violence.**
- **Acknowledgment of the specific and disproportionate impact of systemic and structural racism on women and girls of African descent.**
- **Acknowledgment of political violence as one of the major obstacles to the right of people of African descent to participate in public affairs, with heightened challenges for women of African descent.**
- **Affirmation of reparatory justice as a guiding principle of justice, informed by truth, memory, and the right to acknowledgment.**
- **Reinforcement of the need for affirmative policies for people of African descent across multiple sectors of society, including education, employment and political participation, among others.**
- **Transformation of police structures, including training reforms and the redesign of police institutions away from a logic of combatting an enemy toward care, including attention to the health and well-being of public security professionals themselves.**
- **Disinvestment from militarized public security models.**

- **Prohibition of discriminatory surveillance technologies, including facial recognition technology, in public security.**
- **Access to justice, including independent, impartial, and culturally competent investigative and judicial systems; mandatory protocols for investigating police killings, deaths in custody, disappearances, torture, and ill-treatment, in line with international standards; and independent oversight mechanisms with the effective participation of affected communities.**
- **Reiteration of the importance of legal aid, public defenders, and community-based legal assistance for people of African descent.**
- **Ensuring adequate representation of people of African descent within police, judicial, and prosecutorial institutions.**
- **Establishment of policies to eliminate racial discrimination in all procedures from policing to sentencing.**
- **Protection of human rights defenders of African descent, communities, and victims' families from retaliation and intimidation.**
- **Requirement for the establishment of public, standardized, and accessible systems for the collection and publication of data disaggregated by race or ethnic origin.**
- **Prevention, investigation, and remedy of online racial discrimination, hate speech, and incitement to violence by States and digital platforms.**
- **Addressing religious racism and attacks against Afro-descendant belief systems, both online and offline.**
- **Promotion of inclusive, equitable, and rights-based connectivity policies to address digital inequalities.**
- **Recognition of the profound racial inequalities in health outcomes affecting people of African descent.**
- **Acknowledging the need for the adoption of plans to eradicate obstetric violence, with a particular focus on women of African descent.**
- **Development of targeted responses to diseases disproportionately affecting populations of African descent and adoption of policies that explicitly address the physical and mental health impacts of racism and racial discrimination.**
- **Recognition that structural and systemic racism violates the human right to adequate and healthy food and threatens the food and nutritional security of people of African descent.**
- **Requirement that States respect, protect, promote, and fulfil the right to food of populations of African descent, including through access to land, territory, productive resources, credit, technology, and equitable agricultural policies.**
- **Addressing racial inequalities in education by ensuring safe learning environments free from state violence, preventing school dropouts, and guaranteeing equitable access to higher education and vocational opportunities.**
- **Recognition of domestic work as a site of historical racial exploitation rooted in slavery, and requiring States to transform domestic work into dignified, formal, and protected employment, including through labour inspection mechanisms, social protection, enforcement of labour rights, accessible high-quality public childcare services compatible with the realities of working women, and policies aimed at breaking intergenerational cycles of exploitation, poverty, and social servitude.**

2. Reparatory justice for histories and legacies of colonialism, enslavement, apartheid and genocide.

Participants noted that reparations must be conceived and implemented in a holistic, transformative, and multi-sectoral manner, guided by the principles of racial justice, gender justice, and intersectionality. Reparatory frameworks should go beyond individual compensation and address the historical and ongoing harms resulting from colonialism, enslavement, and state violence. They added that reparations should encompass measures for truth and memory, healing and spirituality, territorial rights, drug policy reform, institutional transformation, and monetary and financial compensation.

As a primary case for reparatory justice, participants emphasized that the cultural heritage and the contributions of populations of African descent in various countries around the world have been excluded from national identities and reduced within historical narratives. These erasures have made it impossible for these populations to be fully recognized in collective memory. Thus, reparations must include the valorization of Afro-Brazilian culture, the preservation and protection of sites of memory, and the promotion of Afro-centred cultural economies, including Afro-tourism, as a means of combining economic development with the affirmation of Afro-descendant identity and historical accuracy. Memory policies on slavery and post-abolition are a way to achieve not only State recognition of slavery but also of the contemporary consequences of colonialism, slavery, and the genocide of populations of African descent not as events of the past, but as historical processes with direct effects on the present.

Similarly, they advanced that reparations must include the transformation of institutional and power structures that have historically excluded people of African descent from decision-making, leadership, and access to resources, with particular attention to the compounded exclusion faced by women of African descent. They argued that affirmative action policies constitute a key reparatory tool in this regard, while noting that their effectiveness in Brazil has been undermined by inadequate monitoring, lack of transparency, limited participation of social movements, and the concentration of beneficiaries of African descent in lower-ranking positions.

Additionally, participants stressed that reparations must address the spiritual and psychological dimensions of harm caused by racism and racial discrimination. Healing processes should be supported to repair the intergenerational trauma that manifests in mental illness. In that regard, spirituality and community-based healing practices should be considered legitimate and essential components of reparatory justice.

They highlighted that specific and differentiated reparatory measures are required for territories where systemic and racial violence is reproduced, including in favelas and urban peripheries,

Quilombola territories, riverside and traditional communities, and other territories of people of African descent.

Finally, they mentioned monetary and financial compensation as an essential component of reparations to be designed to address both individual and collective harm.

In light of the above findings, participants recommended that States should take into consideration the following recommendations:

- **Full implementation of existing public policies, legislation, and jurisprudence, with the explicit recognition of these measures as a form of reparations rather than a discretionary measure.**
- **Allocation of dedicated and sustainable public funding by States for reparatory policies at national and subnational levels.**
- **Provision of reparations through redistributive taxation, including the taxation of the super-rich.**
- **Creation of national reparations funds that are adequately financed, transparent, and governed with the participation of communities of African descent.**
- **Provision of debt forgiveness and debt restructuring mechanisms as forms of reparatory justice, particularly where debt reproduces colonial dependency.**
- **Review of economic policies imposed on former colonized countries and populations, including trade, fiscal and development frameworks that perpetuate racialized inequality.**
- **Adoption of agrarian reform policies by States, including measures to strengthen family farming, protect territories, and value traditional and community-based knowledge as forms of historical reparation.**
- **Guarantee of the titling, demarcation, and protection of lands traditionally occupied by populations of African descent as a matter of reparatory justice, including Quilombola, riverside, traditional, and peripheral urban territories.**
- **Valorisation of Afro-descendant cultures, including the preservation and protection of sites of memory and the funding of cultural initiatives that affirm their identity in all its diversity.**
- **Promotion of Afro-centred cultural economies, including Afro-tourism, as a means of economic reparation, historical accuracy, and recognition of the contributions of people of African descent to national identities.**
- **Reaffirmation of affirmative action policies in the field of basic and higher education, especially for women and girls residing in traditionally occupied lands.**
- **Evaluation by States of progress in access to and retention of students of African descent in universities, with an emphasis on Afrocentric pedagogy and epistemology as expressions of reparatory justice.**

- **Promotion and strengthening of international cooperation and bilateral agreements to increase exchanges with countries on the African continent, with a view to greater knowledge and appreciation of the African legacy to the history of humanity.**
- **Review and reform of drug policy and public security frameworks as components of reparatory justice, including guarantees of non-recurrence for communities affected by police violence.**
- **Recognition that, in cases of lethal State violence, reparations must go beyond financial compensation to include acknowledgment, truth, individual and institutional accountability, and long-term support for affected families and communities.**
- **Establishment of SDG 18 on Racial Equality and SDG 20 on Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Communities, recognizing racial justice, ancestry, and historical redress as global development priorities.**

3. Collective rights for Peoples of African descent

Participants explained that the struggle of Quilombola communities for recognition of their territories is simultaneously a struggle for survival, ancestry, and dignity. These communities maintain sustainable ways of life, traditional knowledge and balanced relationships with the environment, contributing to environmental conservation and cultural pluralism. Similarly, Terreiros are important spaces for the development, preservation and transmission of African culture, philosophy, memory, well-being and spirituality. In these traditional territories, community and collective dynamics and ancestry are inseparable from the land. However, challenges persist, notably regarding slow land titling, the criminalisation of leaders and the absence of integrated economic, social and environmental support policies.

They highlighted that the absence of formal recognition of people of African descent as Peoples contributes to the invisibility of the violation of their rights and the lack of adequate mechanisms for collective protection and redress. They cited Decree 6040 of 2007, which defines traditional peoples and communities as culturally distinct groups that have their own forms of social organisation, recognise themselves as such, and use traditional territories and knowledge for their cultural, social, religious, ancestral, and economic reproduction. They noted that Peoples of African descent, including Quilombola communities, Terreiro peoples, and urban communities, fully meet these criteria as they possess a continuous collective identity, symbolic and material territoriality, ancestral practices, and their own cultural systems.

They acknowledged that recognizing people of African descent as Peoples does not confer new or special privileges; rather, it constitutes necessary measures to correct historical injustices and ensure substantive equality, and free, prior, and informed consent for any legislative, administrative, or development measure affecting Peoples of African descent or their territories.

In light of the above findings, participants recommended that States should take into consideration the following recommendations:

- **Formal recognition of people of African descent as Peoples, and not merely as a demographic group, in order to guarantee the protection of their collective rights.**
- **Explicit recognition that land and territory are central to the physical, cultural, spiritual, economic, and environmental reproduction of people of African descent.**
- **Further recognition of territories of African descent as key contributors to biodiversity conservation and climate resilience.**
- **Prohibition of land grabbing, deforestation, monoculture expansion, and extractive activities in traditional territories, including Terreiros, Quilombos, and urban biomes maintained by communities of African descent.**
- **Integration of Quilombola, Terreiro, Indigenous, and Afro-Brazilian knowledge systems into environmental governance, territorial planning, and sustainable development strategies.**
- **Institutionalised participation of people of African descent in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of public policies affecting their rights, territories, and ways of life.**
- **Adoption of comprehensive measures to combat religious racism, including the creation of specialised police units and prosecutorial mechanisms; mandatory investigation protocols for crimes against Terreiros and religious leaders; and accountability mechanisms for public officials who perpetrate religious discrimination.**
- **Protection of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of people of African descent, in line with the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), including rituals, knowledge systems, languages, practices, and ancestral territories.**
- **Guarantee of the registration, inventory, and safeguarding of intangible cultural assets with the participation of affected communities.**

4. Sustainable Development

Participants indicated that dominant development models fail to account for Afro-descendant cosmologies, theologies, and knowledge systems, often reproducing violence through extractive, energy, and infrastructure projects presented as “sustainable.” In this regard, the way development is currently conceptualised and implemented reinforces violence against traditional populations, in particular in relation to energy transition processes and development projects linked to mining, which have perpetuated a series of violent acts against populations living in affected territories, even when these projects formally claim compliance with the

Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainable development requires explicit anti-racist frameworks.

In light of the above findings, participants recommended that States should take into consideration the following recommendations:

- **Adoption of SDG 18 on Racial Equality by States.**
- **Recognition that sustainable development and equality among countries can only be fair and lasting if the human rights of people of African descent are fully respected and their rights to traditional knowledge are guaranteed.**
- **Recognition that sustainable development and climate justice must be promoted by valuing the traditional sustainable practices of people of African descent, particularly those living in rural communities, including land management, water use, fire control, and biodiversity conservation.**
- **Recognition that the preservation of biomes, such as the Cerrado and the Amazon, forms part of the global agenda and must promote the human rights of people of African descent who, together with Indigenous Peoples, act as agents of sustainability in these territories.**
- **Reinforcement of equitable distribution as articulated in the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development.**
- **Monitoring of the implementation of SDG 7 (access to affordable energy) with heightened attention to energy access for people of African descent.**

5. Pressing issues and emerging human rights concerns

Climate change and environmental injustice

Participants identified climate change and environmental degradation as urgent and emerging human rights concerns that disproportionately affect people of African descent in all their diversity, as a result of historical dispossession, spatial segregation, and environmental racism.

They emphasized that environmental racism has had devastating impacts on Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities in Brazil across multiple biomes. These impacts include contamination generated by mining activities, livestock farming, and the implementation of large infrastructure projects, such as dams. These projects not only contaminate territories and populations but also result in forced displacement. The use of pesticides in one region contaminates surrounding areas and crops, making sustainable production impossible. This was described as violence through the concept of “sacrifice zones”, a term used to reflect how society implicitly accepts that certain populations can be sacrificed. They argued that these zones are not accidental; they are produced through deliberate political and economic choices as populations of African descent are disproportionately concentrated in territories of high environmental vulnerability (such as peripheries and favelas), as a result of spatial segregation

and omissions by public authorities. However, strategies - such as the consensus on decarbonisation or financing mechanisms - may renew the Global South's dependence as an exporter of raw materials, expanding 'sacrifice zones'. Similarly, national energy transition policies may perpetuate violence against traditional and communities of African descent through large-scale projects that compromise life and territory rather than advancing justice.

Participants emphasized the adverse impact of climate change on riverside communities and communities of African-based religions because of their relationship with nature. Climate change also poses a threat to housing rights for populations of African descent who often lose their homes as a result of climate events and receive no adequate state response. Peripheral communities and low-income women of African descent face amplified risks due to precarious housing, reduced access to adaptation resources, and reduced participation in decision-making spaces.

In light of the above findings, participants recommended that States should take into consideration the following recommendations:

- **Recognition of the climate agenda as inseparable from the racial justice agenda.**
- **Consolidation of the category "Peoples of African descent" as a mandatory analytical framework in climate, environmental justice, and vulnerability assessments at national and multilateral levels.**
- **Reinforcement and institutionalisation of the participation of representatives of African-based religions and communities of African descent in climate decision-making spaces, including COP processes.**
- **Strengthening of community institutions through sustained financial support to enable prevention, response, and recovery in the face of extreme climate events.**
- **Establishment of credit policies and financial mechanisms to support populations of African descent living in high-risk territories, particularly in urban peripheries.**
- **Requirement for the systematic collection and use of disaggregated, intersectional ethnic-racial data in climate policies, national censuses, and environmental assessments.**
- **Recognition of climate reparations as an integral component of historical reparations.**
- **Creation and strengthening of conservation units, in regions such as the Pantanal, with full respect for the rights of traditional and communities of African descent.**
- **Promotion of sustainable, community-based tourism as a means of environmental protection, income generation, and intergenerational justice.**

New and emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence

Participants claimed that in Brazil facial recognition programmes have cost significantly more than social protection programmes although they have been used primarily to arrest non-violent offenders of African descent. In that regard, technology does not simply exacerbate existing racism and racial discrimination; it is actively shaped by it. They also pointed to online content as being insufficiently regulated, frequently contributing to the stigmatisation and legitimisation of violence against people of African descent without any form of accountability or restriction. Meanwhile, the population of African descent is still left behind in terms of broad and quality internet access.

In light of the above findings, participants recommended that States should take into consideration the following recommendations:

- **Establishment of comprehensive digital legislation, including specific regulation of artificial intelligence, to prevent racial discrimination, surveillance abuse, and the dissemination of harmful content.**
- **Prohibition of the use of discriminatory technologies, including facial recognition, in public security contexts.**
- **Regulation of digital platforms by States to ensure accountability for online racial and religious hate speech.**
- **Guarantee of universal, affordable, and quality internet access for people of African descent as a prerequisite for the enjoyment of social, economic, and political rights.**

Gender Justice

Participants added gender justice as a pressing issue noting serious risks not only in Brazil but also in other countries, notably regarding the erasure and denial of gender diversity particularly in relation to reproductive justice and systemic exclusion of LGBTIQ+ persons.

In light of the above findings, participants recommended that States should take into consideration the following recommendations:

- **Integration of gender diversity, including the rights of trans persons, into all public policies affecting people of African descent.**
- **Addressing reproductive justice as a core human rights concern, with particular attention to women and girls of African descent across the life cycle.**
- **Ensuring the systematic inclusion of LGBTQI+ persons of African descent in all policy responses.**