SECURING COOPERATION
WITH INTERNATIONAL MECHANISMS
TO COMBAT RACISM

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An Intervention to the
Consultation of Regional Human Rights
Mechanisms in the Americas and the United Nations
Human Rights Mechanisms to Combat Racism,
Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Other
Related Intolerance

Organization of American States
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Dear colleagues for the regional consultation of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the Organization of American States (OAS), it is with deep appreciation and urgency that the International Human Rights Association of American Minorities (IHRAAM), an NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC; and our affiliate organization the Core Planning Group for Historically Black Colleges and Universities Development (CPG-OHBCUD, Inc) --- provide this intervention for your kind consideration.

Recognizing the Human Rights Council Resolution 35/30 and the UN General Assembly Resolution 69/16, regarding the Programme of Activities for the Implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent, we remain appreciative of the WGEPAD’s, and cognate efforts, to promote systemic and full respect for human rights of people of African Descent throughout the diaspora. In this regard, it is particularly important that cooperation with international mechanisms to combat racism be fully promoted and effectively implemented throughout the U.S.A.

In 2001 IHRAAM’s delegation of 41 persons of African Descent from the USA and Canada attended the UN World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in Durban, South Africa. In 2014 we filed an alternative report (AR) with the Human Rights Council in anticipation of the US-UPR of May, 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland. We have had many other forms of engagement with the UNHRC and the U.S. Department of State’s US-UPR Interagency Team in 2015. IHRAAM has also participated in the U.N. Regional Meeting in Geneva, November 22-24, 2017.

Therefore, within this framework, and consistent with the need to establish cooperation with international mechanisms to combat racism, we specifically call for assistance in our efforts to preserve Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) of higher education in the United States. The survival of many of these institutions is currently threatened due to the negative impact of U.S. policies reflecting the government’s unilateral control, abuse and misdirection of hundreds of billions of dollars of African-Americans’ annual federal tax payments.

There are over 200 HBCUs and PBIs throughout America. Together, they produce the largest percentage of African-American teachers, health professionals, federal/state/municipal judges, engineers, government officials and related workers. As such, data confirms that they collectively impact the well-being of U.S. society as a whole, and of African-Americans in particular, at every conceivable level.

These concerns regarding a range of U.S. policy failures and systemic discrimination were formally presented to the U.S. Department of State Inter-Agency UPR Team here in Washington, DC in July, 2015. In this unique venue, we called for the creation of an independent and truly representative organization which would address the collective need of the HBCU/PBI community and help provide a systematic mechanism for promoting socio-economic growth and development of African-American communities in the United States.

This led to the formation of the Core Planning Group for Historically Black Colleges and University Development (CPG-OHBCUD, Inc), which was registered as a non-profit/tax-exempt
organization in 2016. The CPG, Inc has since conducted a national series of workshops at various HBCUs/PBIs throughout the U.S.A. These workshops provide a strategic framework for declaring the promotion and full respect of human rights for people of African Descent.

The CPG promotes the institutionalization of local/regional/national coordinating committees, comprised of duly elected/representative stakeholders who are tasked with the responsibility to develop policy initiatives which advocate for the collective socio-economic empowerment, historic legacy entitlement and human rights of HBCUs/PBIs and, thereby, for the marginalized African Descendant Communities of which they are an integral part.

To this end, a national delegation of 33 HBCU/PBI administrators, senior faculty, alumni, students and community representatives visited UN Headquarters on 19 October, 2018. We had private audiences with officials from: (1) the UN Development Programme UNDP – Headquarters, Regional Bureau for Africa; (2) the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (OSSC); and the Permanent Mission of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to the UN.

The delegation proposed a Plan-of-Action which resulted in the creation of a special series of HBCU/PBI Working Groups that would maintain ongoing collaboration with these three (3) UN
Agencies. The Plan was fully vetted by these Agencies and adopted by members of the delegation at UN Headquarters on 19 October, 2018. This historic delegation also formed an Interim National Coordinating Council (INCC). In brief summary, a select portion of our Plan reads as follows:

Whereas the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) is committed to confronting issues of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance at the national, regional and international level,

Whereas the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent (WGEPAD) is mandated to specifically address the plight of people of African Descent living in the diaspora, including the 200 million in the Americas, and those of us in the United States of America (USA),

Whereas the UN General Assembly resolution 68/237 proclaimed that the Programme of Activities for the Implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) shall strengthen national, regional and international cooperation in relation to the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights by people of African descent, and

Whereas Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), as well as Predominantly Black Institutions (PBI) of higher education in the USA remain economically threatened by US policies, they continue to deserve recognition as a historic legacy entitlement, as they provide the social instrumentation to significantly and intergenerationally contribute to the socio-economic and cultural landscape of both its citizens of African Descent and world society at large;

And, therefore, the members of the HBCU/PBI delegation meeting with representatives of the UNDP, UNOSSC and the Permanent Mission of the OIC to the UN, undertakes the following:

- To form four (4) Working Groups which shall, over time, create mechanisms of mutual support and help institutionalize collaborative projects among HBCU/PBI institutions and the UNDP- Regional Bureau for Africa, OSSC and OIC. These Working Groups are:
  
  1. Working Group on Socio-Educational, Cultural & Political Cooperation
  2. Working Group on Economics, Finance & Entrepreneurial Development

- To establish a National Coordinating Committee (NCC), involving the Chairs of the Working Groups, to help identify, coordinate and monitor collaboratively targeted objectives involving HBCU/PBI institutions and the UNDP, OSSC and OIC. The Committee shall meet semi-annually and continue to liaise with officials from these UN Agencies. Consistent with this understanding, five (5) HBCU/PBI representatives were invited to attend the recently concluded GSSD EXPO 2018 at UN Headquarters from November 27-30, 2018; and
To establish by 2020, via the Interim National Coordinating Council’s (INCC) “Working Group on Human Rights, Social Justice and Legal Review”, a National African-American Human Rights Commission (NAAHRC). This mechanism would be in accordance with the 1993 Paris Principles relating to the status of National Institutions (HRI) for the promotion and protection of Human Rights. Given the US government’s non-compliance with repeated international recommendations to establish such a national entity, this Human Rights Commission will fulfill this domestic, timely and self-evident Human Rights Monitoring function, as it concerns the African-American Community.

Now, therefore, in view of the above record of U.N. related interactions and our further pursuit of same, we propose that we be similarly enabled to liaise, as may be deemed appropriate, with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), and relevant bodies presently or to be established by the Organization of American States (OAS) and its Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

This cooperative procedure would, thereby, explore processes or utilize mechanisms calling upon the American government to take all steps necessary to preserve African-Americans’ Minority Rights to Institutions, reflected in its legacy entitlement, the Historically Black Colleges and Universities of the United States of America.

We look forward to further communications and collaboration in this regard.

Thank you!

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