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“A Comprehensive Strategy for African  
Reparations: A Multi-Dimensional Approach”

*A Plenary Contribution on Reparatory Justice at the  
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## Introduction

The enduring legacies of the trans-Atlantic slavetrade (referred as human trafficking) and slavery and as a result of colonialism, and neo-colonialism continue to impact the African continent and its Global Diaspora, manifesting in economic disparities, cultural dislocation, socio-political inequities, and the disproportionate burden of climate change. Marginalization as consequences of the pseudo-scientific delusions about African people also defined as Afrophobia, the multiple forms of racism against African People.

This document annexes the power point, presents a comprehensive, multi-dimensional strategy for Reparatory Justice, drawing on global Pan African and Reparations movements, research, and the lived experiences of African people that includes the Global African Diaspora Communities.

In perspective of the African experience: It integrates the contributions of key persons in the reparations discourse and aims to foster unity, advocate for justice, and address the interconnected crises of historical injustice and climate change. It serves as a resource for policymakers, educators, and advocates, providing a framework for understanding and advancing Reparatory Justice.

## The Content:

1. Contextual Background
2. Definitions and Frameworks
3. Strategic Goals
4. Multi-dimensional Strategic Components
5. Climate Justice as a Dimension of Reparation
6. Conclusion



# 1.Contextual Background

## Historical Injustices and Their Legacy

The Trans-Atlantic slave trade, slavery, colonialism, and neo-colonial exploitation have inflicted deep and lasting wounds on African nations and their Diasporas. These injustices include:

**Economic Exploitation:** The extraction of resources and wealth from Africa, hindering economic development and creating dependency. For example, it is estimated that the Trans-Atlantic slave trade alone extracted the equivalent of trillions of dollars in today's currency from Africa.

**Cultural Dislocation:** The suppression and erasure of indigenous cultures, languages, and traditions, leading to a loss of cultural heritage and identity.

**Social and Political Inequities:** The imposition of exploitative systems of governance and social structures that perpetuate inequality, marginalization, and conflict.

**Psychological Trauma:** The intergenerational trauma resulting from dehumanization, racial discrimination, divide and conquer strategies, systemic and symbolic violence, impacting mental health and well-being.

## Climate Change as a Dimension of Reparations

Climate change disproportionately affects Africa, despite the continent's minimal contribution to greenhouse gas emissions.

The devastating consequences include:

**Extreme Weather Events:** Increased frequency and intensity of droughts, floods, and cyclones, causing widespread damage and displacement.

**Food Insecurity:** Disruption of agricultural systems, leading to famine, malnutrition, and increased vulnerability.

**Displacement and Migration:** Climate-induced migration, resulting in loss of livelihoods, cultural heritage, and increased competition for resources.

**Health Crises:** The spread of diseases due to changing climatic conditions, exacerbating existing health challenges.



The climate crisis is a direct result of the industrialization and exploitative practices of nations, many of which benefited significantly from the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, slavery and colonialism. Therefore, addressing climate change is a crucial element of Reparatory Justice.

## 2. Definitions and Frameworks

### 2.1 The conceptual framework

According to **Esther Xosei**: Reparations is all about renewing, repairing and fixing something that was once damaged of which Chinweizu assumes that self-repair is the most important part of Reparations.

**Molly Secours**: Reparations is “A process of investigating the damage done to the descendants of those who were abducted from Africa and enslaved around the world for two hundred and fifty years. It is about a dialogue about compensatory measures”.

**Professor Kimani Nehusi**, states that Reparations is the most misunderstood concept immediately associated with financial compensation or reparations. He argues that Reparations is more than just money. Even though money is needed to realize projects within the framework of recovery programs. Reparations are described by him as an act or activity that aims to repair the damage or injustice; to renew something. Restorative Justice, is an act synonymous with Reparations that emphasizes the end result of the 'restorative work'.

The **National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America**. NCOBRA sees Reparatory Justice as a form of atonement for crimes committed in the past and assuming reparation in a material and immaterial sense: money, land and restitution of stolen treasures.

According to **Professor Maulana Karenga's** description, Reparatory Justice is intended to (loosely translated) eliminate that which lies in ruins, by which he mainly means the effects. To repair that which has been damaged; to rejoin that

*American Professor of African Studies, activist and author and known for introducing the concept of Maangamisie as a just alternative to concepts such as Black Holocaust and Maafa and inventor of the December Kwanzaa commemoration*



which was separated (Repatriation); to supplement what is missing; to strengthen that which is weakened; to right what is wrong and to let what is uncertain and undeveloped flourish.

The eminent Nigerian **Professor Chinweizu** argues that Reparatory Justice is not just about money. It's usually not even about money, he emphasizes. In fact, money is not even one percent of what Reparatory Justice is about, he concludes. Reparatory Justice is mainly about carrying out or supporting activities that lead to self-repair of people, society, culture, structures, norms, values and traditions. Repairs of every type needed to "recreate, transform," and make more sustainable societies. As examples, he mentions:

- a.** Recognise that there is racism that is based on past scientific approaches to Africa and African humanity;
- b.** The dismantling of Afrophobia that has served as a stake to protect the trans-Atlantic slave trade to legitimize the slave trade from Africa and the human rights violations against African people;
- c.** Supporting rehabilitation (detrumatization) processes of descendants of the enslaved Africans, by the descendants themselves;
- d.** Activities related to the decolonization of the 'mind';
- e.** Empowerment, Identity strengthening activities that also aim to:
  - deal with 'divide and conquer' strategies;
  - strengthening family relationships/ties, bring back the sense of belonging;
  - strengthening the material condition and the collective reputation;
- f.** providing space for education about the norms, values and traditions as well as the collective memories. Chinweizu is mainly concerned with determining (together) the actions and activities through programs and projects that are necessary for the settlement of the effects of the reprehensible slavery past.

**Armand Zunder (Suriname)** sees Reparations for the Slavery Past as a process of transformation in thinking that begins with acknowledging that the slave trade and slavery of Africans from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century were crimes against humanity. Crimes that, in his view, never expire. Distinguishing five R's as central

*Is one of the most influential scientific icons to his name in the field of various forms of slavery that have affected Africans.*





to this transformation process in thinking, namely: R=Research; R=Refocus (Refocusing on the findings of the research done from a local perspective); R=Re-educate (Reshaping thinking from one's own perspective); R=Rewrite (rewriting one's own history from one's own perspective); R=Repair. These five R's, he argues, can be linked to the starting points in the process of recovery. Namely: recognition, apologies and reparation. In the transformation process of thinking about slave trade and slavery, apologies follow, after the process of recognition has been discussed in depth. Offering apologies means that the descendants of the 'perpetrators' confess to the descendants of the enslaved people - who are often scattered all over the world - whether or not through the intervention of mediators, that their ancestors committed crimes against humanity. Offering apologies also means that it must be clear to whom the apologies are offered. The starting point is the acceptance of the apologies by the 'Party' to which the apologies are directed. The text of the apologies, the rituals surrounding the apologies and the place where the apologies are offered play an important role in this.

## 2.2 The Goal

According to **Esther Xosei**: with regards to Self-repair: "receiving the financial component of reparations will be meaningful only if it serves the holistic purpose and strengthens the integral whole of our self-repair process."

According to **Professor Molefi Kete Asante**, Reparations must ensure that: recognition, justice and development have a positive effect on the part of the descendants of the enslaved Africans on the one hand and the societies as a whole of the countries where the reprehensible slavery past took place on the other hand. The Recovery Programme aims to bring about psychological relief for both Africans and Europeans, in terms of detraumatization and detaboosation processes; to establish national unity where all citizens are considered equal, based on a strong Political Will to stimulate and enable that unity. Using 'Seduce and Connect' as a strategy to counteract 'Divide and Conquer'.

*He is known for his writings on Afrocentricity, a school of thought that has influenced the fields of sociology, cross-cultural communication, critical theory, political science, the history of Africa, and social work.*



**Dr. Datey Kumodzie:** Reparations should lead to the restoration of indigenous African knowledge systems. As examples of the knowledge systems, he mentions: Art & Symbolism, Language, Music, Philosophy, Science, Technology & Spirituality.

### 2.3 Forms

**2.3.1 Ethical Level:** Promoting the moral foundation of Reparations as a national responsibility. This means, among other things: the recognition and the integration of that recognition of the trans-Atlantic trafficking of Africans and slavery as a crime against humanity in the national constitution in accordance with the Durban Declaration and Programm of Action (DDPA 2001) amongst other mechanisms, instruments and related resolutions and declarations.

**2.3.2 Historical Level:** the committed crimes against humanity must be documented. The full picture of slavery and the trans-Atlantic trafficking in Africans must be documented objectively (from a multiple perspective). The crimes committed must be given a full place in the National History, as with regard to other national histories. Governments has an important task and responsibility to stimulate academic interdisciplinary research and to invest heavily in it. This includes measures aimed at encouraging disclosure of all sources of information: national archives, libraries, and registers of all those involved in the crimes (governments, families: this includes the royal families, companies/enterprises, insurance companies, universities, banks and churches).

**2.3.3 Educational Level:** promoting the alignment of curricula as part of human rights education with results (facts and figures) obtained from academic interdisciplinary research, including the effects of the crimes against humanity;

**2.3.4 Social, Economic and Cultural Level** include:

Political recognition and concrete programmes for 'compensation' for social and economic inequalities and political marginalisation. In this context, recognize the

*Pioneer in the field of Indigenous African knowledge systems*

*The indirect role of Leiden and Amsterdam universities, for example, is relevant because they were responsible for training surgeons, so the story goes, who were employed as medical examiners at the 'auction' as animals of the enslaved.*



many forms of multiple racism and discrimination, such as structural institutional and systemic racism, institutional discrimination, as well as the psychological handicaps that Africans and the descendants of the enslaved have suffered as a result of the impact and legacies of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and slavery. Promoting programmes aimed at the development of prosperity or combating the poverty caused by the reprehensible trans-Atlantic slavery system because of the influence of the exclusion mechanisms.

#### 2.4 The Format

In this context, we follow the recommendations of **Professor Rebecca Tsoie** with regards to the requirements that the format must (minimally) meet for the 'implementation' of Reparations. These also apply to the apologies to be offered because they are an important part of the Recovery Program. In fact, the first expression of recognition.

1. Firstly, the intended purpose, role and importance must be clearly defined. In the context of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery, it must be clear that it concerns the African enslaved. In the sense that each specific Group undergoes its own process and trajectory because of its specific histories.
2. It must take into account the specific historical experiences (based on facts and figures) both on the side of the aggrieved nations and also on the side of the European nations that colonized these (aggrieved) nations.
3. It must start from [African] epistemologies referring to the African knowledge systems and philosophies (Ubuntu/Ma'at) instead of European Christianity, being the system that contributed to the oppression of the African people.
4. The different histories must be studied and considered on their own merits. They require their own trajectory and format of realization. Precisely because there are no 'uniform' theories about Reparations that fit the specific crimes in the context of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery.

According **Maulana Karenga**: Reparations is to:

- remove what is in ruins
- repair that which is damaged





- reconnect with that which is separated
- make up for what is missing
- strengthen that which is weakened
- correct what is wrong and
- let what is uncertain and undeveloped flourish

**Restitution** means to “re-establish the situation which existed before the wrongful act was committed.” Changes traced to the wrongful act are reversed through restoration of freedom, recognition of humanity, identity, culture, repatriation, livelihood, citizenship, legal standing, and wealth to the extent they can be, and if they cannot, restitution is completed by compensation. In this context the importance of the participation of the ‘People’ has emphasized as underlined in the **‘Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Violations of International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law’** that Reparations shall be “effective and adequate” and that it only can be achieved if such measures of Reparations meet the needs of victims; Secondly that a participatory process creates a sense of local, national and regional ownership of reparations policies or programmes. Processes and programmes, from the inception, can assist in managing their expectations of what such initiatives can and cannot deliver or achieve; Finally, that a participatory process has a potential healing effect on victims, beneficiaries and communities. Since, being consulted and acknowledged as rights holders helps victims to move forward thereby removing stigmatization tied to victimhood; restoring their agency and dignity as Africans, people of African descent and Indigenous peoples, in addition to, their political status as citizens, which has been impaired due to the impact of enduring violations and harms on contemporary generations. Reparations: Actions taken to repair or make amends for a wrong or injury. This can include financial compensation, restitution, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition.

**Concluding from the various descriptions and insights, is it justified stating that Reparatory Justice is a process of transformation in thinking that starts with acknowledging that the trans-Atlantic slavetrade and slavery were crimes against humanity and that these must be formalized in national constitutions with regards to the non-repetition reparations aspect.**



Citizens must be informed that these crimes are not yet statute-barred because of the effects. They must be educated about the relationship between the past and contemporary racism. This is accompanied by examples. Also because of the awareness about the responsibility of the current generation of the descendants of the perpetrators towards the descendants of the enslaved.

Apologizing also means that it must be clear to whom the apology is offered or addressed, as the apology must be accepted by the addressed "Party". The text of the apologies, the rituals surrounding the apologies and the place where the apologies are offered play an important role in this. A Reparation Program is inextricably linked to the recognition and apologies. It can be argued that apologies should not be considered acceptable without a thorough program for reparation of the material and immaterial 'damage' of centuries of the human trafficking in African People, which still continues to have an effect.

### 3. Strategic Goals

- **Unified Vision and Narrative:** Develop a cohesive narrative among African nations and the Diaspora advocating for reparations.
- **Global Advocacy and Awareness:** Raise awareness about historical injustices and the need for reparations through public campaigns, educational programs, and cultural exchange.
- **Strategic Alliances:** Build partnerships with Civil Society Organizations, Academic Institutions, international organizations, and other marginalized groups.
- **Diplomatic Engagement:** Engage with former colonial powers through diplomatic channels to negotiate Reparations and foster Reconciliation.
- **Legal Strategies:** Explore legal avenues, including international courts, to pursue reparations claims.
- **Climate Justice Integration:** Integrate climate justice into the reparation's framework, ensuring that African nations receive the resources and support needed to address climate change.



## **4. Multi-Dimensional Strategy Components**

### **4.1 Horizontal Strategies (Cross-Cutting)**

**Coalition Building:** Form alliances with Civil Society organizations, academic institutions, and Diaspora groups. Engage with other reparations movements globally.

**Awareness and Education:** Launch public awareness campaigns using various media platforms. Develop educational materials and programs for schools and communities. Support cultural exchange programs and initiatives.

### **4.2 Vertical Strategies (Specific Focus Areas)**

#### **Diplomatic Engagement:**

- Initiate bilateral and multilateral discussions with former colonial powers.
- Leverage international platforms like the AU, EU and the UN.

#### **Legal Frameworks:**

- Support the development of international legal instruments on reparations.
- Explore litigation in international and domestic courts.

#### **Economic Development:**

- Promote sustainable development initiatives in Africa and the diaspora.
- Support investments in education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

#### **Cultural Preservation and Revitalization:**

- Support initiatives to preserve and promote African languages, traditions, and arts.
- Facilitate the return of cultural artifacts and ancestral remains.

## **5. Climate Justice as a Dimension of Reparations**

### **5.1 Climate Reparations:**

- Provide financial and technical assistance for climate adaptation and mitigation projects.



- Support technology transfer and capacity building in renewable energy and sustainable development.
- Invest in climate-resilient infrastructure and agriculture.

### **5.2 Advocacy and Policy Reform:**

- Establish mechanisms to monitor the progress of the reparation's movement, evaluate the effectiveness of strategies, and adapt to changing circumstances. This includes:
  - a. Developing clear indicators and targets.
  - b. Regularly assessing progress and challenges.
  - c. Gathering feedback from stakeholders.

### **5.3. Recommendations for Engagement**

- African Leaders: Advocate for reparations at regional and international forums.
- Diaspora Communities: Mobilize support and raise awareness in their respective countries.
- International Partners: Acknowledge historical injustices and engage constructively in the reparations process.
- Civil Society Organizations: Play a critical role in raising awareness, advocating for policy change, and supporting affected communities.
- Establish mechanisms to monitor the progress of the reparation's movement, evaluate the effectiveness of strategies, and adapt to changing circumstances. This includes:
  - Developing clear indicators and targets.
  - Regularly assessing progress and challenges.
  - Gathering feedback from stakeholders.

### **6. Conclusion**

This comprehensive strategy provides a framework for the pursuit of Reparatory Justice for the historical injustices suffered by Africa and its Diaspora. By integrating climate justice, this strategy



addresses the interconnected challenges of historical injustice and environmental degradation. It requires a concerted effort from African nations, Diaspora communities, international partners, and all those committed to justice and equity.

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