

Statement delivered by
Dr Ricardo Kellman, Chargé d'affaires
Permanent Mission of Barbados to the United Nations Office and other
International Organisations in Geneva
on behalf of the Member States of the
Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in Geneva
Panel discussion on the negative impact of the legacies of colonialism on the
enjoyment of human rights
28 September 2022

Mr. President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Member States represented in Geneva.

We welcome the opportunity to engage in this panel discussion on the negative impact of the legacies of colonialism on the enjoyment of human rights.

There is no part of the world that has not felt the impact of colonialism. However, the weight of recent colonial enterprises is still being carried today, predominantly by the people of the global south.

We in the Caribbean recognise that the historical legacies of colonialism, and the trade and trafficking in enslaved Africans, continue to drive the systemic racism that defines critical aspects of the modern global economy and daily dictate how the people of our region eat, what they produce and the general quality and, indeed, length of life.

Persons studying the Caribbean have long recognised that the impoverishment of the black majority is directly related to the institutional mechanisms of the colonial economy and society. The enduring impact of colonialism is thus captured in the phrase “persistent poverty”.

Mr President, we are mindful that the legacies of colonialism continue to impact indigenous peoples. This is expressed in increased poverty, systemic marginalization and inhibited access to justice. At the international level, the legacies of colonialism have also negatively impacted transnational economic opportunities for individuals, organisations and States.

We are, therefore, committed to addressing the negative effects of colonialism and racism at the national and international levels, as these reduce the enjoyment of human rights. We, therefore, call on all parties to commit to addressing the negative legacies of colonialism as a precondition to achieving sustainable development. This is required if we are to promote the enjoyment of human rights including the right to development.

Mr. President,

In closing, we would like to ask the panel: Given the persistence of the negative impacts of colonialism, as seen in structural underdevelopment in the global south, what practical steps can be taken by Member States through the Human Rights Council to empower and transform individuals and societies, and to assist in the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the enhanced enjoyment of human rights?

I thank you.

END

Statement delivered on behalf of the following countries:

The Bahamas

Barbados

Guyana

Haiti

Jamaica

Suriname

Trinidad and Tobago