

**Canadian Ecumenical Initiative to mark
The International Decade for People of African Descent**

June 3, 2020

To the leaders of member denominations, observers, and affiliates of the Canadian Council of Churches,

We are writing to invite your church or organization to join us in recognizing and marking the **International Decade for People of African Descent** in the Canadian context.¹

On March 21st, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, we, representing our three denominations (The Anglican Church of Canada, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and The United Church of Canada) issued a joint letter recognizing the United Nations' International Decade for People of African Descent (UN IDPAD).² It affirms a commitment to the call upon churches to do more to address anti-Black racism and to uphold the main objectives of the Decade. The same three denominations are working jointly on this project as a concrete demonstration "to gather and share resources that encourage conversations across our churches, facilitate deeper understanding of human rights and help eradicate racism."

On May 7th, at our initiative, the Canadian Council of Churches hosted an ecumenical conversation to encourage greater commitment from Canadian churches on the International Decade for People of African Descent. Participants from eight member denominations, a local faith community and an ecumenical agency joined the conversation. One key outcome from the conversation was a unanimous desire to seek wider involvement from other member denominations of the CCC.

In the light of the above, we would like to invite you to:

1. Consider either signing the attached joint letter or to create a similar letter that honours your respective denominational contexts.
2. Join us in asking the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) to make anti-racism, specifically anti-Black racism and the goals of the UN IDPAD, a priority.
3. Join us in providing personnel and financial resources to ecumenical and denominational anti-racism work.

It is with sincere intention that we seek to uphold the work of racial justice in our churches. We request your prayerful consideration to engage deeper with this work among our churches.

Sincerely yours,

The Most Rev. Linda Nicholls,
Primate, The Anglican Church of Canada

The Rev. Susan C. Johnson
National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Ms. Nora Sanders
General Secretary, General Council, The United Church of Canada

¹ Please see attached document for more details on the International Decade for People of African Descent. This could also be viewed at <www.un.org/en/observances/decade-people-african-descent>.

² A copy of the letter can be accessed at <<https://www.interculturalleadership.ca/news/international-decade-for-people-of-african-descent-church-leaders-issue-joint-letter>>.