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peace for the twenty-first century”**

Statement submitted by Athletes United for Peace, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

The Path to Reparatory Justice and Economic Empowerment for Women of African Descent

Throughout history, women of African descent have faced systemic discrimination, economic exclusion, and violence, resulting in deep-rooted socio-economic disparities. As we move into an era shaped by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and globalization, these challenges persist but also offer opportunities to chart a new course toward equity and reparatory justice. To achieve this, we must invest resources in economic justice, social safety nets, and sustainable development. Governments, international organizations, and civil society play critical roles in advancing these objectives.

Reparatory Justice: A Necessity for Historical and Present-Day Injustices

The principles of reparatory justice are deeply rooted in the recognition of the historical and contemporary injustices faced by people of African descent. Reparatory justice is not just about financial compensation; it also seeks to address structural inequalities, provide restorative healing, and create sustainable pathways for future generations. Reparations must encompass economic, social, and political measures that not only rectify past wrongs but also build resilience against current and emerging challenges, including those posed by AI-driven economic exploitation.

Women of African descent, who have long been the driving force of resistance movements, understand the urgency of reparatory justice as a means to alleviate the effects of colonialism, slavery, and systemic racism. By addressing reparatory justice through both international frameworks like the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and national policies, we can create a more inclusive, just society.

Expanding Social Safety Nets: A Call for Universal Basic Income, Universal Healthcare, and Universal Housing

Governments must urgently expand social safety nets to ensure economic security for women of African descent, workers, and economies worldwide. Women of African descent have long been disproportionately affected by poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to essential services. In an era where AI threatens to further entrench economic disparities by automating jobs held by many in marginalized communities, the provision of Universal Basic Income (UBI), Universal Healthcare, and Universal Housing becomes not just a safety measure but a pathway to sustaining the middle class in countries like the United States.

Universal Basic Income offers a lifeline to those most vulnerable to job displacement, ensuring a basic standard of living. Coupled with Universal Healthcare, which guarantees access to quality medical services without financial hardship, and Universal Housing, which provides safe and stable living conditions, these provisions can help sustain workers and their families. Access to these essential resources would alleviate the burden of poverty and improve the quality of life for many.

Harmonizing Economic Efforts for People of African Descent: Combating Exploitation and Supporting Unions

Women of African descent have historically been subjected to various forms of economic exploitation. In the age of AI, this exploitation takes on new forms, such as the underpaid labor of Kenyan workers in AI development. These forms of exploitation highlight the need for harmonizing economic efforts that benefit women of African descent, ensuring that the fruits of their labor are fairly compensated and that they are not further marginalized by technological advances.

We must promote the formation of unions and advocate for a Human Rights Economy that centers economic justice and equity. An economy based on the principles of fair wages, workers' rights, social protection, and respect for the environment is essential in addressing long-standing disparities.

Supporting Self-Sustainability and Self-Sufficiency

Self-sustainability and self-sufficiency are essential components of economic justice for women of African descent. The Toronto Black Farmers and Food Growers Collective and the Mali-Folkecenter Nyetaa demonstrate how agroecology, food distribution, and renewable energy can be leveraged to build sustainable futures. These initiatives must be supported from the local to the international level. They are aligned with the SDGs and show that grassroots movements can create lasting change.

Advocating for Anti-Racist AI and Addressing Algorithmic Bias

AI and machine learning technologies have the potential to revolutionize industries, but they also carry the risk of perpetuating existing biases against marginalized groups. The COMPAS recidivism algorithm, for example, has been shown to have significant biases against people of African descent, yet it continues to be used by law enforcement agencies. These biases reinforce systemic racism in the criminal justice system and further marginalize already vulnerable communities. Women of African descent have long been victims of the racist justice system on multiple fronts, both as prisoners themselves and as family members left to lead households alone when a partner is incarcerated. These burdens expose them to economic hardships, emotional strain, and social stigmatization, all while navigating a justice system that often overlooks their unique struggles.

It is crucial to advocate for the development and implementation of anti-racist AI. AI systems must be continuously audited for biases, and companies must be held accountable for ensuring that their technologies do not perpetuate harm. Moreover, a diverse range of voices, particularly those from marginalized communities, must be included in the design and oversight of these technologies to ensure they reflect the needs and realities of all people.

Aligning Efforts to End Police Brutality: Legislative and Community Action

Police brutality remains a pervasive issue in the U.S., particularly for people of African descent. The fight to end police violence must be multi-faceted, involving both legislative reform and community-led initiatives. New Jersey's Civilian Complaint Review Board Bill (A3441/S1551), for example, aims to give communities more oversight over police misconduct investigations, while the Seabrooks-

Washington Community-Led Crisis Response Act seeks to address police-involved shootings during mental health crises.

At the federal level, the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021 (H.R.1280) represents a crucial step toward addressing systemic racism and police brutality. United Nations support for these legislative efforts, combined with grassroots activism from organizations like the People's Organization for Progress, can help bring about meaningful change and avoid more Black women victims like Sandra Bland, Breonna Taylor, and Sonya Massey.

Teach Political Education and Grassroots Collaboration and Support

Political education, including how to navigate local, state, and federal politics, is critical in enabling women of African descent to organize around policy priorities and hold elected officials accountable by using platforms like nngage.org.

The global community plays a vital role in supporting women of African descent who have long endured systemic discrimination, economic exclusion, and violence. To realize these goals, UN Member States must enact appropriate laws, fund grassroots projects, and endorse economic models that prioritize the needs of women of African descent. Frameworks like "The Blueprint: Goals and Targets to Achieve Justice for People of African Descent" are key to setting clear international objectives, initiatives, and measurable progress in both public and private sectors. "The Blueprint" not only supports but builds upon the foundations laid by the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and aligns with the recommendations of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, infusing anti-racist objectives into the broader SDG agenda. By working together, governments, international organizations, and civil society can create a future where disenfranchised communities are empowered to live free from economic oppression, systemic racism, and violence. This is not just a moral imperative; it is a necessary step towards achieving global justice and equity.
