



**From Pain to Power: Historical Diasporas and the Legacy of Slavery –
A Global African Diaspora Perspective**

**Solidarity Statement at the Opening Ceremony Of
The Pan African Parliament Permanent Committee Sitzings**

By

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(Greetings)

Mr. President of the Pan African Parliament, His Excellency, Chief Fortune Charumbira; The Judge President of the African Court on Human and People's Rights, Her Excellency, Lady Justice Imani D. Aboud; The Chairperson of the Banjul Commission, Hon. Remy Ngoy Lumbu; The Vice Presidents of the Pan African Parliament, Hon. Dr. Fatimetou Habib, Hon. Dr. Ashebir Woldegiorgis Gayo and Hon. Lucia Dos Passos; The Deputy Minister of International Relations and Co-operation of the Republic of South Africa, Hon. Thandi Moraka; Her Excellency, Ambassador Marie - Antoinette Rose Quatre, CEO of the Africa Peer Review Mechanism; Dr. Tumenta Kenedy, Commissioner, African Diasporas Development Agency; The Dean of African Ambassadors, His Excellency, Ambassador Andre Nzapayeke; The Ambassador of Palestine, Her. Excellency, Hanan Jarrar; Excellencies, Deans of other Regions and Ambassadors here present; Hon. Members of the Pan African Parliament; Representatives of the African Union Commission; Ms. Lindiwe Khumalo, Clerk of the Pan-African Parliament; Representatives of the Department of International Relations and Co-operation (DIRCO); Distinguished Invited Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen; Ubuntu Connected Friends and Families:

Mr. President,

On behalf of the **African Union African Diaspora 6th Region High Council**, and the over **300 million** members of the Diaspora spread across the Americas (Latin, South, North), the Caribbean, Asia, Europe, Australia, the Pacific, and returnees without recognition here on the African continent.

I also speak as a **Princess of the Kingdom of Kush**, tirelessly working to create a space where we can unite historical Africans diaspora and promote development in a spirit of unity and ubuntu.

I extend my deepest gratitude for this invitation to address this historic Pan African Sitting.

Your invitation is a profound honor, a powerful acknowledgment of the vital role the Global African Diaspora plays in the sustainable development of our continent and the advancement of the worldwide African community.

It speaks volumes about your recognition of our skills, capacities, and unwavering commitment to the struggle for justice, recognition, and development – the three inextricably linked pillars of the UN International Decade for People of African Descent, the roadmap toward reparatory justice.

This invitation is not just symbolic. It's a demonstration to the Pan African Parliament's commitment to implementing Article 3(q) of the African Union Constitutive Act, adopted in July 2003 in Maputo Mozambique. This Act, a cornerstone of our shared vision, calls for the integration of Africa and its Global Diaspora.

This journey, a journey we have embarked on together with various AU organs and bodies, has led us to this moment, to the establishment of the Diaspora High Council – a “Leave No Community Behind” governance structure born from over 125 years of struggle. I speak of the struggle that began after the First Pan-African Congress in London, where the integration of the Diaspora and the fight against colonialism were first articulated. I speak of the 140 years of struggle since the Berlin Conference, the "Scramble for Africa," whose scars remain deeply engraved on our continent.

(A Moment of Reflection)

Mr. President, I ask you, and all of us, to close our eyes for a moment. Imagine the unimaginable. Imagine the terror, the dehumanization, the sheer brutality of being enslaved. *Reflect on the devastating impact of enslavement, genocide, and ethnocide. Contemplate what might have been. What if our ancestors, my ancestors, had not been stolen from their homeland, reduced from proud Africans to mere commodities labeled "negro boy" or "negro girl"? Would we be gathered here today discussing reparatory justice?* Perhaps the Pan-African Congress of 1900, and the subsequent eight congresses that followed, focusing on the scourge of colonialism, might never have been necessary. *Think of the profound impact on both Africa and the Diaspora.*

I stand before you as a living descendant of enslaved people. My ancestors were forcibly removed from this continent, their humanity criminalized, and transported across the ocean to Suriname in South America. I carry within me the stories of my ancestors, passed down through generations, stories of unimaginable suffering. And I, along with millions across the Diaspora, seek justice. Look at me. What do you see? You see a proud African woman, deeply connected to her roots, honored to be here, in this moment, with you. Proud to embrace you, to be who I am, who I was always meant to be. This is the profound significance of our presence here today, and for this, we thank you. My presence here today embodies the resilience of our people and serves as a testimony to the enduring connection between the diaspora and the African continent.

(The Legacy of Enslavement)

The manuals that dictated the treatment of enslaved Africans – *the "Negroes" and "Negresses"* – are filled with heartbreakingly **cruel, pseudo-scientific, and utterly delusional ideas**. They detailed methods of perpetual oppression. The infamous **Code Noir of King Louis XIV**, and similar codes enacted by slaveholders across the Americas, from the United States to the Caribbean, **codified the power imbalance between "white" and "black."** These codes dictated every aspect of the lives of enslaved people, from curfews and restrictions on gatherings and cultural expression, to the denial of basic human rights, including family life. **Love was criminalized, families were torn apart, and women were subjected to sexual racism, treated as property to be exploited.** These measures, these prohibitions, were designed to perpetuate white supremacy and maintain the brutal system of enslavement. **Their effects continue to reverberate across generations.**

(From Survival to Strength, From Pain to Power)

And yet, **we, the historical Diaspora, stand before you today as survivors.** We endured the most brutal system of enslavement ever inflicted upon a people, and we emerged with resilience, with skills, with an unwavering spirit. **Stripped of our indigenous heritage, our dignity, and our identity, we never lost our faith in our African identity.** It is this faith that sustained us. **It is this same faith that now guide our engagement with the African Union,** particularly in the context of the Ubuntu “Leave No Community Behind” High Council model. **We are committed to building a sustainable partnership with the Pan African Parliament, a partnership grounded in our shared history, our shared aspirations, and our unwavering belief in the power of our collective future**

Mr. President, Honorable Members of the House, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Ubuntu-connected Friends and Family.

We see Africans increasingly asserting their place on the global stage, participating in international organizations. However, we also witness a concerning trend of nations withdrawing from multilateralism. This presents an opportunity for us. **As the African diaspora and people of African origin, we are larger than any single multilateral organization.** We must capitalize on the potential of our people across the globe to build a stronger, more integrated Africa.

As a young girl, I often contemplated the true meaning of "African." Through years of work, I've come to understand that by harnessing the collective competencies of people of African origin, we can project a stronger, more unified image of Africa to the world.

The diaspora extends beyond the CARICOM states. The Sixth Region incorporates people of African origin in Brazil, Colombia, Panama, the United States, Canada, Japan, China, Russia, Palestine, India, Australia, Israel, European countries, the Caribbean, and beyond. This diverse representation of **DIASPORAS** found in the High Council empowers us to come together and finally complete the Pan-African Parliament. **This is Pan Africanism, is Ubuntu in practice.**

(Closing Remarks)

Mr. President, Honorable Members of the House, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We salute your unwavering leadership and steadfast commitment to the African cause. The unique opportunity granted to us in 2012, to engage directly within this Parliament, ignited a flame that the African Diaspora Sixth Region High Council has nurtured with tireless dedication. **We have mobilized, we have organized, and we have brought forth the very best of our competencies, projects, skills, finance, and lobbying potential.** Yet, as we stand on the cusp of a new era, we recognize that our journey toward true liberation and unity is far from complete. ***We implore you, continue to walk alongside us, to amplify our voices, and to champion the cause of justice, recognition, and development that binds us as one African family.***

Today, we issue a resounding call to this August House: deepen your engagement with the African Diaspora. ***Establish a dedicated Special Diasporas Committee, and open the doors of your existing committees—trade, justice, gender, legal, and more—to the expertise of our people. Create focal points within each nation, forging a network of collaboration and resource mobilization that will propel us forward.*** Let us unite to dismantle the lingering vestiges of slavery, colonialism, and neo-colonialism. Let us reclaim our **stolen artifacts, our ancestral lands, and our rightful economic resources.** Let us confront the existential threat of climate change, the deceptive forces of marginalization, and the pervasive exploitation that continues to plague our people. And let us ensure that the voices of the Diaspora resonate powerfully in every global forum. ***Together, we will build a stronger, more integrated Africa. Together, we will achieve reparatory justice. Together, we will honour the enduring legacy of our ancestors, and forge a future***

worthy of their immeasurable sacrifices. Let us transform the pain of our past into the undeniable power of our future.

Thank you.

