DECLARATION ON THE OUTCOMES AND ACTIONS OF THE VIRTUAL AFRICA AND AFRICAN DIASPORA (AAD) CONFERENCE HELD ON THE

23-29 OCTOBER 2021

1. Overview

The Africa and African Diaspora (AAD) Conference was held virtually from the 23-29 October 2021 on the theme, “Africa and the African Diaspora: From Manchester 1945 to a Pan-African Renaissance: The Shared Journey – The Past, Present and Future.” The conference built on the outcomes of the 1945 Pan African Congress in Manchester. The conference led to a call for a global movement and reinstatement of the principles and ideals of Pan-Africanism in all sectors pertaining to the social, political, spiritual and economic empowerment of Africans and people of African descent in this moment.

A moment that includes, inter alia, critical engagement with global, regional and domestic efforts by civil society, the private and government sectors, including special regard for the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, the 2001 United Nations (UN) World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and other Intolerances in Durban, South Africa, the International Decade for People of African Descent 2015-2024, the new UN Permanent Forum of People of African Descent, the Sustainable Development Goals and the global Black Lives Matter movements and campaigns and other similar Pan African movements.

The conference brought together people of African descent from all the continents of the world (from the African continent, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, North America, Central America, and Oceania-Pacific Islands), and included voices from indigenous peoples and the people of Palestine. The conference was preceded by a Consultative Conference of Women of Africa and of African Descent from the regions referred to above (Pan African Women of Faith/Pan African Women’s’ Ecumenical Empowerment Network-PAWEEN).

2. The Conference Highlights

The Conference was officially opened by the representative of the Government of the Republic of South Africa, President Cyril Ramaphosa's representative, Minister Nathi Mthethwa, and the keynote address was delivered by the Former President of South Africa, President Thabo Mbeki. Throughout the week speakers from multilateral organizations (UN, AU and CARICOM) and from all the regions globally where people of African descent are found addressed various themes outlined in the concept note for, and the program of, the Conference. The conference also included voices from Cuba, the Dalit communities, the Gambia, Haiti, people from the Pacific islands including West Papua, who shared on the challenges faced by the people of Africa and those of African descent across the world.

The conference addressed the challenge of decolonizing the minds of the people of Africa and those of African descent globally and encouraged them to deepen their resolve to take responsibility for their own political, economic, and cultural liberation, and more substantially engage the creative and innovative opportunities offered by the Fourth Industrial Revolution to put people of African descent* on the African continent and globally at the cutting edge of development in the world.

In addressing the economic strategies required to change the economic conditions of Africans and people of African descent globally, the conference heard the passionate plea for reparations. The voices of African descended peoples who have survived and thrived despite the ancestry of our beloved who were enslaved without remuneration for centuries were heard. It was recognized that the wealthier regions of Europe and "the Americas", for example, especially did and do benefit from this history as well as other privileged regions of the global economy—including, historic and continuing inequities, centuries of terror, unethical, unjust and unlawful extraction and exploitation. It was further recognized that indigenous people globally share this history. In this regard, the conference heard of the efforts of the Caribbean Community for justice, recovery and development through their Ten Point Plan for reparations, and people of African descent in the USA through the US House Resolution 40 (H.R. 40) sponsored by Representative Sheila Jackson Lee who also addressed the conference.

The conference also heard from the Pacific islands where nuclear tests in these lands have caused diseases for many generations, which have added to the catastrophic consequences of climate change in the region. It was recognized that climate change is primarily caused by the major "developed countries," which are threatening the lives and livelihoods of the people on these islands.

The conference noted the importance of building bridges between Africans on the continent and people of African descent globally by establishing a global Pan-African

network that is rooted in all the regions where people of African descent are found. Various speakers urged that Africans and people of African descent should work closely with and as part of the Sixth Region of the AU, and the UN Permanent Forum of People of African Descent, to ensure that the challenges facing Africa and people of African descent globally are brought to the highest levels of decision making in the world, including the restructuring of the international governance architecture and establishment of an equitable and democratic international order.

The conference participants agreed that there cannot be Pan-Africanism which is not a Pan-Africanism for all and with all. Pan-Africanism shall engage and include women, youth, the elderly, minorities, and various religious, spiritual, and cultural expressions. Voices of indigenous peoples, the Dalit communities, and of people from Palestine reminded us to collaborate and work together with all people who are oppressed and whose rights are violated to bring about a sustainable transformation in the world with and for humanity and creation.

3. Action Plan

The Conference agreed on the following action plan to work pragmatically towards a Pan-African Renaissance informed and inspired by the ten thematic areas of the conference:

(1) To develop a program of decolonizing knowledge, education, and educational systems to ensure that people of African Descent globally develop tools of critical thinking, research, and innovation to find solutions to challenges facing them and the world. This program shall include a rewriting of our community narratives to unequivocally promote gender equity and the leadership of women in the development of sustainable life in Africa and in the African Diaspora. This platform will also include building partnerships with youth and young adults. These communities will also provide necessary resources to build a platform for the present and future of Africa and people of African descent.

(2) To engage each other in our understanding of our different forms of spirituality and together develop liberating forms of spirituality as part of the decolonizing of the mind and more fully embracing the human spirit. Such engagement will inform how we center human dignity and thereby the human rights of Africans and the African Diaspora in self-determination and progress.

(3) To prioritize solidarity and action especially with Africans on the African continent and people of African descent globally, who are among the most

vulnerable and marginalized. Such solidarity and action will lead to the creation of opportunities and spaces for Africans and People of African Descent globally to interact with and learn from each other, understand each other better, to be able to act in solidarity with one another in a collective manner to change the balance of forces globally and force the world to change its perspectives about Africans and People of African descent, and move us towards ending racism in the world.

(4) To seek a formal relationship with the Directorate of the Division on the Diaspora of the AU (CIDO) based on the AU's Sixth Region for the African Diaspora.

(5) To seek a formal relationship that holds policy leaders, international organizations and civil society actors and actresses accountable for integrating Pan-Africanist ideals in policy and decision-making at the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent as well as support fully the UN International Decade for People of African Descent 2015-2024.

(6) To seek a formal relationship that holds policy leaders, international organizations and civil society actors and actresses accountable to integration of Pan-Africanist ideals in policy and decision-making government bodies in the African Diaspora space—in CARICOM, Latin America, United States, Canada, European Union and other regions on matters that affect people of African Descent.

(7) To create a platform to encourage trade and collaboration in business and civil society enterprising between Africans on the African continent and people of African Descent globally as well as work together to develop enterprises with competitive and comparable advantage globally. This platform shall facilitate regional and national exchange of entrepreneurial initiatives, cultural ideas, critical reflection and capital between Africa and the African Diaspora.

(8) To address the racist perspectives on reparations for Africa and people of African descent and build on continuing efforts of reparatory justice mobilization across the world. Such efforts should address the economic, social and political costs of histories of enslavement of Africans and African diasporas in solidarity with related issues in the Pacific and among indigenous communities, especially in India, the Americas, Europe, and other issues such as those of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa.

(9) To enter consultative processes with as many diverse entities that address matters related to People of African Descent and Pan-Africanism with the view of establishing a sustainable global Pan-African Network within a period of a year to ensure that our commitments are turned into reality to achieve a Pan-African

renaissance to end racism in the world. This shall include a mission of facilitating future dialogue and engaged network activity, and pilgrimages to various locations where people of African descent are found and Pan African histories are (re) discovered, to build a movement towards a vision of transformation with Pan African priorities and themes identified in our concept note for the conference for and with all.

(10) To resolve that a follow-up Pan-African conference be held within three years to evaluate progress made and next steps to be taken to achieve the full liberation of people of African Descent, politically, economically, socially and spiritually.

The Declaration was accepted in principle and referred to a special task team to finalize it and make it available to all participants.

**We are using this reference as part of our understanding of this term. We also acknowledge that the United Nations defines People of African Descent as those outside of the continent of Africa.*