



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

E/CN.4/2003/NGO/189  
17 March 2003

ENGLISH ONLY

---

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
Fifty-ninth session  
Item 14 (b) of the provisional agenda

SPECIFIC GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS:  
MINORITIES

Written statement\* submitted by All For Reparations and Emancipation (AFRE),  
a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[3 February 2003]

---

\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Four hundred years of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, plantation slavery, and the lingering effects of slavery have caused us, the Afro Descendants, to be left out of the UN system. Other people of African descent living in the Diaspora whose ancestors were not subjected to slavery in the Americas Region, still have their original identity and their bond with others of their family, tribe or nation. We do not. Thus we do not have collective human rights (original language, culture and religion), as articulated in Article 27 of the ICCPR.

Our collective human rights were utterly destroyed due to forced denial of our original identity and forced mixed breeding during slavery. Today we are no longer bonded together by the mother tongue, culture and religion of our ancestors. We, the Afro Descendant minorities in the Americas Region and slavery Diaspora, wish to reconstitute ourselves and reconstruct our lost ties with UN assistance. We seek to be recognized by the UN as one people, and we seek to have our collective human rights restored as the first step in granting us reparations for slavery and its lingering effects.

Afro Descendants is a name that we have chosen for ourselves. We chose this name during the process leading up to the World Conference Against Racism, and chose it again when Afro Descendant leaders from 19 countries met in La Ceiba, Honduras at a seminar organized by the UN Working Group on Minorities, which is a working group of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

In La Ceiba we began to define Afro Descendants as peoples who have their roots in Africa, who have been forcibly transported to the Americas for slavery, and have experienced the loss of their original identity, language and religion, and as a result suffer discrimination.

The experts of the Working Group on Minorities are aware that we Afro Descendants are experiencing, in reality, the process of ethnogenesis: a word that describes the coming to life again of a people who have been scattered, forcibly cut off, severed; now seemingly assimilated, within the countries of their domicile. This Working Group has been studying and assisting Afro Descendant minorities for six years under the direction of the Sub-Commission. Through the efforts of the Working Group on Minorities we have begun to establish a foundation upon which we Afro Descendants can proceed in our efforts, as recognition, restoration and reconciliation are our primary concerns.

We sincerely appreciate the decisions made by the Commission on Human Rights on our behalf, and we respectfully ask the Commission to consider our recommendation: we recommend that the Commission on Human Rights pass a resolution asking the Sub-Commission to place Afro Descendants on their agenda. We feel that restoration of the human rights of Afro Descendants is best placed in the capable hands of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and the Working Group on Minorities.

-----