

Strengthening the Rights of Afro-Descendant Youth: Innovation in Public Policies and South–South Cooperation

The Black Youth Alive Plan and the Amefrican Pathways Program

Side Event

Fifth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent

Context

Populations of African descent in different regions of the world continue to be deeply impacted by structural inequalities rooted in the historical legacies of slavery and colonialism, continuously reproduced by structural and systemic racism. Although peoples of African descent are diverse in their histories, identities, and cultural expressions, common challenges persist related to socioeconomic inequality, racial violence, discrimination, and barriers to the full exercise of human rights.

It is estimated that approximately 200 million people of African descent live in the Americas, in addition to millions in other regions of the world. In many countries, ethnic-racial diversity has historically been addressed through discriminatory structures that have produced deep inequalities and asymmetric power relations. In this context, recognizing racism as a global challenge requires strengthening international cooperation initiatives and exchange among countries and communities of the African diaspora.

Promoting the rights of people of African descent also requires recognizing and valuing their histories, cultures, and memories, as well as confronting discriminatory narratives that have historically marginalized these populations. It also implies advancing agendas of reparatory justice in relation to the legacies of slavery, the transatlantic trafficking of enslaved Africans, colonialism, apartheid, and racial violence.

Brazil's Public Policies for Afro-Descendant Youth

In Brazil, a country that hosts the largest Afro-descendant population outside the African continent, confronting structural racism and promoting racial equality are central priorities of public policy. The Ministry of Racial Equality (MIR) was established by Decree No. 11,346 of January 1, 2023, with the mission of promoting policies aimed at overcoming racial inequalities and confronting racism.

Among its responsibilities is the formulation and coordination of cross-cutting public policies focused on promoting the rights and dignity of the Black population, quilombola communities, traditional peoples and communities of African descent, and the Roma people.

In this context, the Federal Government instituted the Black Youth Alive Plan, the most comprehensive Brazilian public policy specifically aimed at protecting Afro-Descendent youth. The plan was coordinated by the Ministry of Racial Equality and the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic, in articulation with 16 other ministries, and was established by Decree No. 11,956 of March 21, 2024.

The Black Youth Alive Plan aims to reduce lethal violence and address the structural vulnerabilities that affect Afro-Descendent youth in Brazil through the implementation of intersectoral public policies. Its formulation resulted from a national participatory process that included consultations with approximately 6,000 Black young people, carried out through Participatory Caravans in all Brazilian states and in the Federal District.

The Plan is structured around 11 strategic axes, brings together 217 governmental actions, establishes 43 specific goals, and has a 12-year implementation horizon. The initiative represents a political commitment by the Brazilian State to protect life, expand opportunities, and promote citizenship for Afro-Descendant youth.

Amefrican Pathways: International Cooperation and Anti-Racist Education

Among the initiatives foreseen within the Black Youth Alive Plan, the Amefrican Pathways Program stands out. This action is aimed at strengthening anti-racist education and promoting international cooperation among countries of the African diaspora.

The program was established by Interministerial Ordinance No. 233 of July 31, 2023, and is implemented through a partnership among:

- Ministry of Racial Equality
- Ministry of Education
- Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES)
- Brazilian Service of Support for Micro and Small Enterprises (SEBRAE)
- Federal University of Maranhão (UFMA)
- Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO)

The Amefrican Pathways Program promotes short-term international academic exchanges, focusing on cooperation between Brazil and countries in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The initiative directly contributes to the implementation of Law No. 10,639/2003, which made the teaching of African and Afro-Brazilian history and culture mandatory in Brazilian schools.

Through academic exchanges and knowledge circulation, the program strengthens international research, education, and public policy networks aimed at confronting racism.

The program carries out four annual editions:

- three international editions held in partner countries
- one edition held in Brazil

Each international edition brings together 50 Brazilian participants, including Black students from teacher training courses at public higher education institutions and basic education teachers. The edition held in Brazil brings together 13 participants from each partner country, including students, professors, public managers, and representatives of social movements.

To date, the program has carried out eight editions in countries such as Mozambique, Colombia, Cape Verde, Peru, Angola, and the Dominican Republic, in addition to two editions held in Brazil.

Relevance for the United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent

This side event takes place at a strategic moment for the international racial equality agenda, marked by two important global milestones:

- the 25th anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action
- the beginning of the Second International Decade for People of African Descent (2025–2034)

In this context, the event seeks to share concrete experiences developed by Brazil to promote the rights of Afro-descendant populations, especially youth. The articulation between the Black Youth Alive Plan and the Amefrican Pathways Program demonstrates how national public policies and international cooperation initiatives can act complementarily in confronting structural racism and promoting opportunities for Afro-descendant youth.

Event Objective

To present and discuss Brazilian initiatives aimed at promoting the rights of Afro-descendant youth, highlighting the Black Youth Alive Plan and the Amefrican Pathways Program as examples of public policies and international cooperation focused on confronting structural racism.

Expected Outcomes

The event seeks to:

- share the Brazilian experience in formulating public policies aimed at Afro-Descendant youth;
- strengthen dialogue among countries of the African diaspora;
- promote the exchange of good practices and innovations in public policies;

- expand international cooperation aimed at confronting racism;
- contribute to advancing the global agenda for racial justice and sustainable development.