

AG/RES. 2824 (XLIV-O/14)

RECOGNITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN
DESCENT^{1/}

(Adopted at the second plenary session, held on June 4, 2014)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

RECALLING resolution AG/RES. 2550 (XL-O/10), which recognizes the International Year for People of African Descent;

BEARING IN MIND:

That the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in that instrument, without distinction of any kind, particularly for reasons of race, color, or national origin;

That the Charter of the Organization of American States establishes as one of the principles of the Organization recognition of the fundamental rights of the individual without distinction as to race, nationality, creed, or sex;

That the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man establishes that all men are born free and equal, in dignity and in rights, without distinction as to race, sex, language, creed, or any other factor;

That the Social Charter of the Americas states: “Member states recognize the contributions of indigenous peoples, afro-descendants, and migrant communities to the historical process of the Hemisphere and will promote recognition of their value”; and

That the Inter-American Democratic Charter proclaims that respect for ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity in the Americas contributes to strengthening democracy and citizen participation;

MINDFUL of the historical bonds and shared experiences which tie together the American and African continents, the fundamental contributions of persons of African descent and their communities in the Americas, and the importance of recognizing and preserving that heritage;

RECALLING the relevant provisions on people of African descent contained in the declarations of the Summits of the Americas, as well as 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 the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean Preparatory to the Durban Review Conference held in Brasilia, Brazil, in 2008;

1. The United States has consistently objected to the negotiation of new legally binding instruments against racism, racial discrimination and other forms of discrimination or intolerance...

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

BEARING IN MIND that in February 2005, in recognition of the racial discrimination that persists against persons of African descent in the Americas, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) established a Special Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and against Racial Discrimination, in order to promote the recognition and the rights of those persons;

RECALLING ALSO the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993; the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2001; and the Outcome Document of the Durban Review Conference against Racism held in Geneva in 2009;^{2/}

CONSIDERING that the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 64/169, “International Year for People of African Descent,” which proclaimed 2011 the International Year for People of African Descent, with a view to strengthening national actions and regional and international cooperation for the benefit of people of African descent in relation to their full enjoyment of economic, cultural, social, civil, and political rights; their participation and integration in all political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of society; and the promotion of greater knowledge of and respect for their diverse heritage and culture;

RECALLING that the Ibero-American High Level Meeting [CHECK Summit?] to Celebrate the International Year of People of African Descent in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, in November 2011, recognized that “despite the progress achieved in various countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to promote the rights of people of African descent, great challenges remain to ensure the full inclusion of this population segment on equal conditions in the social, cultural, economic, and political life, taking into account different national realities”;

RECALLING ALSO the Third World Summit of Afro-descendant Mayors and World Leaders, held in Cali and Cartagena, Colombia, in September 2013; and the Latin America and Caribbean Region Meeting on the Decade for People of African Descent, held in Brasilia, Brazil, in March 2014;

REAFFIRMING 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; and

TAKING NOTE of the General Assembly’s June 5, 2013 adoption of 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, which help to consolidate the democratic content of the principles of legal equality and nondiscrimination,

2. While Canada supports the essence and objectives of this resolution, it opposes the references to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference against Racism, ...

RESOLVES:

1. To reaffirm 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.

2. To take note of resolution 68/237, adopted by consensus at the United Nations General Assembly on December 23, 2013, in which it was decided to proclaim the International Decade for People of African Descent, commencing on 1 January 2015 and ending on 31 December 2024, with the theme “People of African descent: recognition, justice and development.”

3. To also note with satisfaction the Communiqué of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States that proclaimed the Decade of Latin American and Caribbean Afro-descendants, beginning on January 1, 2014, and concluding on December 31, 2023.

4. To instruct the Permanent Council to hold a special meeting in the first half of 2015 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.

5. To request that the Permanent Council report to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth regular session on the implementation of this resolution. Execution of the activities envisaged in this resolution will be subject to the availability of financial resources in the program-budget of the Organization and other resources.

FOOTNOTES

1. ... We reiterate our longstanding reservations and concerns with that exercise and the resulting conventions. We are concerned that some provisions of the conventions could undermine or are incompatible with international human rights law protections including those related to freedoms of expression and association. There is already a robust global treaty regime that provides comprehensive protections in this area. The Inter-American instrument runs the risk of creating inconsistencies with this global regime. as early as 2002, the Inter-American Juridical Committee articulated similar concerns, concluding that it was not advisable to negotiate a new convention in this area. The United States believes that – rather than promoting those new instruments -- the resources of the OAS and of its member states should be used to identify practical steps that governments in the Americas might adopt to combat racism, racial discrimination and other forms of discrimination and intolerance, including best practices in the form of national legislation and enhanced implementation of the global instruments.

2. ... Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2001 and related processes contained in the preamble of this resolution. Instead of fostering concerted global action against racism, the 2001 Conference degenerated into a politicized forum which served to promote intolerance and anti-Semitism, rather than combat it. Canada firmly believes that the Durban process remains highly politicized to this day and that it has been unable to distance itself from its controversial past, including its open and divisive expressions of intolerance and anti-Semitism. While Canada disapproves of the reference to this process in this resolution, Canada will nevertheless continue to work in practical ways with the OAS and its member states towards addressing racism, promoting tolerance and non-discrimination, as well as recognizing and promoting the rights of people of African descent in the Hemisphere.