

AG/RES. 2891 (XLVI-O/16)

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

(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 persons 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;

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 Persons of African Descent in the Americas:

# **PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE DECADE FOR PERSONS OF AFRICAN DESCENT IN THE AMERICAS**

**(2016-2025)**

## **BACKGROUND**

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

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

In addition, the Afro-descendant nations and other member states of the Caribbean Community have traced their developmental challenges to the legacies of the Trans Atlantic 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 persons 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 also repeatedly expressed their concern about inclusion, respect for human rights, and meeting the needs of this group.

Following up on that concern, the OAS General Assembly adopted resolutions AG/RES. 2550 (XL-O/10) "Recognition of the International Year of Persons of African descent"; AG/RES 2693 (XLI-O/11) "Recognition and Promotion of the Rights of Persons of African descent in the Americas"; AG/RES. 2708 (XLII-O/12) "Recognition and Promotion of the Rights of Persons of African descent in the Americas"; AG/RES. 2784 (XLIII-O/13) "Recognition and Promotion of the Rights of Persons of African descent in the Americas"; and AG/RES. 2847 (XLIV-O/14) "Recognition and Promotion of the Rights of Persons of African descent in the Americas."

Through resolution AG/RES. 2824 (XLIV-O/14), "Recognition of the International Decade for Persons of African descent," the OAS General Assembly recognized the International Decade for Persons of African descent, which was proclaimed by the United Nations. It also instructed the Permanent Council to hold a special meeting to mark the beginning of the International Decade or Persons of African descent, with a view to exchanging ideas for the possible development of an OAS Plan of Action for the Decade.

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

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

**PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE DECADE FOR**

## **PERSONS OF AFRICAN DESCENT IN THE AMERICAS**

**(2016-2025)**

THE MEMBER STATES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES,

BEARING IN MIND the Charter of the Organization of American States (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;

STRESSING that the OAS member states have focused on persons of African descent in various resolutions of the OAS General Assembly, 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;

RECALLING that vast majority of persons of African descent in the Americas are the descendants of millions of Africans who were forcibly enslaved and transported in the framework of the inhumane practice of the transatlantic slave trade, between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries, that caused indescribable hardship to this population who continue to suffer the effects of slavery;

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

ACKNOWLEDGING the movement by the Caribbean Community Reparations Commission for reparatory justice to correct 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;

BEARING IN MIND 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.

BEARING IN MIND AS WELL United Nations resolution A/RES/68/237 “Proclamation of the International Decade for Persons of African descent,” which began on 1 January 2015 and ends on 31 December 2024, under the theme “Persons of African descent: Recognition, Justice, and Development.”

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the considerations of the Special Meeting of the OAS Permanent Council to celebrate the start of the International Decade for Persons of African descent, and the decision of the OAS Permanent Council’s Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs to prepare a Plan of Action for the Decade for Persons of African descent in the Americas.

ADOPT the following Plan of Action:

# **PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE DECADE FOR PERSONS OF AFRICAN DESCENT IN THE AMERICAS**

**(2016-2025)**

## **I. VISION**

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

## **II. MISSION**

The member states of the Organization of American States commit to gradually adopting and strengthening public policies and administrative, legislative, judicial, and budgetary measures to ensure persons 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, taking the steps needed to include the issue of persons of African descent in the policies, programs, and projects of the OAS.

In addition, Member States of the Organization 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 cross-cutting manner, with special focus on:

The traditionally vulnerable groups within the population of African descent due to the multiple, aggravated, and concomitant forms of discrimination.

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

In its implementation, the Organization of American States (OAS) shall:

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

## **IV. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

**Goal 1: For the Organization of American States (OAS)**

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

Promote enhanced knowledge and respect of the diversity of the legacy and culture of persons of African descent and their contribution to societal development.

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

## **Goal 2: For countries**

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

Develop programs and activities, particularly educational programs at the primary and secondary school levels to foster an understanding of the significance of slavery and the slave trade, and their consequences on the life of persons 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
- II. Justice
- III. Development

## **I. Recognition**

### ***(a) Right to equal treatment and nondiscrimination***

#### Goal 1:

1. Promote, when relevant, the incorporation of government bodies that promote racial equality in the work of the OAS' Inter-American Networks in the countries of the region.
2. Create campaigns against the multi-faceted discrimination suffered by persons of African descent, in collaboration with other organs and organization of the OAS and 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, and 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. To promote measures aimed at combating 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 the strengthening of financial resources and the provision of the necessary personnel to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Office of Special Rapporteur for Persons of African descent and against Racial Discrimination, as part of a process for the integral strengthening of all rapporteurships of the Inter American Commission on Human Rights.
8. Support states that so request, in the comprehensive review of domestic legislation to identify and abolish provisions that entail direct or indirect discrimination that could affect the persons of African descent in the region.
9. Promote appropriate legislative measures, where appropriate, to strengthen recognition of persons of African descent.
10. Promote the development of national action plans to promote the diversity, equality, equity, social justice, equal opportunities, and participation of persons of African descent.

Goal 2:

1. Promote awareness campaigns about the rights of persons of African descent, including campaigns against the multi-faceted discrimination of which they are victims.
2. Promote the inclusion of the focus on the rights of African descent in programs and projects aimed at vulnerable persons.
3. Encourage the signing, ratifying and adherence 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*

Goal 1:

1. Promote the recognition of the history of persons of African descent, particularly the recognition of the consequences or legacies of the historical injustices of the enslavement of Africans in the Americas.
2. Organize, at the OAS, expositions featuring publications from persons of African descent in the Americas, as well as exhibitions on persons and artists of African descent, and encourage the Art Museum of the Americas to establish cooperative relations with museums on persons of African descent and Africans.
3. In collaboration with international and regional organizations and universities, assist member states with the inclusion of the history of Africa and the population of African descent in the Americas, of the fight against racism, racial discrimination, and intolerance, and of the intercultural approach in study programs.

4. Raise the visibility of the cultural economic, political and social contributions made by the Afro-descendant population to progress in the region.
5. Consider the creation of a Historical Memory Center in the region.

Goal 2:

1. Promote campaigns to highlight culture and the economic, cultural and social contributions of persons of African descent.
2. Promote the inclusion of the history of Africa and the population of African descent, of the fight against racism, racial discrimination, and intolerance, and of the intercultural or ethno-educational approach in study programs.
3. Promote the recognition of intangible Afro-descendant cultural heritage.
4. Encourage investment in and the formalization of Afro-descendant Culture Research Centers.
5. Work for the implementation of educational programs aimed at raising the positive visibility 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 enhance the visibility of 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 persons of African descent.

**(c) *Information gathering***

Goal 1:

1. Support the states, upon request, in promoting the inclusion of the Afro-descendant variable in national statistical systems.

Goal 2:

1. Compile, analyze, disseminate, and publish reliable national and local statistical information and take other related necessary measures to regularly assess the status of persons of African descent in the Americas.
2. Promote the greater statistical visibility of the population of African descent for the formulation of public policies and the effective observance of human rights.
3. Promote diagnostic studies on current forms of discrimination against persons of African descent.

4. Incorporate the Afro-descendant variable in the collection of statistical data on migrant populations, refugees and those requesting refugee status to serve as a basis to establish public policy for economic and social inclusion and the effective exercise of their rights.

**(d) *Participation and inclusion***

**Goal 1:**

1. Support member states in promoting public policies for the participation and full inclusion of persons of African descent in their societies.
2. Promote, through member states, the inclusion of local governments, localities, municipalities or others in communities of persons of African descent in the Program for Modernization of Municipal Management, in collaboration with international and regional organizations.
3. Promote with the member states, when relevant, electoral observation with the Afro-descendant approach.
4. Promote the participation of persons of African descent in OAS activities and, among other things, promote inclusion of their organizations in the OAS Civil Society Register, facilitate forums for dialogue with Afro-descendant civil society organizations, create a Permanent Virtual Forum for Persons of African descent in the Americas, and facilitate the participation of persons of African descent as stakeholders in the Summits of the Americas process.
5. Promote, through member states, International Meetings of Afro-descendant Mayors and Authorities.
6. Develop awareness-raising processes to better understand the role of public policies in promoting the full social inclusion of the region's population of African descent.
7. Support the region's governments in designing, formulating, implementing, and following up on inclusive public policies and in establishing mechanisms for efficient and effective management, with particular emphasis on participation by Afro-descendant civil society and on accountability.

**Goal 2:**

1. Promote the inclusion of Afro-descendant persons and civil society organizations in the processes of development, formulation, execution and follow-up of public policies in the establishment of efficient and effective management mechanisms and accountability, through consultative mechanisms that facilitate their participation.
2. Encourage leadership training of the population of African descent and promote their political participation.

**II. Justice**

**(a) *Access to Justice***



### Goal 1:

1. Encourage implementation of the recommendations made by the Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA) in its report on the Judicial System and Racism against Persons of African Descent in the Americas.
2. Promote the Judicial Facilitators Program in communities of persons of African descent and those that are predominantly Afro-descendant.
3. Include the Afro-descendant approach in the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (OID), the OAS Observatory on Citizen Security.
4. Include the Afro-descendant approach on the agenda of the Follow-up Mechanism for the Convention of Belem do Para (MESECVI).
5. Promote and apply measures aimed at combating racial profiling.

### Goal 2

1. Take the necessary measures towards the implementation of the recommendations made by the Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA) in its report on the Judicial System and Racism against Persons of African Descent in the Americas.
2. Promote instruments and channels of cooperation and dialogue between the security forces and communities of persons of African descent or those that are predominantly Afro-descendant.
3. Promote the inclusion of the Afro-descendant approach in the reports of the Follow-up Mechanism for the Convention of Belem do Para (MESECVI).
4. Promote public policies focused on providing equitable non-discriminatory treatment which will allow for equal access to the justice system for persons of African descent.
5. Promote the training of justice administrators and operators and security forces, especially on national and international legislation to combat ethnic and racial discrimination, and on protection standards for persons of African descent, to prevent and eradicate racial profiling and excessive use of force, especially against persons of African descent.
6. Work for the establishment of protocols for dealing with cases of ethnic and racial discrimination.
7. Promote and apply measures aimed at combating and punishing racial profiling.

**(b) *Special measures***

**Goal 1**

1. Promote an affirmative action policy for communities of persons of African descent under the OAS Academic Scholarship Program and Internship Program.
2. Create an affirmative action policy for the community of persons of African descent in all OAS training activities and in hiring and promoting staff in the Organization.
3. Encourage the creation of affirmative action policies for persons of African descent in the Inter-American Human Rights System, including the institutionalization of scholarships for young professionals of African descent in the internship program and for lawyers of African descent.
4. Promote the inclusion of gender in affirmative action policies aimed at the Afro-descendant population 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 various areas of the public and private sectors, with special emphasis on education and employment.

**Goal 2**

1. Promote the adoption of special measures, including affirmative actions for persons of African descent in public service, and encourage the establishment of such measures to promote the hiring and promotion of persons of African descent in the public and private sectors.
2. Promote the adoption of measures that facilitate political participation and equal opportunity to seek election of persons of African descent to office.

**III. Development**

**(a) *Right to development and antipoverty measures***

**Goal 1**

1. Include the rights for persons of African descent on the agendas of the Inter-American Committees and Networks, secretariats, departments, programs and strategic initiatives of the OAS and in the development of work related to the 2030 Agenda.
2. Request the General Secretariat, through its diverse bodies, to incorporate cross-cutting dialogues on affirmative actions in favor of persons of African descent, in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the Decade for Persons of African descent.
3. Recognize the claim for reparations by some member states of the Caribbean Community and to promote and facilitate discussions on this matter among member states of the OAS.

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 efficient public policies with emphasis on the participation of persons of African descent.

#### Goal 2

1. Encourage inclusion of the rights of persons of African descent on the agenda for social development and anti-poverty policies and programs.
2. Encourage the formulation of public policies for the population of African descent within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
3. Encourage member states to include the rights of persons of African descent in their country indicators and in 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 among communities with an Afro-descendant presence.
5. Encourage the creation of financial education training programs in communities with an Afro-descendant presence.
6. Encourage inclusion of cultural and tourist industries in communities with an Afro-descendant presence.
7. Promote training on the rights of persons of African descent for public officials working on development programs and policies on the Afro-descendant approach, as well as on the multiple forms of discrimination suffered by persons of African descent in vulnerable situations.

#### **(b) *Employment***

##### Goal 1

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

#### **(c) *Health***

##### Goal 1

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

## Goal 2

1. Promote the inclusion of the Afro-descendant approach in the social determinants of health through inter-sectoral policies, and promote the creation of health programs for persons of African descent.
2. Encourage campaigns to promote sexual and reproductive health in communities with an African-descendant presence.
3. Encourage the creation of national health policies taking into consideration ethno-racial and intercultural perspective.
4. Promote the development and implementation of protocols for comprehensive healthcare for recurrent non-communicable diseases in the population of African descent.

### *(d) Housing*

## Goal 1

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

## **V. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

Through its Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity, the OAS General Secretariat will be responsible for monitoring implementation of this Plan of Action and coordination of its activities, and will collaborate with other bodies of the inter-American system.

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

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

When the current Plan of Action runs its course, the OAS Permanent Council will hold a special meeting to evaluate the implementation of the Plan and consider the possibility of extending its mandate.

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