2ND AFRICA AND AFRICAN DIASPORA (AAD) CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE DECLARATION (PARTS I AND II)

“The Return to Africa” • Johannesburg, South Africa • 26–30 October 2026

Part I: The Declaration | Part II: The Annexes

PART I: THE DECLARATION

1. PREAMBLE

We, Africans and people of African descent from the African continent, the Caribbean, Latin America, North America–Turtle Island, Europe, the Pacific, and Asia, together with Indigenous peoples and partners of many faiths and beliefs, gathered in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 to 30 October 2026 for the 2nd Africa and African Diaspora (AAD) Conference under the theme “The Return to Africa”.

We thank the people and the Government of the Republic of South Africa for their warm hospitality, and the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Hon. Ronald Lamola, for the opening address.

We remember our ancestors who were enslaved, colonised and dispossessed, and we do not forget the unborn, to whom we owe a just future.

We stand in the tradition of the Pan-African Congresses since 1900 and of Manchester 1945, and we build on the Declaration and Action Plan of the first AAD Conference of October 2021, which resolved that a follow-up conference be held to evaluate progress and agree to next steps.

We gathered as the women and girls of Africa and the Diaspora who gathered before us, in the Women's Pre-Conference on 26 October, in partnership with the Pan African Women’s Ecumenical Empowerment Network (PAWEEN), under Hagar's words: “You are the God who sees me”. To be seen is to be recognised as people of dignity, rights and history, and to take our place in shaping the agendas that decide our future.

Some of us from the Diaspora entered the continent through the “Doors of No Return”, which we renamed the “Doors of Return”. For those setting foot on African soil for the first time, it was a moment of tears and of homecoming; some told us that they now “feel complete”.

Return, however, is never finite; it is present, continuous and enduring. Africans have always engaged in returning to their homeland.

Under this theme, we reflected on Africa's monetary and resource sovereignty and the African Diaspora’s monetary and resource sovereignty (CARICOM and the Pacific) and financial wellness where the African Diaspora is the minority; economic and climate justice and a just transition; decoloniality, racism, gender justice and human rights; culture, identity and liberating forms of spirituality; reparatory justice; the history of the Pan-African Congresses; the future of Africa and the African Diaspora, and the Diaspora as the African Union's Sixth Region; the state of Indigenous peoples and genocide; and the voices of women, girls and of young people.

We were addressed by three former Presidents: H.E. Thabo Mbeki, former President of the Republic of South Africa; H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, former President of the Republic of Liberia; and H.E. Rev. Prof. Dr Jean-Bertrand Aristide, former President of the Republic of Haiti, whose statement was read on his behalf. We also heard keynote addresses from church, academic and United Nations leaders, and messages of support from Mrs Graça Machel and His Holiness the Most Rev. Dr Rufus Okikiola Ositelu, World Council of Churches President from Africa. The opening messages came from the President of the South African Council of Churches and Metropolitan Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Cape Town,

Bishop Sithembele Sipuka, and the AAD Co-Conveners, the Rev. Dr. Frank Chikane and the Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith. The opening was also accompanied with cultural performing arts from the Republic of South Africa.

We heard of the condition of Haiti, the first Black Republic, born of the revolution of 1804. From its birth, the powers that had enslaved and colonised its people denied it the conditions to flourish: an indemnity was imposed as the price of recognition of its freedom, followed by sanctions, isolation and interference. Haiti reminds us that freedom without justice and repair remains incomplete.

Africa is not a place of pity or a problem to be solved. Our history is one of suffering, but also of courage, creativity, resistance, resilience and triumph.

We understand the return to Africa not only as a homecoming, but as a return to responsibility: to decide together where we are going, and to be judged not by the strength of our words but by the difference we make in people's lives. We now understand the return to Africa as a homecoming of justice, knowledge, capital and dignity, in which a return to responsibility becomes a partnership of equals.

2. AFFIRMATIONS: WE AFFIRM THAT

Theme	Affirmation
Dignity and Being Seen	Every African and person of African descent must be seen, heard and counted. We will rewrite the narratives that diminish us, above all the false narrative about women: “until lions learn to write, every story will glorify the hunter”.
Pan-Africanism with All and for All	Pan-Africanism must include women, girls, young people, the elderly, minorities, Indigenous peoples and people of all faiths, as affirmed in 2021. Africa and its diaspora is home to people of many faiths and beliefs, and we work together with them.
Reparatory Justice	A broad global consensus on reparatory justice has been reached; the task now is to further related negotiations put it into practice. Recognition of the crimes of enslavement and colonialism must lead to meaningful redress that restores dignity and transforms systems and structures within and among countries. This struggle belongs to all Africans and people of African descent, not to states alone. Reparatory justice, climate justice and sovereignty form a single claim: the climate debt, the colonial debt and the debt of enslavement are owed to Africa and the African Diaspora.
Sovereignty and Economic Justice	Africa's debt, the extraction of its minerals and the illicit outflow of its wealth are continuations of colonial patterns. There must be no development without justice, and no sovereignty without control over our resources, our finances and our data. Africa and the African Diaspora, do not owe; Africa and the African Diaspora are owed. Lasting prosperity rests on four sovereignties: over our knowledge, over our resources, over our money and over our bodies. Every resource agreement must pass one test: does the access and use of wealth beneath the ground and related policies and practices honor the health and welfare of all the people and creation above it?
Climate Justice	Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific have contributed least to the climate crisis but suffer first and most. Adaptation is survival and must be planned with communities, not only for them. A just transition must protect workers and communities, and regions like these must not be asked to stay poor in order to be green. Those affected first, women, farmers, workers and Indigenous communities, must co-create and govern the transition, and their guarantees must be written down together before the first plant closes or the first mine opens.
Sustainable Development	The AAD Conference affirms the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to achieve social and international orders – including a global economy – that are environmentally sustainable as well as socially and economically equitable and inclusive, that “leave no one behind”. At the same time, global reparatory justice, global economic justice, environmental and climate justice and redressing systemic and structural racism within and among countries are central to achieving the SDG objectives and should be at the heart of addressing and implementing the SDGs and especially the post-2030 Agenda for sustainable development. The SDGs are about the ordinary lives of our people: ending poverty and hunger, and achieving gender equality etc.
Ending Racism	Racism and racial discrimination against Africans and people of African descent, and the cyclical return of imperial worldviews, remain a global reality, from the legacy of enslavement and colonialism to the racism, xenophobia and discrimination faced today. We recommit to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (2001), the goals of the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent and the second International Decade for People of African Descent (2025–2034), and we call on churches to confront racism within their own life and theology.
Women's Leadership and Safety	The Women's Day Declaration is an integral part of this Declaration. Women must be co-powered and financed to lead, not only placed in office. We cannot celebrate liberation while our daughters live in fear: gender-based violence and femicide must urgently end.
African Intelligence (AI) and Decolonising Knowledge	African thought must move from critique to construction: building its own theories, methods and institutions, with faith as one of its sources, so that Africa and the African Diaspora further shape global knowledge rather than being studied by it. Education at all levels should be African-centred. Guided by Sankofa, we return to retrieve what has been lost, suppressed or distorted, and we hold that decolonising education and knowledge is not peripheral but fundamental to justice, liberation and self-determination.

Self-Determination and Solidarity	Decolonisation is unfinished and must be furthered.
Indigenous Peoples and Knowledge	We stand with Indigenous peoples and with all peoples pursuing self-determination, including the Indigenous Melanesian peoples of West Papua and the peoples of dependent and occupied territories, such as Puerto Rico; and with those suffering war and conflict, including in Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and northern Mozambique. Land is more than a resource: it is a relative, a memory and a home. Reciprocity with the land, the people and creation shall be the first test of every energy, mining and land project: whoever takes from the Earth and Heavens gives back to it and to the communities that care for it. African and Indigenous ways of knowing are sources of science, and our climate data, research and models shall be owned by our own institutions and communities.
Migration	Migration is rarely a choice: it can be driven by war, oppressive regimes, violence against women, climate change and famine. Hostility towards migrants is not the answer; we call for continental solidarity and the protection of migrant and displaced people, especially women and girls.
Artificial Intelligence and Digital Futures	African people and institutions must help shape the ethical development and use of artificial intelligence, so that it does not exploit and thereby harm the land, air, water or labour. Digital technology must respect and reflect the languages, cultures, knowledge, values and lived experiences of Africa and the Africa Diaspora, protect the dignity and data of our people, and open opportunities for women and young people.
The Present and Future Generations	Young people are leaders now and not only the future. The AAD conference affirmed their seats and a real voices in decision-making in the church and in society, and/or the furthering of young people to have opportunities that allow them to build their futures at home, under the theme “Africa, My Home, My Future”. Children, too, must be included: informed and inspired to understand their dignity, rights and identities, and to take part, in age-appropriate ways, in ending gender-based violence and femicide.

3. VISION FOR COMMITMENTS, OWNERS AND 12-MONTH RESULTS

Owners will be confirmed by the AAD Continuing Committee. Each commitment shows the point of the 2021 Action Plan it carries forward, so that the Declaration also reports on progress since 2021 (see Annex D).

No.	Commitment	Proposed Owner	Result by October 2027
1	Implement the six commitments of the Women's Day Declaration, and establish a permanent network of women across Africa and the Diaspora (2021: point 1)	Women's Pre-Conference leadership, with PAWEEN	Network launched in all six regions; a first joint advocacy statement to a multilateral forum; a report on women in decision-making in member churches
2	Explore a fund for women's leadership, as proposed by H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, covering security for women candidates and childcare for women in office	Co-Convenors, with partners	A concept note and consultations with governments, development banks and private partners
3	End gender-based violence and femicide, including through raising boys and young men with values of equality, dignity and respect, and by observing the International Day of Women and Girls of African Descent (25 July; see Annex F)	Churches and councils of churches in each region, with PAWEEN and partners, including the UN	Development of a model for a faith-based campaign in each region, and an annual day of prayer and action for women affected by violence with partners.

4	Put reparatory justice into practice: support the AU Framework for Reparations, the CARICOM Ten Point Plan and the UN Permanent Forum; stand with Haiti's call for restitution; and treat finance for loss and damage as a form of reparation, paid as grants that reach affected communities directly, never as loans (2021: point 8)	An AAD reparations accompaniment working group, with representatives of each region	An AAD position paper on how reparations should be understood and ways of implementation (for example, a development fund), that reflects a structured dialogue involving African, Caribbean and Diaspora representatives, governments, churches and institutions that benefited from enslavement and colonial exploitation; reparations education resources for churches in each region
5	Advance economic sovereignty: call for an annual report on what AU member states and related multilateral institutions, i.e. the World Bank, International Monetary Fund etc., have done about illicit financial flows, and for a debt jubilee; organise African and Diaspora capital for development; revive the Africa–Diaspora trade and enterprise platform and the 2012 Global African Diaspora Summit flagship projects (2021: point 7)	An AAD economic justice working group	A submission to the AU on illicit financial flows; a first Africa–Diaspora business and investment exchange
6	Climate justice and a just transition: community-centred adaptation with finance that reaches municipalities and community groups directly; knowledge partnerships; pathways for women and young people in the energy transition	An AAD climate justice working group and partners	At least one community adaptation partnership in each region
7	Decolonise knowledge, education, pedagogy, imagery and curriculum and develop the next generation of African thought: research networks, curricula, African-language scholarship and mentoring of emerging scholars (2021: point 1)	Colleges, universities and educational institutions and organisations at all levels in the AAD network	Identification of a network of scholars, educators, researchers and mentors skilled in African-centred pedagogy, curriculum development, critical thinking and broad-based methodologies
8	Young people as leaders: full participation of youth and young adults and development of community space	Youth and young adult representatives of each region in partnership with the advance of the All Africa Youth Network movement under the theme “Africa, My Home, My Future”, (AACC)	Youth caucus in place, with a seat in the AAD mechanism; a youth programme of exchange, mentoring and relationship building.
9	Solidarity with peoples seeking self-determination, including West Papua: dialogue with Papuan organisations, support for UN human rights monitoring, and Africa–Caribbean–Pacific solidarity networks (see Annex C)	AAD Co-Convenor from the Pacific and its regions	A dialogue with Papuan churches and organisations; a joint statement to the relevant UN mechanisms
10	Migration: confront xenophobia and protect migrant and displaced people, especially women and girls	Churches in South Africa and in each region	Development of a campaign against xenophobia; practical support for migrant women through member churches
11	Formalise relationships with the AU (including the 6th Region and its Diaspora directorate, CIDO), CARICOM (2021: points 4 to 6), the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent and other UN mechanisms	Co-Convenors and the AAD secretariat	Formal engagement agreed with the AU and the UN Permanent Forum; AAD outcomes presented to both

12	Formalise relationships with civil society, organisations and groups to explore the possibility of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for accountability and redress with a possible related Pan-African media and film co-production guarantee fund that tells these authentic stories of Africa and its Diaspora.	To be confirmed and groups identified. Skills/Expertise: Legal Counsel, Public Policy advocates, Communication Storytellers.	Names and Groups identified and confirmed and groups identified to bring an initial research report with costs and capacity recommendations.
13	Community outreach and a regional day of mobilisation: take the Conference to the people through community outreach, and each region chooses one day a year to mobilise its people and communities around this Declaration (proposed by the Africa region)	Regional co-convenors, with member churches and partners in each region	Each region has chosen its day and held at least one outreach and mobilisation day, and reported on it to the AAD Continuing Committee
14	Artificial intelligence and data justice: build digital and AI skills among women and young people; support AI and data initiatives in African languages; and develop guidance for churches and communities on the ethical use of AI (2021: the Fourth Industrial Revolution)	Universities and technology partners in the AAD network, with the youth caucus	A framework for a digital and AI skills programme for women and young people in at least three regions; an AAD guidance note on ethical AI for churches and communities
15	Monetary sovereignty and community capital: African, resource-backed monetary systems that turn dormant assets into productive capital and end arrangements, such as the CFA franc, that place African money in foreign hands; value retained where resources are found; public and community banks capitalised by resource rents; and Diaspora, congregational and community savings pooled to co-own productive African assets, with people before profit (Session A)	An AAD economic justice working group, with African central banks, development finance institutions, Diaspora faith institutions and civic organisations	The partners convened, and a blueprint for a pooled Africa–Diaspora ownership vehicle and a resource-backed settlement instrument presented by October 2027

4. THE MECHANISM TO TAKE THE AAD FORWARD

“To turn these commitments into results, we establish the AAD Continuing Committee and a permanent Global AAD Network, as resolved in 2021.”

Element	Proposal
AAD Continuing Committee	The two Co-Convenors and the regional co-convenors of Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, North America–Turtle Island, Europe and the Pacific, with two women (younger and older) women's and two youth representatives (two male and one female)—(balancing male and female numbers).
Secretariat	A small secretariat, hosted by a partner institution, to coordinate the working groups, keep records, organise meetings and communicate with the regions
Working groups	Women; reparatory justice; economic justice and monetary sovereignty; climate justice and resilience; decolonising knowledge and AI; youth; solidarity and self-determination. Each has a named lead and reports every six months
Global AAD Network	The network resolved in 2021 is formalised, rooted in every region and connected to the AU, the UN Permanent Forum and regional bodies
Accountability	A public progress report at 12 months (October 2027) and a two-year review (October 2028), measured against the results in section 3. Each region reports on its outreach and mobilisation day. Progress on the 2021 Action Plan is recorded honestly, including where little has been achieved (Annex D)

Next Conference	A 3rd AAD Conference within three years to evaluate progress; the host region and date will be announced. Make the Conference accessible to the public: clear language, outcomes in accessible formats, and opportunities for community members, young people, artists and entrepreneurs to take part
Communication	This Declaration and the Conference report shared with all participants, partner churches, the AU, the UN and others who asked for the outcomes

PART II: THE ANNEXES

ANNEX A: ACTION PLAN

The commitments of section 3, with owners, results and reporting dates (April 2027 & October 2027).

ANNEX B: WOMEN'S DAY DECLARATION

Final version of 28 October 2026, reproduced as received, without changes.

“You are the God who sees me.” (Genesis 16:13)

We, African women and women and girls of the African diaspora, gathered in South Africa on the occasion of the Pan-African Conference “Return to Africa,” recognize this gathering as part of a long history/herstory of memory, resistance, faith, organizing, and collective action. We gather remembering that no history/herstory of freedom begins from scratch. Today, we carry the memory of the women who came before us... Therefore, we make six commitments: (1) Leadership and Political Participation; (2) Climate Justice and Confronting Environmental Racism; (3) Dignity and Rights of Women and Girls Experiencing Migration; (4) Economic Justice, Poverty Elimination, and Food Security; (5) Memory, Reparatory and Historical Justice; (6) Strengthening Women’s Networks and Collective Action.

ANNEX C: PROPOSED ADDITIONS ON WEST PAPUA AND SELF-DETERMINATION

The Conference recognised that the struggle for liberation, human dignity and racial justice remains unfinished in many parts of the world, including the Pacific. Particular concern was expressed regarding the situation of Indigenous Melanesian peoples in West Papua, where longstanding questions of self-determination, racial discrimination, human rights, cultural identity, and control over ancestral lands and natural resources remain unresolved. Decolonisation must be understood not only as the ending of formal colonial rule but also as the restoration of political agency, cultural identity, spiritual dignity, and the right of peoples to determine their own futures.

ANNEX D: PROGRESS ON THE 2021 ACTION PLAN

Progress on each point of the 2021 Action Plan will be reported honestly in the 12-month progress report (October 2027), including where little has been achieved. Unfinished actions are carried forward in the 2026 commitments.

ANNEX E: REGIONAL ACTION PRIORITIES INFORMING THE DECLARATION AND ACTION PLANS

Extracted from the regional reports submitted to the Plenary by Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, North America–Turtle Island, and thematic scholars.

ANNEX F: UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION: INTERNATIONAL DAY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS OF AFRICAN DESCENT

Resolution A/78/L.96 (Brazil and Colombia), proclaiming 25 July as the International Day of Women and Girls of African Descent.