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Wednesday, August 25, 2021

Costa Rica will host the commemoration of the first International Day for People of African Descent

- **San José and Cahuita will be the settings for high-level forums, conferences, and artistic and cultural activities, taking place from August 31 to September 4.**
- **The commemoration is organized by the Government of Costa Rica with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.**
- **The UN General Assembly adopted the resolution promoted by the Government of Costa Rica in December 2020 to proclaim August 31 as the International Day for People of African Descent.**
- **"This first international commemoration is held in Costa Rica for being the country that promoted this celebration," declared Vice President Epsy Campbell, after detailing that this date reaffirms commitments for the recognition, justice and development for people of African descent.**

San José, Costa Rica, August 25, 2021 - With a schedule of special activities taking place from August 31 to September 4, 2021, Costa Rica will host the first commemoration of the International Day for People of African Descent, an initiative to promote the recognition, justice and development of People of African Descent around the world.

This commemoration seeks to promote respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of people of African descent, contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against them, and promote the diverse heritage and the extraordinary contributions made by the African Diaspora.

On December 28, 2020, the United Nations General Assembly, with the support of 52 member States, adopted the resolution promoted by the Government of Costa Rica to proclaim August 31 as the International Day for People of African Descent.

Therefore Costa Rica will serve as the global headquarters for the first International Day for People of African Descent, with events to be held and live streamed to the rest of the world. The celebration will run from August 31 to September 4, with activities scheduled in both San José and the southern Caribbean town of Cahuita



The activities are organized by the Government of Costa Rica with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Department of Global Communication and the United Nations System in Costa Rica.

“This first international commemoration is held in Costa Rica for being the country that promoted this celebration, complying with commitments made more than one hundred years ago at the I Congress of the Black Peoples of the World when it proposed to celebrate the contributions of Afro-Colombian people”, declared Vice President Epsy Campbell.

Vice President Campbell added that this date seeks to reaffirm commitments for the recognition, justice and development of people of African descent.

Celebration of the International Day for People of African descent – August 31.

High-level authorities will share their special messages with the world, including the Vice President of the Republic of Costa Rica, Epsy Campbell; the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and President of the United Nations Development Group, Amina J. Mohammed; the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet; and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Dr. Natalia Kanem.

Also on this day at 6 pm, an opening ceremony will be held at the National Theater in San José, which will include artistic and cultural activities with the participation of national and international groups such as Playing for Change, Rocky Dawuni, Grupo Kawe, Afro Fiesta, Hope Masike, Abel Mafuleni, Emanuel Ntaka and the Concert Band from Limón (Costa Rica).

The event will be broadcast live via streaming.

High-Level Forum – September 1-3

From Wednesday 1 to Friday 3 September, sessions will be held to reaffirm commitments made for the recognition, justice and development of people of African descent.

These forums will articulate the voices of people of African descent and those of other key actors in the region and the world, related to issues such as the rights of people of African descent, and the fight against racism and racial discrimination against women and youth, among others.

Representatives from governments, international organizations and civil society, as well as academia, artists and leaders of African descent, will participate in the events.



Given the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, events will have a mixed format (in-person and virtual) with streaming feeds through the official channels of the Government of Costa Rica, the United Nations and UNFPA.

Drum Dialogue and Closing Ceremony – September 4

The commemoration will come to a close on Saturday, September 4, in Cahuita, a town located in the Limón province on Costa Rica's southern Caribbean coast, with events such as a dialogue of Afro-Costa Rican civil society, a gastronomic tour, and art and cultural exhibitions, organized jointly with inhabitants from the area.

At 10:30 am, a Drum Dialogue ceremony will be held for the recognition, justice and development of people of African descent. This event is a commemoration of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade and will take place on the coast of Cahuita National Park, where it is estimated that in 1710 an expedition of lost Danish galleons was shipwrecked while transporting enslaved African peoples to the Americas.

The Drum Dialogue will feature the participation of renowned artists from different backgrounds.

These events, and the support from UNFPA and the Government of Costa Rica, are a call to action to put an end to inequality and discrimination against people and communities of African descent. Where there is exclusion, societies cannot claim to be fair, equitable, or developed. The 2030 Agenda is explicitly committed to leaving no one behind, resulting in the need for actions and investments for development to be directed first to those who are in most need.

Note for journalists:

For more information on the resolution (A /RES/ 75/170) proclaiming 31 August as the **International Day for People of Afro-descendants** within the framework of the **International Decade for People of African Descent** (2015-2024), **click [here](#)**.

On 2 August 2021, the United Nations General Assembly established the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent to combat systemic racism. Learn more **[here](#)**.

For interviews or more information, please contact:

Alvaro Serrano: serrano@unfpa.org; Gabriela Rodríguez: grodriguez@unfpa.org; Danilo Mora: daniilo.mora@un.org; Mariela Chinchilla: mariela.chinchilla@presidencia.go.cr