



PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF
AFRICAN DESCENT
IN THE AMERICAS (2016-2025)



OAS

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for more people

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PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF

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(Adopted at the second plenary session, held on
June 14, 2016)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

RECALLING resolution AG/RES. 2824 (XLIV-O/14),
which recognizes the International Decade for
People of African Descent;

RECOGNIZING the valuable contributions at every
level of the member states to the effective
exercise of the human rights of the population of
African descent;

REAFFIRMING the importance of the full and equal participation of people of African descent in all aspects of political, economic, social, and cultural life in the countries of the Americas; and

REAFFIRMING ALSO the steadfast commitment of the member states to confront the scourge of racism, discrimination, and intolerance in their societies as a problem that affects society in general,

RESOLVES:

TO ADOPT the following Plan of Action for the Decade for People of African Descent in the Americas (2016–2025):

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BACKGROUND

According to various international and regional organizations, there are some 200 million people of African descent in the Americas.

People of African descent are among the most vulnerable groups in the Hemisphere as a result of poverty, underdevelopment, social exclusion, and economic disparities that are closely associated with racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance.

In addition, the Afro-descendent nations and other member states of the Caribbean Community have traced their developmental challenges to the legacies of the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, racism, racial discrimination, and intolerance.

Against that backdrop, various international and regional organizations have expressed concern about the vulnerable situation in which people of African descent in the region exist.

The Organization of American States (OAS), through its General Secretariat and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), as well as the Summits of the Americas process, have repeatedly expressed concern about the inclusion, respect for human rights, and meeting the needs of this group.

Further to that concern, the OAS General Assembly adopted resolutions AG/RES. 2550 (XL-O/10), “Recognition of the International Year for People of African Descent” and AG/RES. 2693 (XLI-O/11), AG/RES. 2708 (XLII-O/12), AG/RES. 2784 (XLIII-O/13), and AG/RES. 2847 (XLIV-O/14), “Recognition and Promotion of the Rights of Persons of African Descent in the Americas.”

By resolution AG/RES. 2824 (XLIV-O/14), “Recognition of the International Decade for People of African Descent,” the OAS General Assembly recognized the International Decade for People of African Descent proclaimed by the United Nations. It also instructed the Permanent Council to hold a special meeting to celebrate the start of the International Decade for People of African Descent, with a view to exchanging ideas on preparing an OAS plan of action for the Decade.

In November 2015, the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) of the OAS Permanent Council approved the establishment of the Working Group to Prepare the Plan of Action for the Decade for People of African Descent in the Americas.

This Plan of Action provides a framework for the OAS to implement policies, programs, and projects, as well as guidelines for cooperation with other regional and national organizations to recognize and promote the rights of people of African descent in the Americas.

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THE MEMBER STATES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS),

RECALLING the Charter of the OAS, the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, the American Convention on Human Rights, the Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Protocol of San Salvador), the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the Social Charter of the Americas, the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Related Forms of Intolerance, and the Inter-American Convention against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance;

UNDERSCORING that the OAS member states have focused on persons of African descent in various resolutions of the General Assembly, in the declarations of the Summits of the Americas, in the Declaration of the Regional Conference of the Americas (Preparatory Meeting for the Third World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance), held in Santiago, Chile, in 2000, and at the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean Preparatory to the Durban Review Conference held in Brasilia, Brazil, in 2008;

RECALLING that the vast majority of people of African descent in the Americas are descendants of millions of Africans who were forcibly enslaved and transported as part of the inhuman transatlantic slave trade between the 15th and 19th centuries, which caused indescribable torment to this population, who continue to suffer the effects of slavery;

RECALLING ALSO that the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance recognizes that slavery and the slave trade, especially the transatlantic slave trade, are a crime against humanity and should always have been so;

WELCOMING the efforts at reparatory justice of the Reparations Commission of the Caribbean Community aimed at correcting the legacies of underdevelopment caused by the enslavement of Africans in the Caribbean;

REAFFIRMING the steadfast commitment of the member states to confront, through various mechanisms, the scourge of racism, discrimination, and intolerance in their societies as a problem that affects society in general, and that all of its individual, structural, and institutional manifestations must be fought;

RECALLING the work of the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and against Racial Discrimination of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights;

RECALLING ALSO United Nations resolution 68/237 “Proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent,” which began on January 1, 2015, and ends on December 31, 2024, with the theme “People of African descent: recognition, justice, and development”; and

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the considerations of the special meeting of the Permanent Council to celebrate the start of the International Decade for People of African Descent and the decision of the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs of the Permanent Council to prepare a Plan of Action for the Decade for People of African Descent in the Americas,

ADOPT the following:

PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF

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I. VISION

The member states of the Organization of American States (OAS) will, at the domestic level and through the OAS, strengthen policies, programs, and projects to recognize, promote, protect, and observe the rights of people of African descent in the Americas.

II. MISSION

The OAS member states commit to gradually adopting and strengthening public policies and administrative, legislative, judicial, and budgetary measures to ensure that people of African descent in the Americas can enjoy their economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights and fully participate on equal terms in all areas of society, with the support of the OAS, and to taking the steps needed to include the issue of people of African descent in the policies, programs, and projects of the OAS.

In addition, member states will promote and support programs aimed at correcting the legacies of historical injustices caused by the enslavement of Africans in the Caribbean.

III. CROSSCUTTING IMPLEMENTATION

This Plan will be implemented in a crosscutting manner, with a particular focus on:

Traditionally vulnerable and marginalized groups within the population of African descent as a result of multiple, aggravated, and concomitant forms of discrimination; and

The nations of African descent and other member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) whose legacies of underdevelopment can be traced to the enslavement of Africans in the Caribbean.

In its implementation, the OAS shall:

Include the rights of people of African descent on the agendas of meetings of ministers and high authorities as well as in the policies, programs, and projects, of the organs, agencies, and entities of the OAS.

IV. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

OBJECTIVE 1. *At the OAS level*

Expand and foster cooperation, exchanges of experiences, and good practices to strengthen government structures that implement public policies and mechanisms in each state to promote racial equality.

Promote greater knowledge and respect for the diversity of the legacy and culture of people of African descent and their contribution to societal development.

Annually commemorate International Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade on March 25, focusing on eminent persons of African descent who made significant contributions to the abolition of the slave trade and slavery and to the promotion of civil rights in the Americas.

OBJECTIVE 2. *At the national level*

Gradually adopt public policies and administrative, legislative, judicial, and budgetary measures to enable people of African descent to access and enjoy their rights.

Develop programs and activities, particularly educational programs in primary and secondary schools, to foster greater understanding of the significance of slavery and the slave trade, and their consequences for the lives of people of African descent, as well as to acknowledge the significant contributions of persons of African descent to the economies, cultures, and societies of the region.

STRATEGIC LINES OF ACTION

i. Recognition

(a) Right to equal treatment and nondiscrimination

* Objective 1:

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1. Encourage, where appropriate, the inclusion of government bodies that promote racial equality in the countries of the region in the work of the inter-American networks of the OAS.
2. Create campaigns against the multi-faceted discrimination suffered by people of African descent, in collaboration with other OAS organs and agencies, as well as international and regional organizations.
3. Create a campaign for the signature, ratification, and implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Racism,

Racial Discrimination, and Related Forms of Intolerance, as well as the Inter-American Convention against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance.

4. Promote respect for and tolerance of different cultural expressions and religions with African roots.
5. Promote measures to combat racial profiling.
6. Recommend that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) monitor and prioritize a study on situations related to religious intolerance towards practitioners of African and African-diaspora religions in the Americas.
7. Promote increased funding and the provision of the necessary personnel for the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and against Racial Discrimination of the IACHR as part of an

equitable financial strengthening of all the IACHR rapporteurships.

8. Assist States that so request in a comprehensive review of domestic legislation to identify and abolish provisions that entail direct or indirect discrimination that could affect people of African descent in the region.
9. Promote appropriate legislative measures, where applicable, to strengthen recognition of people of African descent.
10. Advance the development of national action plans to promote diversity, equality, equity, social justice, equal opportunities, and participation for all people of African descent.

*** Objective 2**

1. Promote awareness campaigns on the rights of people of African descent, including campaigns against the multi-faceted discrimination of which they are victims.

2. Promote the inclusion of an Afro-descendant rights perspective in programs and projects that target people in vulnerable situations.
3. Encourage States, as appropriate, to sign, ratify, and accede to the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Related Forms of Intolerance and the Inter-American Convention against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance.

(b) Education on equality and awareness

*** Objective 1**

1. Promote acknowledgment of the history of people of African descent, particularly with respect to the consequences or legacies of the historical injustices of the enslavement of Africans in the Americas.
2. Organize at the OAS expositions on Afro-descendent publications in the Americas, as well as exhibitions on people of African

descent and Afro-descendant artists, and encourage the Art Museum of the Americas to establish cooperative relations with museums on people of African descent and Africans.

3. With the collaboration of international and regional organizations and universities, assist member states to include in study programs the history of Africa and the population of African descent in the Americas, the fight against racism, racial discrimination, and intolerance, and an intercultural approach.
4. Raise the visibility of the cultural economic, political, and social contributions of people of African descent to progress in the region.
5. Consider the creation of a Historical Memory Center in the region.

* Objective 2

1. Advance campaigns to highlight the culture and economic, cultural, and social contributions of people of African descent.
2. Promote the inclusion in study programs of the history of Africa and the population of African descent, the fight against racism, racial discrimination, and intolerance, and an intercultural or ethno-educational approach.
3. Promote the recognition of intangible Afro-descendent cultural heritage.
4. Encourage investment in Afro-descendent cultural research centers and their formalization.
5. Work for the implementation of educational programs aimed at highlighting the positive nature of the contribution made by Afro-descendants as protagonists in constructing the region's nations and their economic,

political, social, cultural, and historical contributions to development.

6. Promote the recovery, collection, and dissemination of Afro-descendant stories, in particular those of women, that highlight their contributions and give them a voice in communities, organizations, and families.
7. Encourage consideration of special measures—including affirmative actions—for access to quality education at all levels for people of African descent.

(c) Information gathering

*** Objective 1**

1. Assist member states that so request in promoting the inclusion of the Afro-descendant variable in national statistics systems.

* Objective 2

1. Compile, analyze, disseminate, and publish reliable statistics at the national and local level and take all necessary related measures to regularly assess the situation of people of African descent in the Americas.
2. Promote the Afro-descendent population's greater statistical visibility for the purposes of public policy formulation and effective observance of human rights.
3. Promote diagnostic assessments of current forms of discrimination against people of African descent.
4. Incorporate the Afro-descendant variable in statistics gathering on migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers which could serve as a basis for introducing public policies on their economic and social inclusion and effective exercise of their rights.

(d) Participation and inclusion

*** Objective 1**

1. Support member states in promoting public policies for the participation and full inclusion of people of African descent in their societies.
2. Promote, through member states, the inclusion, among others, of local governments, communities, and municipalities with an Afro-descendant presence in the OAS Program for Modernization of Municipal Management with the collaboration of international and regional organizations.
3. Promote with the member states, where relevant, electoral observation with an Afro-descendent perspective.
4. Promote the participation of persons of African descent in OAS activities and, *inter alia*, encourage the inclusion of their organizations

in the OAS register of civil society organizations, facilitate mechanisms for dialogue with Afro-descendant organizations, create a Permanent Virtual Afro-descendants Forum of the Americas, and facilitate the participation of people of African descent as social actors in the Summits of the Americas process.

5. Promote, through member states, international meetings of Afro-descendant mayors and authorities.
6. Carry out awareness-raising to improve understanding of the role of public policies in promoting full social inclusion for people of African descent in the region.
7. Support the region's governments in designing, formulating, implementing, and following up on inclusive public policies and in establishing efficient and effective

management mechanisms, with particular emphasis on participation by Afro-descendant civil society and accountability.

*** Objective 2**

1. Promote the inclusion of Afro-descendants and their civil society organizations in the development, formulation, implementation, and follow-up of public policies, the establishment of efficient and effective management mechanisms, and accountability processes by means of consultation mechanisms that facilitate their participation.
2. Encourage leadership training for people of African descent and promote their political participation.

ii. Justice

(a) Access to Justice

*** Objective 1**

1. Move forward the implementation of the recommendations made by the Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA) in its report “The Judicial System and Racism against People of African Descent” (CP/doc.3845/04 corr. 1).
2. Promote the Inter-American Program of Judicial Facilitators in communities with an Afro-descendant presence and those that are predominantly Afro-descendent.
3. Include an Afro-descendent perspective in the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (OID), and the OAS Observatory on Citizen Security.

4. Incorporate an Afro-descendent perspective in the agenda of the Mechanism to Follow Up on Implementation of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, “Convention of Belém do Pará” (MESECVI).
5. Promote measures to combat racial profiling.

* Objective 2

1. Take the necessary steps to implement the recommendations made by the JSCA in its report “The Judicial System and Racism against People of African Descent” (CP/doc.3845/04).
2. Promote instruments and channels of cooperation and dialogue between the security forces and Afro-descendent communities.
3. Promote the inclusion of an Afro-descendent approach in reports to the MESECVI.

4. Promote public policies focused on providing equitable, non-discriminatory treatment that would afford equal access to the justice system for people of African descent.
5. Promote training for justice administrators and operators as well as security forces, especially on national and international rules against ethnic and racial discrimination, and on protection standards for people of African descent, in order to prevent and eradicate racial profiling and excessive use of force, particularly against persons of African descent.
6. Promote the establishment of protocols for dealing with cases of ethnic and racial discrimination.
7. Promote and enforce measures to combat and punish racial profiling.

(b) Special measures

*** Objective 1**

1. Promote affirmative actions for Afro-descendent communities under the Scholarship and Internship Programs of the OAS.
2. Create an affirmative action policy for the Afro-descendent community in all OAS training activities and in hiring and promoting staff in the Organization.
3. Encourage the creation of affirmative actions for people of African descent in the inter-American human rights system, including the institutionalization of scholarships for young persons of African descent in the Internship Program and for lawyers of African descent.
4. Promote the inclusion of a gender perspective in affirmative actions aimed at people of

African descent in the framework of the General Secretariat.

5. Encourage the creation of a compendium of best practices in inclusion of persons of African descent in different areas of the public and private sectors, with special emphasis on education and employment.

* Objective 2

1. Promote the adoption of special measures, including affirmative actions for people of African descent in public administration, and encourage the establishment of measures to stimulate hiring and promotion of people of African descent in the public and private sectors.
2. Encourage the adoption of measures to facilitate political participation and equal opportunity in seeking election to public office for persons of African descent.

iii. Development

(a) Right to development and measures against poverty

*** Objective 1**

1. Mainstream the rights of people of African descent in the agendas of the inter-American committees and networks, in the secretariats, departments, programs, and strategic initiatives of the OAS, and in work related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda).
2. Request the General Secretariat, through its diverse bodies, to incorporate crosscutting dialogues on affirmative actions in favor of people of African descent in the framework of the 2030 Agenda and the International Decade for People of African Descent.

3. Welcome the claim for reparations by some member states of the Caribbean Community and promote and facilitate discussions on this matter among OAS member states.
4. Promote the creation of financial education training programs in collaboration with other international and regional organizations and the private sector.
5. Support the region's governments in formulating, implementing, and following up on inclusive and effective public policies with an emphasis on the participation of people of African descent.

* Objective 2

1. Foster mainstreaming the rights of people of African descent on the agenda of policies and programs in the area of social development and combatting poverty.

2. Encourage the formulation of public policies for people of African descent within the framework of the 2030 Agenda.
3. Encourage member states to include the rights of people of African descent in their country indicators and their respective reports on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
4. Promote the inclusion of the Afro-descendant population in programs for science, innovation and technology, trade and economic empowerment, culture and tourism, sustainable development, and the environment, in particular in communities with an Afro-descendant presence.
5. Encourage the creation of financial education training programs for people of African descent.

6. Encourage the inclusion of cultural and tourism industries in communities with an Afro-descendant presence.
7. Promote training on the rights of people of African descent for public officials working on development programs and policies, including on the multiple forms of discrimination suffered by persons of African descent in vulnerable circumstances.

(b) Employment

*** Objective 1**

1. Promote the creation of vocational training programs in communities with an Afro-descendant presence.

(c) Health

*** Objective 1**

1. Promote an Afro-descendent approach in health policies and encourage campaigns to promote sexual and reproductive health in communities with an Afro-descendant presence, in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization.

*** Objective 2**

1. Promote the inclusion of an Afro-descendant approach in the social determinants of health through inter-sectoral policies, and promote the creation of health programs that target people of African descent.
2. Encourage programs to promote sexual and reproductive health in communities with an Afro-descendant presence.

3. Encourage the creation of national health policies, taking into consideration the need to promote an ethno-racial and intercultural equality approach.
4. Promote the development and implementation of protocols for comprehensive healthcare for recurrent non-communicable diseases in the population of African descent.

(d) Housing

*** Objective 1**

1. Facilitate access to adequate and decent housing with basic utility services for persons of African descent, especially those in vulnerable circumstances.

V. IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The OAS General Secretariat, through its Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity, will be responsible for monitoring implementation of this Plan of Action in coordination with other entities of the inter-American system.

The OAS General Secretariat will collaborate with other organizations, universities, and the public and private sectors in order to create synergies for executing this Plan of Action.

The General Secretariat will report on progress to the Organization every two years at a special meeting of the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs of the OAS Permanent Council.

Upon the conclusion of the Plan of Action, the OAS Permanent Council will hold a special meeting to evaluate the Plan's implementation and examine the possibility of its extension.

Execution of the activities envisaged in the Plan of Action will be subject to the availability of financial resources in the program-budget of the Organization and other resources, in line with the OAS strategic vision.

Approved in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
June 14, 2016
During the Forty-sixth Ordinary Period of Sessions
of the OAS General Assembly



Organization of American States

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