



## United Nations People of African Descent (UNPAD)

### Activity Report and Biennial Programme Plan for 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2023

#### Theme: *Diversity for Success*

#### Contents

	Page
A. Overview and Strategic Vision .....	1-2
B. Work of UNPAD .....	2-3
C. Funding Considerations .....	3-3
D. Key Objectives of 2022-2023 Programme of Activities.....	3-4
E. Key Activities of 2022-2023 .....	4-5
i. Advocacy	
ii. Think-tank	
iii. Operational	
F. Anticipated Impact .....	5-5
G. Measurements of Success .....	5-5

#### A. Overview and Vision

1. Current patterns of human migration predict that the populations of many nations that are presently viewed as monolithic societies will in the future be a conflation of different races, cultures, and ethnicities<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, growing empirical evidence shows that decisions that reflect the diversity of the views of the people to be impacted are more durable and impactful. Therefore, as nations become increasingly multicultural, multiracial and multiethnic, the decision-making process of governmental and intergovernmental entities must equally reflect this diversity in order to produce acceptable and successful decisions that will provide all with a stake in their society and minimize dissidence. For the United Nations to meet its 21<sup>st</sup> century obligations toward this new demography of nation States, it must embrace *diversity for success*. That is to say that *diversity and inclusion* can no longer be viewed as an add-on activity. Instead, *diversity and inclusion* must become a doctrinal priority and policy that the UN promotes at all levels of governmental and international decision-making, as an indispensable tool for achieving cohesive and peaceful societies. These principles hold equally true for the internal management of the United Nations. Mainstreaming diversity into its affairs of internal management is imperative for the UN's continuing success.

2. The United Nations People of African Descent (UNPAD) is a United Nations employee resource group that was established in 2016 to act as a consultative platform between the UN Management and UN personnel of African descent with the objective of integrating the voices and views of people of African descent into UN discourse; to ensure that UN policies and practices are racially inclusive. UNPAD

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<sup>1</sup> According to the to the IOM 2020 World Migration Report, migration has been a key determinant of population change in several countries.



advocates for equal access for all persons in the United Nations system worldwide, regardless of race, nationality, ethnicity, *inter alia*, through the elimination of any barriers to the recognition, contribution and inclusion of people of African-Descent in the United Nations system. UNPAD is expected to operate as a critical part of any emerging *Diversity and Inclusion* framework of the United Nations.

3. UNPAD's vision is to be viewed UN system-wide as a knowledge-based body of expertise and excellence in promoting equal inclusion, recognition and access for all UN staff globally, through strong networks and partnerships (internal and external) and alongside strengthened engagement with key actors across the UN system. The mission of UNPAD is to promote equal inclusion, recognition and access for all persons in the United Nations system worldwide.

4. This document gives a general outline of UNPAD activities since its inception in April 2016. The document also presents the programme plan for UNPAD for the 2022-2023 biennium and demonstrates the concrete ways in which UNPAD will continue, alongside all its valued stakeholders, to support and drive the delivery of the anti-racism agenda for the United Nations. The next report will cover UNPAD activities in 2022 – 2023 and will outline the programme plan for the 2024 – 2025 biennium.

## **B. Work of UNPAD**

5. From 2016 to the present time, the work of UNPAD in eliminating racism in the UN workplace can be clustered into the following group activities:

- *Events to bring awareness to the issue of structural racism:* UNPAD hosted an event on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at the United Nations ECOSOC Chambers and around the margins of the 70<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly under the theme '*Promoting equal inclusion, recognition and access for all persons in the United Nations system worldwide*'. The event involved a panel discussion composing of distinguished speakers including Ambassador Rhonda King, Permanent Representative and Ambassador of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, and later President of the ECOSOC. The event highlighted anti-racism work in institutions (using the World Bank as an illustration), at the national level (showcasing Brazil) and the efforts of the United Nations General Assembly in seeking to address racism including through the establishment of the international decade for people of African descent.
- *Information gathering:* As a platform for consultation between Management and staff of African descent, UNPAD collects information directly from UN personnel on matters relating to their concerns on issues of racism. In May 2020, UNPAD issued its survey on '*Perceptions of racism in the UN system*' to collect staff opinions about the prevalence of racism in the UN workplace. The findings of the survey were widely disseminated and have been taken into consideration by other groups and entities working on anti-racism agendas in the United Nations, as they shape their own efforts.
- *Working with Management:* UNPAD tendered recommendations to senior management on actions to be taken to address systemic racism in the United Nations workplace. UNPAD



participated in the working groups of the Secretary General's taskforce on racism that was established in 2020.

- *Advocacy:* UNPAD continued to promote the notion of *diversity mainstreaming* through widespread dissemination of its White Paper issued in 2016, where the concept is introduced. Diversity mainstreaming is a concept developed by UNPAD which proposes a more holistic organizational approach to Diversity that will factor all diversity classifications in the formulation of policies - Gender, Race, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Religion and others.
- *Capacity building:* UNPAD worked with field missions as well as with several UN entities, on their anti-racism efforts. As well as participating in town halls and brown bag lunches for their staff, UNPAD has worked with several UN entities and offices in developing their antiracism agendas.
- *Peer support group for victims of racism:* While not formally recognized as a grievance resolution mechanism, UNPAD is often approached by staff that have concerns about developments and decisions that they view as racially motivated or biased.

### **C. Funding Considerations:**

6. Since its inception, UNPAD has been funded by donations from the members of its executive committee to meet emerging expenses. To date, main expenditures have included expenses relating to the hosting of the launching event/panel discussion that was held in the ECOSOC Chambers on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016; the creation of an official website for UNPAD; and for the hiring of a consultant to finalize its 2020 survey on the perceptions of racism in the UN system. Beyond this, UNPAD has supported its activities through heavy reliance on expertise from among its executive leadership team.

7. For future activities, UNPAD will look to funding sources authorized by its constitution. These include voluntary membership dues, donations, and through fund raising activities. Also, in recognition of the fact that UNPAD is a General Assembly mandated activity, UNPAD will look to the United Nations for the sponsorship of its activities.

### **D. Key Objectives of 2022-2023 Programme of Activities**

8. In line with its vision and mission that is outlined in paragraph three (3) above, UNPAD's main objective is to advance the fulfillment of the fundamental human right to equal treatment for people of African descent serving in the United Nations system, through equal access to the opportunities provided by the system. Within this core objective are some more specific objectives, as follows:

- *Promote common understanding of racism:* UNPAD will endeavor to promote a common understanding of racism and how systemic racism manifests within the UN system and seek to mobilize actions to bring about needed change.
- *Integrate the core principles for combatting racism enunciated in international instruments into UN operations:* UNPAD will seek to promote within UN operations the core international



principles underlying efforts to address racism against people of African descent, including the principles of recognition, contribution and development of people of African descent outlined in General Assembly resolution 68/237.

- *Strengthen interagency coordination to address racism:* Through its chapters in the different UN entities and through other interagency platforms, UNPAD will seek to ensure that the UN system works in a concerted manner to address racism.

## **E. Key Activities of 2022-2023**

9. UNPAD activities over the upcoming biennium will be as follows:

### **i. Advocacy:**

- *Continuation with core function of raising awareness on racism:* UNPAD will continue to advocate for the comprehensive review of existing UN administrative data that can potentially highlight areas of UN operations where people of African descent have been historically disenfranchised within the UN system, and advocate for corrective action. Additionally, UNPAD will identify areas of UN operations that raise concerns about racism from data collected directly from staff and present these findings to the Administration. UNPAD will propose actions to address problem areas. UNPAD will continue to act as a consultative forum for the UN Management in the development of policies that will impact staff, both when sought out by the Administration for this purpose, and through its own initiative.

### **ii. Think-tank:**

- *Participation in Commemoration Events, for capacity building:* UNPAD will convene brownbag talks, town hall meetings, and other activities, including on important days related to its mandate such as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the International Day of remembrance for the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition. These events will be utilized to both showcase the UN's own progress with its work against racism and inform and explore new benchmarks for the UN. Fora and events will also document cultural, economic, cinematic, artistic, academic and other contributions of people of African descent, to their societies.
- *Development of Anti-Racism Resources:* UNPAD will seek out expertise that can help with the development of resources for addressing racism including training materials for UN staff that will enhance their racial sensitivity.

### **iii. Operational:**

- *Operationalization of UNPAD Constitution:* UNPAD will work toward operationalizing the structures envisaged in its Constitution and will report on this in its next report, including on the progress made with the establishment of UNPAD chapters within the various UN entities where agreement has been provided for the establishment of chapters.



- *Outreach activities:* UNPAD will continue to raise awareness of its work among staff through membership drives and through periodic staff broadcasts.
- *Consolidation of Stakeholder Engagements:* In addition to the United Nations Administration, the key internal stakeholders of UNPAD are the United Nations staff associations (Field Staff Union – FSU; New York Staff Union-NYSU); staff federations, (United Nations International Civil Servants Federation - UNISERV; Coordination Council for International Staff Unions and Associations - CCISUA); and other UN employee resource groups such as the United Nations Feminist Network (UNFN) and the United Nations Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Employees (UNGLOBE). UNPAD has also partnered with the United Nations Senior Africa Group (UNSAG); for briefings.
- UNPAD would seek to expand stakeholder relations through consolidation of existing relationships with interested member States, as well as establish new relationships with universities and other academic institutions that can assist in data collection and other activities that can support its work. UNPAD will facilitate linkages with prominent persons and persons of influence who can support and spearhead events, including members of the Black Lives Matter Movement. UNPAD will also build relationships with the different offices inside the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) that have the mandate on race related issues.
- *Expansion of Membership and Sponsors:* UNPAD will initiate further membership drives and will seek to enhance feedback mechanisms from its broader membership with its executive committee.
- *Enhance funding sources:* UNPAD will actively pursue funding as allowed for under its Constitution, to be able to properly implement its activities.
- *Finalization of Report of Activities for 2022-2023 and Programme Plan for 2024 – 2025:* Over the period, UNPAD will finalize its report on its activities for 2022-2023 and outline the proposed activities for the following biennium, 2024 – 2025.

#### **F. Anticipated Impact of UNPAD Activities**

10. UNPAD’s activities will raise awareness of areas of UN operations that reflect systemic racism and biases in implementation.
11. UNPAD’s contributions to the United Nations are expected, combined with other efforts, to result in the development of practices that serve the interests of all staff of the United Nations system equally and eliminate systemic racism.

#### **G. Measurements of Success**

12. UNPAD’s success will ultimately be determined by evidence of organizational change showing that all staff of the UN benefit in equal measure from all the opportunities that the UN has to offer, for recruitment, career progression, equal treatment in disciplinary complaints, and in other areas.
13. Milestones will be ascertained by further reviews of UN administrative data and staff surveys.