

Third session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent
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Minister Gale Gillespie
Remarkable Life Ministries
Statement

Moderator
Chairperson
Excellencies
Panelists
Ladies and Gentlemen

Theme: The Second International Decade for People of African Descent: Addressing Systemic Racism, Reparatory Justice, and Sustainable Development.

Panel #1: Reparations, Sustainable Development & Economic Justice

The Issues: As mentioned in the concept note, the impact of colonialism, enslavement, trans-Atlantic, -Indian and -Pacific Ocean trade and trafficking of Africans, systemic and structural racism on people of African descent persists across the world. At the domestic and regional levels, people of African descent are overrepresented in poverty indicators and are often marginalized and disadvantaged in access to education, employment, healthcare, housing, markets, loans, and technology. Intergenerational poverty coupled with systemic and structural racism result in lack of land ownership, precarious work conditions, lower income, lower employment opportunities, limited progression in the labor market, restrictive access to entrepreneurship through purposefully restrictive administrative procedures, and exclusion from local bank and loan opportunities, among other issues. Women of African descent are often particularly vulnerable in the economy, making them more vulnerable to the lack of economic opportunities and autonomy, as well as restricted access to crucial economic resources, including credit, land ownership and inheritance.

Recommendations:

I recommend reparatory, sustainable development and economic justice first and foremost in the form of land ownership and livestock for food security, sustainable clean water, financial assistance for affordable housing ownership, entrepreneurial training, workforce development through education with professional, financial and personal development training to increase employment opportunities, and economic empowerment via access and inclusion to business and agricultural grants and loans.

Secondly, historically farmers of African descent have experienced racism and discrimination to a crippling degree which has deeply impacted them and their descendents. Reparatory justice through land ownership or reclaiming racially motivated land loss that according to the American Bar Association publication black farmers lost more than 90% of the 16 million acres of land

they owned in 1910. Land ownership would increase generational wealth and economic opportunities to flourish for people of African descent. Agricultural reparations would allow people of African descent to own their own land, produce their own food, and raise their own livestock with access to water septic systems providing clean water. This would create tangible solutions that provide autonomous sustainable systems for healthy and nutritional living, economic development and justice for marginalized and disadvantaged persons of African descent and their future generations.

Thirdly, reparatory justice would include land reparations with the ability to obtain financial assistance for affordable housing options. Affordable housing counseling programs for people of African descent that are first time home buyers. Additionally, providing funding for financial and business counseling programs, giving entrepreneurs and farmers guidance and assistance on building successful and sustainable businesses and farms.

In 1865 after the emancipation proclamation a group of black leaders and ministers came together to discuss and ask for 40 acres and a mule. They received the reparatory land request only to have it overturned by the new Andrew Johnson administration in the fall of the same year. It's been over 150 years and still repatriation for over 15 million victims of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Slavery over a 400 year time period has not been addressed. This atrocity is said to be the worst violation of human rights in history and yet reparatory justice has yet to be made. I recall the famous quote attributed to Maya Angelou "History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage need not be lived again."

It behooves us to make reparatory, sustainable development and economic justice a main issue to be addressed during the 2nd Decade for People of African Descent. These are the main aspects of reparatory, sustainable development and economic justice recommendations I would like to call your attention to today. I appreciate the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent members and all the work done thus far. I urge the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent to consider these recommendations and actionable steps for their fulfillment.

Thank you!