

FOUNDING DECLARATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF AFROFEMINIST VOICES (RIVAS)



March 14, 2023

In the framework of the meeting "Afrodescendant Women, Resistance or Resilience?", convened by the "Nelson Mandela" Chair of Afrodescendant Studies and the CLACSO Afrodescendencias y propuestas Contrahegemónicas//Afro-descendants and Counter-hegemonic proposals Working Group of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO), based in Havana, Cuba

The International Network of Afrofeminist Voices (RIVAS) was born. The event took place from March 8 to 11, 2023, through digital platforms, with the participation of 127 anti-racist activists, researchers, representatives of organizations and institutions from fifteen countries (Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Colombia, Angola, Ghana, Peru, Cuba, Spain, Uruguay, Haiti, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Sao Tome and Principe). The meeting paid tribute to the Afro-Brazilian leader Marielle Franco and to the women murdered during the International Decade for People of African Descent.

During the three days of the forum, the diverse and committed participation of people who, encouraged by the need to make this space of struggle last in time and at an international level, decided to join forces to create a network. They addressed a pressing issue, which has become a current imperative for the visibility of Afro-descendant women in all their vital stages, intersectionalities and territorial spaces.

We take into consideration as legal foundations normative instruments of significant importance for Afro-descendant women and peoples, among which the following stand out: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979); the Durban Declaration and Program (2002); Resolution 68/237 of the UN General Assembly for the proclamation of the Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024), Resolution 75/314 of the UN General Assembly for the proclamation of the Permanent Forum for the Permanent for Afro-descendants (2021).

We are interested in highlighting, but above all in eradicating, the conditions of inequality and structural and systemic racism that persist in our societies. Women of African descent find ourselves at the intersections of oppression of class, race, gender, age, territory, migrations, disabilities and diversities around the world. When we rise up, we integrate in our struggles the confrontation of all systems of oppression, across lines of skin color, gender boundaries and territorial borders. From the decolonial, intersectional and complexity analysis, we show that multiple systems of oppression converge in sex, "race", social class, economy, politics and culture, as components of the various mechanisms of structural racism, which has had as its purpose the inequitable distribution of power and economic resources in the world. In this sense, racism has been a structuring and structuring factor in the poverty of certain population groups, classified as "inferior" with respect to others.

According to the expressed will of the participants, the general objectives of RIVAS are:

To make Afrofeminist voices visible, highlighting our historical role from the Maroon genealogies, ancestral knowledge, leadership, individual-collective productions and articulated political action.

Promote the autonomy of Afro-descendant women, in its three dimensions: economic, physical and decision-making.

Establish alliances with people, movements, networks, projects, academies and other forms of organization committed to this anti-racist agenda.

These objectives underpin the common platform for collective affirmation and recognition of knowledge, promoting unity of action from diversity. It will be a space for intergenerational encounters and learning of all voices. An open, flexible, dialogic and under construction process.

From RIVAS we will develop and promote initiatives with the support of various committed actors, the active participation of new generations and families as an expression of sustainability of this initiative. These are the main lines of action:

- Anti-racist, Afro-feminist, non-sexist training, aimed at research and dissemination of Afro-centered knowledge that contribute to the strengthening of knowledge, healing, arts and African ancestral practices, Afrodiasporic and of the global South; through the articulation of academies and social activisms.
- Autonomy of Afro-descendant women and their allies, in terms of empowerment, strengthening leadership and guaranteeing a life of dignity and freedom from violence.

- Recovery and visibility of our history, cosmology, religiosity and syncretism, based on Afro-epistemologies and Maroon pedagogies.
- Promotion and demand of rights as part of the Afro-descendant peoples and the fulfillment of international commitments and agendas of the UN consistent with our cause.
- Food sovereignty, environmental rights, community health and territorial preservation.
- Gender, with an intersectional approach, human rights and education for peace with social and environmental justice.

From RIVAS we fight for inclusion and unity in diversity, convening and participating in spaces for dialogue and action with other platforms with similar objectives. To fight for these voices we must have the vocation of commitment to these commitments. We are inclusive, we are diverse, but at the center must be those Afro-feminist, African and Afro-diasporic voices from Latin America, the Caribbean, North America, Africa and Europe.

Following the commitments of the Decade for People of African Descent and the agenda adopted in Durban, we call upon all institutional and non-institutional actors, obliged to work for its fulfillment, to develop actions that strengthen this agenda and the initiatives proposed here. We also invite the various networks, organizations, collectives and all people committed to this perspective, to join us in the development of actions and to continue to place our voices and goals at the center and with strength.

1. Cuba
2. Mexico
3. Brazil.
4. Colombia
5. Argentina
6. Chile
7. Spain
8. Ghana
9. Bolivia
10. Portugal