

PRESS RELEASE



The National Coordinator of Rural Black Quilombola Communities (CONAQ) and the Process of Black Communities in Colombia (PCN)

Declaración sobre el reconocimiento de los afrodescendientes en el contexto del CDB y el artículo 8(j)

Cali – Colombia, 01 de Noviembre de 2024

The National Coordination of Black Rural Quilombola Communities (CONAQ) and the Process of Black Communities in Colombia want to express its deep concern regarding the barriers imposed by the European Union against recognizing Afro-descendants in the text of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), specifically in Article 8(j), which addresses the knowledge, innovations, and practices of local and indigenous communities.

Historically, Brazil and Colombia are nations whose identities and social structures were profoundly shaped by the Atlantic trafficking of enslaved peoples, driven by the economic and colonial interests of the same countries that today constitute the European Union. This forced trade laid the foundations for societies where Afro-descendants now make up a significant part of the population, representing cultures, knowledge, and practices that have contributed—and continue to contribute—to biodiversity conservation and management.

Denying the recognition of Afro-descendants' rights in this context perpetuates the invisibility of these groups' essential contributions to the sustainability and resilience of their territories. Moreover, it is a refusal to acknowledge the historical responsibility of these same European countries for the exploitation and violence that structured racial and social relations across the Americas.

The geopolitical stance seen in current CBD negotiations thus reflects an attempt to delay the recognition and redress of Afro-descendant rights, even as global sustainability and biodiversity protection require a truly inclusive and equitable approach. It is urgent that the European Union reconsider its position, embrace the proposal from Brazil and Colombia, and formally recognize the importance of Afro-descendants' practices and knowledge in biodiversity preservation and management, in line with principles of environmental justice and historical responsibility.

CONAQ reiterates that the recognition of Afro-descendants is an essential step toward ensuring biodiversity governance that respects cultural diversity and the historical role of peoples and communities who, for centuries, have safeguarded and managed their territories.

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