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A Platform for Race Equality Issues in Parliament

The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Race and Community will be re-launched by the Runnymede Trust this Wednesday, 20 January, in the House of Commons. Chaired by Diane Abbott MP, the group will debate issues of race, equality and community cohesion.

Representatives from Unite Against Fascism, the Race Equality Foundation and Aik Saath will speak at the event. In addition, members of the public have been invited to put forward questions to parliamentarians on race equality issues.

The APPG, which has not met since 2007, is being resurrected in light of recent developments regarding race relations, particularly given the rise of the BNP. It has been re-established by the Runnymede Trust and Harry Cohen MP, the group's secretary. Runnymede believes it is essential that race equality ideas and developments are given the gravitas of a parliamentary platform on which to be discussed.

It is Runnymede's view that a functional and existing Race and Community APPG prior to the dissolution of this parliament will be crucial to the ongoing success of the group, and to ensuring that parliamentarians (new and old) have ample opportunity to access top-level discussion on race equality. This is particularly crucial at a time when issues concerning race relations are likely to remain high on the political agenda

Meetings of the APPG on Race and Community will provide members who are returned after the next general election with the opportunity to immediately restore the group in the new parliament, and to promote the work and value of an active group to new members.

Notes to Editors

1) If journalists would like to attend the event they should contact Vicki Butler at vicki@runnymedetrust.org or 020 7377 9222. It will take place this Wednesday, 20 January at 4.30pm in Committee Room 20.

2) Runnymede is an independent policy research organisation focusing on equality and justice through the promotion of a successful multi-ethnic society. Founded as a Charitable Educational Trust, Runnymede has a long track record of policy research, working in close collaboration with eminent thinkers and policy makers in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Since 1968, the date of Runnymede's foundation, it has worked to establish and maintain a positive image of what it means to live affirmatively within a society that is both multi-ethnic and culturally diverse. Runnymede continues to speak with a thoughtful and independent public voice on these issues today.

3) The All Party Parliamentary Group for Race and Community exists to:

- Bring about a more equal and cohesive society through raising awareness of issues affecting the diverse multi-ethnic communities within multicultural Britain;
- Seek to influence the development of public policy capable of achieving greater equality and cohesion;
- Raise awareness of racism, racial discrimination, and those elements of best practice capable of eroding racial discrimination;
- Bring about greater empathy and understanding between different ethnic and racial groups within society;
- Press the case for mainstreaming not just racial equality issues, but all equality issues, within the government's legislative programme.

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