**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

**--**

**REMARKS TO THE AFRICA DIALOGUE SERIES HIGH-LEVEL POLICY DIALOGUE**

**New York, 30 May 2025**

**[all-English]**

This year’s dialogue focuses on “Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through Reparations”.

This is also the African Union’s theme for 2025, as it was already said.

And it is a call gathering momentum around the world – from Freetown to Bridgetown.

Understandably so.

Africa is a continent of boundless energy and possibility.

But for too long, the colossal injustices inflicted by enslavement, the transatlantic slave trade, and colonialism have been left unacknowledged and unaddressed.

I deeply regret that these wrongs were perpetrated by many countries, including my own.

And they continue to distort our world today.

Decolonization did not free African countries, or people of African Descent, from the structures and prejudices that made those projects possible.

When African countries gained their independence, they inherited a system built to serve others — not them.

The inherited economic model and years of neglect in social and institutional investments during the colonial era created lasting challenges, shaping post-independence reality.

Structures based on exploitation persisted.

So did racism.

And the long shadow of colonialism can be felt in many of the continent’s current conflicts and governance challenges.

Many African countries were under colonial domination when today’s multilateral institutions were created.

And that injustice is reflected to this day.

Excellencies,

We point to the poisoned legacies of enslavement and colonialism, not to sow divisions but to heal them.

Reparatory justice frameworks are critical – to redress historic wrongs, address today’s challenges, and ensure the rights and dignity of all.

Such frameworks encompass a broad range of measures.

We need a comprehensive approach, developed with the participation of affected communities, to achieve accountability and redress.

And we must be clear-eyed about the fact that attempts to repair the past ring hollow unless they also seek to dismantle its manifestations in the present:

From racism, to extraction of African resources, to the injustices embedded in structures, institutions, and global governance.

Animated by honesty and justice, we can transform the legacies of slavery and colonialism into equal and respectful partnerships:

Partnerships that ensure African countries take their rightful place in shaping global decision-making…

That help to deliver on the priorities of African and Caribbean countries, and people of African descent…

And that help to ensure that all Africans – and the African diaspora – have the opportunity to thrive.

We must push for the Second International Decade for People of African Descent to deliver on reparatory justice, equal rights, and the Durban Declaration – the world’s blueprint to tackle racism and racial discrimination.

Yes, these are turbulent times:

Times of trade barriers…

Deep cuts to lifesaving assistance…

And international cooperation itself called into question.

But that does not alter the truth that justice for Africa, for the Caribbean, and for all people of African descent requires global action and global partnerships.

We need partnerships to reform global governance.

The Pact for the Future agreed last year drove progress. I thank African countries sincerely for their support in getting an ambitious text over the line.

And we must keep pushing for fair representation within international institutions – including permanent African representation on the United Nations Security Council.

We need partnerships for peace founded on the principles of justice and international law, as set out in the United Nations Charter.

The international community must play its part – in preventing and ending conflicts, relieving their appalling effects, and ensuring justice for victims.

And the United Nations will never relent in pursuing peace for the great continent of Africa.

We need partnerships to advance sustainable development.

The Pact for the Future includes important commitments:

To advance an SDG stimulus...

To reform the international financial architecture…

And to take action on debt – which is suffocating economies and sapping investment in many countries in Africa and the Caribbean.

The upcoming Financing for Development Conference in Sevilla is an important opportunity to push this agenda forward.

We need concrete commitments on debt: to lower the cost of borrowing, improve

debt restructuring, and prevent crises from taking hold.

We will keep pushing to boost the lending capacity of Multilateral Development Banks, making them bigger and bolder, able to mobilise far more private finance at reasonable cost to the African continent and the Caribbean.

And we need action to unleash a surge in finance across the board.

Developed countries must keep their promises on development spending…

Governments must strengthen domestic resource mobilization…

And we must keep working towards an inclusive, effective global tax regime able to meaningfully reduce tax evasion and to fight elicit financial flows and money laundering that is so dramatically impacting the African continent.

Finally, we need partnerships for climate justice.

African countries did not cause the climate crisis.

Yet the effects of our heating planet are wreaking havoc across the continent:

Fuelling hunger and displacement, hobbling economies, destroying livelihoods, and taking lives.

The Caribbean is also suffering disproportionately.

Justice is long overdue:

We need significant contributions – together with innovative sources of financing – to the new fund for responding to loss and damage.

We need a boom in adaptation finance – starting with developed countries honouring their commitment to at least $40 billion a year by this year.

And we need massive investments in clean energy.

Africa is home to 60 percent of the world’s best solar resources and around a third of the minerals critical to the renewable energy revolution.

Yet the continent has just 1.5 percent of global installed solar capacity.

Around 600 million people remain without power.

And African countries and communities are pushed to the bottom of the critical minerals value chain, while others feast on their resources.

The centuries-old exploitation of the continent’s natural resources – which fuels conflict and misery – must end.

We need action for Africa to take its rightful place as the clean powerhouse of the world…

To derisk and boost investment...

And to ensure African countries and communities receive maximum benefit from their critical minerals.

New national climate action plans, or NDCs – must be submitted this year and align with limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius, especially in countries that are the major polluters.

These represent an immense opportunity.

I urge African leaders to take it. And to use these new plans to bring together climate, energy, and sustainable development goals to attract investment.

And I urge countries, companies and more, to work with us to deliver on the recommendations of our Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals – to ensure human rights, justice and equity through the value chain, and to retain maximum benefit in African countries.

Excellencies,

Across all these critical fronts, let’s work to leave no person, no country and no continent behind.

And together, let’s deliver justice for Africa and people of African Descent.

Thank you.