

PROCLAMATION ON BUILDING A UNITED FRONT TO PROMOTE THE CAUSE OF JUSTICE AND PAYMENT OF REPARATIONS TO AFRICANS

PREAMBLE

We, the delegates participating in the Accra Reparations Conference held in Accra, Ghana from 14 to 17 November 2023, under the theme "*Building a United Front to Advance the Cause of Justice and Reparations to Africans*" (hereafter referred to as "Accra Reparations Conference" or "Conference"), and hailing from all the regions of the Continent of Africa and the African Diaspora, including the Caribbean, Latin America, North America, Europe and the U.K.;

EXPRESSING our profound appreciation to His Excellency, President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the Government and People of the Republic of Ghana and the African Union for co-organizing and conducting this Conference, and to His Excellency Azali Assoumani President of the Union of Comoros, and Chairperson of the African Union (AU) for the support and contribution provided by the Union to this Conference;

ACKNOWLEDGING, with appreciation, the invaluable statements and contributions of the Prime Ministers of Burundi and Barbados, Ministers of Member States of the AU, the Secretary General of the CARICOM, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and Senior Officials attending this Conference;

ALSO NOTING WITH DEEP APPRECIATION, the work led by the Permanent Representative of the Government of Ghana to the African Union in conceptualizing, formulating and shepherding the conduct of the Conference and other pre-conference activities with the AU Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) as well as the substantive and invaluable contributions of the African Union Commission (AUC) in the preparation of the Conference;

RECOGNIZING that the Accra Reparations Conference convened with a shared commitment to addressing historical injustices and injurious crimes committed against Africans and people of African descent, through transatlantic enslavement, colonialism and apartheid, and to addressing the inequities present in the international economic and political orders, is a demonstration of the African Union's commitment to advancing the cause of reparatory justice and healing for Africans and for all people of African descent;

NOTING that the Accra Reparations Conference is in fulfilment of the decision taken in February 2023 at the 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, endorsing the Government of Ghana's proposal to co-organize with relevant stakeholders and host an International Conference towards "Building a United Front to Advance the Cause of Justice and the Payment of Reparations to Africans";

COGNIZANT that in July 2023, a High-Level delegation of the African Union conducted a study tour to the Republic of Barbados, with a view to developing stronger AU-CARICOM cooperation in advancing the agenda on reparations and racial healing;

NOTING FURTHER that the findings and recommendations that emerged from the Study Tour called for the need to implement joint initiatives that ensure civil society perspectives are represented in the mobilization and advocacy for reparations;

RECALLING that in November 2022, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) passed a resolution (ACHPR/Res.543 (LXXIII) 2022) reaffirming that accountability and the provision of remedies for historical mass crimes, including slavery, the trade and trafficking of enslaved Africans, colonialism and racial segregation are integral to combatting ongoing systemic racism and to the advancement of the human rights of Africans and people of African descent;

FURTHER RECALLING that in August 2022, the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the African Union, in collaboration with global civil society, held the Accra Summit on Reparations and Healing to build on ongoing conversations in and outside of the African Continent and explore ways to create a platform for adoption of a single transcontinental plan for reparations;

REITERATING our respective and collective understanding and abhorrence of the profound and lasting impacts of slavery, colonialism, racial discrimination and neo-colonialism on Africans and people of African descent, and how these continue to cause immense suffering, cultural disruption, economic exploitation, emotional trauma and unending discrimination endured by Africans and people of African descent throughout history;

AFFIRMING that the fulfilment of reparations is a moral as well as a legal imperative rooted in principles of justice, human rights and human dignity, and that the claim for reparations represents a concrete step towards remedying historical wrongs and fostering healing among the people of Africa and people of African descent;

UNDERSCORING the historic importance of this gathering and the impetus to operationalize proposed and/or existing multi-stakeholder mechanisms and processes as recommended by the 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, including but not limited to the establishment of an African Committee of Experts on Reparations for the purpose of developing a Common African Position on Reparations and Healing and incorporate therein, an African-Caribbean Programme of Action; and to consider the establishment of an AU – diaspora-wide program of action in pursuit of the objective of realizing a global African community;

FIRMLY CONVINCED of the need to build on these efforts and outcomes as the basis for establishing a solid foundation for the reinforcement of unity and

revitalization of the global African community as a panacea for a much wider and sustained transcontinental campaign for reparations;

RE-EMPHASIZING the essentiality of resourcing and collectively strengthening the relevant civil society-led actions and initiatives in and outside the African Continent, and promoting a global African reparatory justice campaign that is devoid of unnecessary duplication of efforts;

HEREBY COMMIT to undertaking the following social, cultural, political and economic areas of action;

Guided by the rich deliberations of the Conference attended by legal experts, policymakers, academics, and stakeholders from, among others, the African Union, the global African diaspora and peoples of African descent, and the Caribbean Region

Commitments of the Accra Reparations Conference and Recommendations for Member States of the African Union:

1. **Establishment by the African Union Commission and inauguration of a Committee of Experts on Reparations, in consultation with Member States, ECOSOCC and other AU Organs as well as the RECs, for the purpose of developing a Common African Policy on Reparations and incorporating therein, an African Reparatory Programme of Action,** in accordance with due process and taking into consideration the following proposals:
 - a. To serve as a principal point of reference for the African Union on matters relating to reparations and healing;
 - b. To solicit, nurture and promote reparatory justice knowledge at the African Union, by developing and implementing knowledge about reparations between and among different AU organs, Member States and the global African community;
 - c. Liaise with and support the mandate of an AU Special Envoy on Reparations for Africa; and
 - d. Undertake any other tasks which may be assigned and determined by the African Union.
2. **Establishment of a Global Reparations Fund,** based in Africa and supported by multilateral institutions and agencies aligned with the reparatory justice agenda. Such a Fund will complement the efforts of similar initiatives in and outside the Continent, while operating as an autonomous entity geared towards ensuring the judicious utilization of a pool of resources to advance the campaign for reparations, in close cooperation with the African Union Commission and for consideration by Member States, according to due process;
3. **Establishment of the Office of AU Special Envoy on Reparations for Africans,** to be recommended for consideration according to the AUC due

process, and with a view to help champion the international advocacy and campaign for reparations at the global level. The full mandate of this Special Envoy will be determined, in consultation with the Executive Council of the African Union. The postholder of this office will reinforce the work of the Committee of Experts on Reparations and Healing.

4. **Recognition of African civil society efforts on reparations:** The African Union Commission, through the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), have made tremendous progress in engaging and collaborating with African peoples through civil society actors, and expanding engagement with the African Diaspora community through State and non-state institutions. To build on this and continue the advancement of equitable representation and participation that will inform the day-to-day discourses on reparations and reparative justice, we commit to supporting relevant African networks, coalitions and initiatives that foster synergy and cooperation between and among the relevant actors of the reparatory justice movement.
5. **Creation of a transcontinental partnership framework between the AU, CARICOM Latin American States, and the African diaspora in Europe and all other regions in the world, including, where appropriate, relevant CSOs:** This will seek to enhance Global South cooperation, in close coordination with the African Union Commission, through stronger collaboration between the African Union (AU) and other inter- governmental entities in the Global South with significant African and people of African descent. The framework will support efforts by the AU to accelerate processes that will catalyse the development of transcontinental messaging around reparations, including the need to emphasize that reparations are an integral pillar for the achievement of sustainable development. It will also be deployed to foster intercontinental knowledge building and exchange on reparations and healing.
6. **Exploration of legal and judicial options for reparations:** This will involve engagement, in close coordination with the African Union Commission, on the question of how international law interacts with or supports the quest for reparations, including the potential for exploring litigation options in regional and international court systems. This effort will require the African Union, including the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, CARICOM and Latin American states, Europe and all other regions of the world, among others, in collaboration with civil society, to engage the United Nations and other multilateral bodies on the legal merits of the call for reparations, including on the question of whether acts of enslavement, colonialism and apartheid against Africans, constitute grave violations of human rights at the time they were committed. In addition, we support actions being taken in and outside the Continent by individual Member States and descendants of victims of these historical crimes and call on the African Union to lend its weight behind future litigatory actions for reparations.

7. **Increased role for the United Nations:** Conference Members call on the United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, to convene, in close coordination with the African Union Commission, an International Conference, involving former colonial powers, on the issue of reparations as well as to extend the Decade for People of African Descent, for acknowledgement and healing with regard to the Trans-Atlantic enslavement, colonialism, and apartheid.
8. **Establishment of a Legal Reference Group,** in close coordination with the African Union Commission, to be set up to support the AU Committee of Experts and the AU Special Envoy, through the provision of legal advice on the question of reparations, including best practice on the law, practice and litigation of the reparation's agenda. The Legal/Expert Reference Group will further provide thought leadership and advice, drawing from global case studies, for influencing policy and advocating for the application of global norms in support of reparatory justice.
9. **Amplification of marginalized voices in the reparatory justice movement.** The Conference acknowledges that contemporary forms of discrimination, especially against women and young people, stem from long-standing discriminatory and non-representative policies rooted in colonialism, apartheid and neo-colonialism, which have further strained the overall development of former colonized countries in the Global South. As such, the Conference calls for political discussions on reparations accompanied by actions that demonstrate genuine socio-political equality through fair representation of marginalized voices.
10. **A united front for the reform of global financial systems and structures:** The delegates commit to supporting the advocacy campaign headlined by President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and the Republic of Ghana for the reform of the global financial infrastructure with a view to achieving a new global financial pact that is reparatory in nature and economically equitable in scope and practice. Member States of the AU, CARICOM and other developing and Least Developed Countries that have been adversely impacted by trans-Atlantic enslavement, colonialism, apartheid and other forms of extractivism, are urged to support the Government of Ghana and similar efforts, including the Bridgetown Initiative championed by Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley of the Republic of Barbados, to pursue joint reparatory efforts within the global multilateral system.
11. **Increased and active role for AU organs Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the reparations campaign:** Conference delegates further call on AU organs, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) of the African Union, to take concrete measures, in close coordination with the African Union Commission, that would promote and sustain linkages between the various AU organs, the RECs and Civil Society, including through the use of information

and communication technology as well as the arts and culture industries to advance reparatory justice and healing.

12. **Climate justice and reparatory justice:** The delegates of the Conference note that descendants of the victims of Trans-Atlantic enslavement and colonialism have also been exposed to the dangers of climate change, including the impact of environmental damage caused by the exploitative forces of colonialism and through the forced relocation of enslaved African labour to other regions. Delegates, therefore, commit to supporting efforts campaigning for the compensation of the people of African descent suffering from those effects.
13. **Repatriation, restitution and safeguarding of African cultural artifacts:** Developing a strong Common African Position on the Restitution of Cultural Property and Heritage and producing a Framework for Action on the Negotiations for the Return/Restitution of illicitly trafficked cultural property from the Continent in accordance with the Continental Consultations on the Restitution of Cultural Property and Heritage held from 30 November to 2 December 2021. African experts should endeavour to establish networks of African cultural experts, policymakers, certified dealers and auctioneers, and museum curators, among others, working in combatting illicit trafficking in cultural property and heritage. As the African Union Agenda 2063 underscored, Africa's stolen culture, heritage and artifacts should be fully repatriated and safeguarded.
14. **Neo-colonialism:** Highlight that African States are still facing the repercussions of trans- Atlantic enslavement, colonialism, and apartheid through the persistence of neo- colonialism and dependency on former colonial powers. Hence, they call for immediate, just and comprehensive reforms of the prevailing architecture of multilateral institutions by fully realizing related African Common Positions particularly with regard to the composition and working methods of the United Nations Security Council, and the Bretton Woods Institutions, as well as ensuring an equitable and just international system through concrete measures including, but not limited to, special and differential treatment, common but differentiated responsibility and mechanisms for loss and damage, debt relief, curbing illicit financial flows and return of African cultural artefacts.
15. **Propose** the holding of the International Conference on Reparations regularly and **encourage** other AU Member States to offer to host the Conference in collaboration with the AU Commission, alongside other relevant mechanisms for dialogue relating to specific aspects of reparations to sustain the momentum.
16. **RECOMMEND** that the Theme of the Year 2025 be “**Justice for Africa Through Reparations**”.