



United States Sustainable Development Corporation  
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## GLOBAL ISOLATION OF AFRICAN AND INDIGENOUS DESCENDANTS OF COLONIALISM AND ENSLAVEMENT

Esteemed chair, member states, NGO's and other member of civil society, in keeping with the theme, "Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world" it is against the backdrop of much unrest among the African and indigenous descendants of colonialism and enslavement in the United States that I submit this statement to this body. Today, descendants of African and indigenous Americans constitute nearly 1 million of the total 2.3 million of the incarcerated population, and have nearly six times the incarceration rate of those of European descent. The portion of southeast United States that covers approximately 600 contiguous counties from Virginia to Louisiana, coined by Booker T. Washington as the "black belt" region has been much studied and found to have many of the social, health and economic indicators of the global south, including massive poverty, severe challenges in education and high mortality from a plethora of causes. The same applies to many urban centers across the nation. Yet, despite the generations of systemic, institutional and policy abuses that continue to this day, there is a thought that for these people unlike any other in the world who may be experiencing these struggles, simply because they live in the US, the blame and responsibility for their current condition lies solely at their feet.

Another false narrative that has continued to dominate the historical ethos is that those who are the descendants of colonialism and enslavement are somehow an encroaching group who have no legitimate right in the land, the infrastructure for which their ancestors, many of whom preceded English colonialism, provided the free labor and yet they do not legitimately belong to another. As a result, the global isolation that is felt by those who encounter the daily struggle for basic human rights in the US is disheartening. Only a mother in a developing country might identify with the fear of a mother of indigenous or African descent in the United States when her son leaves the house each day, no matter the socioeconomic position.

It was by legislation that the early founders of the United States went to great lengths to define non-European citizenship as they simultaneously sought to erase and make them invisible to the social, historical and political fabric of the new government. Many of the member states present in this room are centuries old and continue to grapple with issues that are older than the entire history of the United States. Most in this room would likely agree that it is a foolhardy notion to assume that no remnants of such many-layered generational social, political, economic and legislative decisions would exist today.

But what does it matter today? The answer may be found in the current social climate where people of indigenous and African descent in the US find themselves repeatedly asking why it seems that their lives do not matter. Embedded deeply within the sociopolitical and economic scaffolding that holds the American institution together may be found the seed of truth out of which has grown the fruit of situations like, Flint,



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Michigan, Trayvon Martin and Sandra Bland. The systematic reclassification of generations people of African and indigenous descent into one homogeneous group called negro effectively rendered them an invisible in the socioeconomic caste of the United States the remnants of which continue to be felt. Today, identifying as "black" has taken on a political and social context that immediately defines the wearer of said identity as a member of the permanent underclass of the United States regardless of social, political or even economic status.

Nonetheless, it is at this place that the journey towards healing and resolution must begin. The search for a cure begins with acknowledgment of an illness, but to begin the healing process actionable steps must be taken to find the source of the problem. The source of the problem lies in the intents of the heart and consequences of founding legislation and it will be the intention of the heart and proactive policies that finally brings us out of the dark past. We submit that this is a timely regional matter in the 2030 agenda, and is a most important matter of global sustainable and social development. In closing, it is for that reason that we propose that a Committee for African and Indigenous Descendants of Enslavement be established forthwith.