**Africa & Africa Diaspora Conference 2021**

**Theme: AU Sixth Region (African Diaspora), Development of African Descent Globally and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want**

**A Shared Journey with Critical Multilateral International Organisations**

Excellencies, fellow panellists and conference participants, ladies and gentlemen. It is an honour to address you today on the invitation of my fellow Member of the recently formed Working Group of the Permanent Forum for people of African Descent, Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith. In the short while that we have met, the Working Group has hit the ground running following the long-awaited adoption of a Resolution establishing the Permanent Forum as a human rights mechanism that specifically addresses historical and contemporary manifestations of Afriphobia / Afrophobia. For those unfamiliar with the term, I will define Afrophobia for the purposes of this discussion as encompassing the genocide, system racism, and discrimination that we as people of African descent, Afrodescendientes, or “plain old Africans” experience in our daily lives globally.

My participation in this celebration of the anniversary of the 1945 Pan African Congress Manchester Meeting, would not be true to my character without reference to our forebears in the struggle for human rights, equality and justice. These include the Haitian philosopher anthropologist Antenor Firmin, the Honourable Mosiah Garvey, W.E. B. Du Bois, Dr Martin Luther King, Malcolm Omowale Malik Al Shabaxx (popularly known as Malcolm X), Madiba Nelson Mandela, Kwame Nkrumah and so many other African leaders and champions. Recognition is one of the thematic objectives of the International Decade for people of African Descent 2015-2024, and we must ourselves recognise the foresight, resilience, and integrity of those who championed our freedom from the oppression of historical White supremacist oppression and imperialist hegemony.

*On the Conference theme of* ***Pan Africanism & Spirituality*** I therefore state I believe spirituality and religious beliefs are personal and individual choice, which are not determined by being African or Pan Africanist. For example, in a recent interview with Professor Toyin Falola, Kabiyesi Lamidi Adeyemi, the Alaafin of Oyo alluded to the diversity of religious beliefs within the Yoruba nation and diaspora, declaring that he himself embraced Muslim, Christian and traditional religious beliefs. I believe the UDHR 1948 asserts the right to freedom of religion which state parties should adhere to without discrimination.

I encourage all conference participants to partner with the Working Group for the launch of the UN Permanent Forum for People of African Descent, to facilitate multilateral multistakeholder ***Pan Africanism With All, for All*** that includes the aspirations of Africa’s Sixth Region. This is a challenge before us as we move forward a century after Marcus Mosiah Garvey’s historic speech to the United Negro Improvement Association - ACL in Harlem in 1921, and 20 years after the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action recognised the failure of neoliberal Western economies to recognise our humanity and equality in rights and justice. With this in mind, I advocate state parties and other stakeholders ensure achievement of AGENDA 2063, e.g. ASPIRATION 1. A Prosperous Africa Based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development; & ASPIRATION 2. An Integrated Continent, Politically United Based on the Ideals of Pan Africanism and the Vision of Africa’s Renaissance.

The global protests for **justice** in 2020, which is another thematic objective of IDPAD highlights the importance of the Conference theme ***Decolonizing Knowledge***. Our Pan African forebears knew this and contributed a body of scholarship often referred to as Black Atlantic Ideology, which I prefer to call African Atlantic Ideology. It is for this reason that the United Negro Improvement Association had chapters in Europe and the North America where Garvey resided and championed our cause, but also knowledge exchange with Africa and Latin America of our common oppression by White supremacist hegemony. In that regard,Professor David L. Horne is quoted in the Kuumba Report, 2016 as stating

***“21st century Pan Africanism (i.e., the Union of African States) can and will only be achieved by a balanced combination of governmental action, consistent, even relentless community-based organizing, mass political mobilization, international networking, and technological expertise by Africans, with the timely and relevant assistance of specific allies for particular issues.”***

Increasingly it is the “bottoms-up” multilateral multistakeholder approach to policy development that is employed by scientists and social scientists, in tackling systemic racism, the covid-19 pandemic, and climate change. For example, SDG 16 of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** advocates inclusive democratic community participation of marginalised communities including racialized African diaspora communities and African sub-cultural minorities as a Target to be implemented for peace, justice, and good governance. Moreover, there has been some improved relations between the AU and stakeholders from its Sixth Region over the last five years. For example, the African Union played a pivotal role in ensuring adoption of the General Assembly Resolution establishing PFPAD despite initial opposition from many neoliberal economies including the USA and UK. Although adversely affected by the covid-19 pandemic and economic implications around the globe, it is imperative that opportunities for **Aspiration 5: An Africa With a Strong Cultural Identity, Common Heritage, Values and Ethics,** of Agenda 2063 are allowed to thrive particularly through greater digital access for all. This is also in accordance with the DDPA, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and universal human rights.

***"International Law is not the right and preserve of states alone; it is also about the victims of human rights abuse in the African diaspora. In that respect, t*he *UN OHCHR conceptual framework speaks to reparations being about repair, and its operational framework on the right to repair.*** **International Network of Scholars & Activists for Afrikan Reparations (INOSAAR)** is a global network of Pan African academics who recently have lobbied and championed reparatory justice on all continents affected by the Transatlantic Trade in Enslaved Africans. Recent progress made include HR 40 in the USA, the impending official launch of the AAPRG in the UK Parliament later this week, and the Caricom 10 point

Lastly, **Black Lives Matter** as the global protests clearly chanted in unison in 2020 in response to loss of lives as a result of police violence in the USA, and has been documented elsewhere in both the Global North and the Global South. In that regard, my discussion acknowledges contributions in Agenda 2063 made by THE ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION. I agree we must

*“d. Learn from past and present African development efforts and challenges and forge an African-centred approach to transformation. This includes lessons from post-independence state and nation-building, industrialization and modernization efforts, the fight against disease, ignorance and poverty; and the push for integration, as captured in the OAU Charter, the Monrovia Declaration, the Lagos Plan of Action, the Abuja Treaty, the AU Constitutive Act and NEPAD.*

*e. People-centered development, gender equality and youth empowerment, which places the African people at the center of all continental efforts, to ensure their participation in the transformation of the continent, and to build caring and inclusive societies. It recognizes that no society can reach its full potential, unless it empowers women and remove all obstacles to women’s full participation in all areas of human endeavours. Africa must provide an enabling environment for its children and young people to flourish and reach their full potential.*

*f. The changing global context, and in our times the modern information revolution; globalization; changes in technology, production, trade, knowledge and labour markets; the opportunities presented by global demographic trends, urbanization and the growing global middle and working classes in the South; the move towards multi-polarity with strong elements of uni-polarism remaining, global security and the impact of climate change. Humanity today has the capacities, technology and know-how to ensure a decent standard of living and human security for all inhabitants of our earth. And yet children continue to die of preventable diseases; women continue to die whilst giving birth, hunger and malnutrition remain part of the human experience; and underdevelopment, fragility, marginalization and inequality between regions and countries and within countries persist,”* (African Union Agenda 2063).

We must advocate **development**, the third thematic objective of IDPAD, through **social, economic and environmental development** of African diaspora communities as imperative for successful achievement for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The empirical evidence highlights we endure disproportionate inequalities in access to health, education, employment as well as other social, economic and cultural rights. Environmental racism contributes to environmental degradation and pollution, with high mortality and morbidity rates in African diaspora communities globally. Furthermore, gentrification of our neighbourhoods for capitalistic exploitation contributes to homelessness and economic disempowerment of our communities. It is these and other human rights issues that the PFPAD is charged to address through reparatory justice and other means.