Formal Adoption of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024)

November 10, 2021

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 2015 – 2024 the International Decade for People of African Descent with the following theme: "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development”.

The Canadian and Ontario governments have formally recognized the International Decade and it has been adopted by the City of Ottawa as well as many local and national organizations.

The University of Ottawa is a global institution committed to advancing knowledge and discovery; cultural and linguistic understanding and tolerance; social justice and human rights. We recognize the fundamental importance of education in achieving the objectives of the UN Decade as they relate to the economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights by people of African descent and their full and equal participation in all aspects of society, as well as the promotion of a greater knowledge of and respect for the diverse heritage, culture and contribution of people of African descent to the development of societies.

The University of Ottawa is pleased to formally adopt the UN declaration as a demonstration of our commitment to the principles of the Scarborough Charter, which acknowledges the role that institutions of higher education have played in constructing knowledge about historically excluded groups and accepts the ethical responsibility to give voice to alternative ways of knowing and to support community building.

In adopting the declaration, the University acknowledges that members of our community have suffered from the scourge of racism and discrimination and reiterates its determination to enact change through meaningful community engagement, critical self-reflection, and transformative actions to ensure its campus is a safe place and that all students, faculty and staff treat each other with respect at all times. We recommit to the actions below and to maintaining our focus to ensure the full and equal participation of people of African descent in all aspects of university life.

The University has appointed a Special Advisor on Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence, and identified priority areas for action, which include measures to address accessibility; enriching curricula with more culturally diverse and inclusive practices (methodologies) and knowledge; and implementing a research support program for racialized researchers, so that a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive research community is established.