

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. AMB. SACHA LLORENTTY,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS, ON THE LAUNCH OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT AT
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 10 December 2014)**

Mr President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Allow me to take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing the Launch of the International Decade for Peoples of African Descent as mandated by Resolution 68/237, on the International Human Rights Day.

The Group of 77 and China reaffirms that the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination as well as the outcomes of the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the 2009 Durban Review Conference, are the fundamental legal frameworks for the effective elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. In this context, the Group reemphasizes that resolute and renewed political will, adequate funding as well as sustained international cooperation are indispensable to address all forms and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The Group welcomes the adoption of the Programme of activities for the Implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent; and welcomes recent efforts on the elaboration of complementary standards to strengthen and update international instruments on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance in full support of the full and effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

Mr. President,

The 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance was a historic opportunity to acknowledge the on-going challenges faced by people of African descent as a result of the legacies of slavery, the slave trade and colonialism. Despite efforts to mobilize political will at the national, regional and international levels, 13 years after the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, Related Intolerance, discrimination faced by people of African Descent continue to manifest in situations of insufficient access to quality education, employment, and security as well as vulnerability to violence based on colour, nationality or ethnicity. These challenges are also caused by social and economic inequalities and lack of national legislation and specific public policies on combating these scourges.

The members of the Group have worked hard, in Geneva and New York towards a firm agreement on the Programme of Activities that will serve as a roadmap for promoting racial equality worldwide.

To the Group public policies and the engagement of the States are essential. Many of our Members have implemented affirmative action programmes and national policies aimed at ending extreme poverty and the reduction of inequalities among different racial and vulnerable groups, in particular.

The Group attaches immense importance to the International Decade for People of African Descent and to the Programme of Activities, which, we expect, will contribute to the full implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and raise awareness in combating prejudice, intolerance and racism.

The Group is pleased to note the progress towards the completion of the UN's permanent memorial to the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, and takes note of the successful fundraising luncheon just held. We encourage all Member States and stakeholders to make good on the commitment to financially support the completion of the Ark of Return, which will stand as a symbol of our collective resolve to counter racism and racial discrimination.

The theme for the International Decade is "People of African Descent: recognition, justice and development".

We expect that by launching the Decade and implementing its Programme of Activities, Member States along with the civil society, the UN and all other relevant stakeholders will show their resolve in promoting respect, protection and fulfillment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for people of African descent.

We also expect that we will be able to raise awareness in respect of the rich cultural legacy of people of African descent, their knowledge, diverse heritage and culture.

Ten years from now, we hope our work will have contributed to ensuring justice for people of African descent, honored their culture and history and rectified the social and economic inequality they have been subjected to.

We believe diversity is an asset. By promoting respect for the human rights of all peoples irrespective of their race or ethnicity, we are strengthening our common bonds as human beings.

Thank you.