

Greetings Madame Chairperson and distinguished delegates. My name is Emanuel H. Brown, and I am the Executive Director and Steward of Acorn Center for Restoration and Freedom, in occupied Muscogee Creek Territory in Georgia, United States of America. I come to speak on behalf of the Black, Queer and Trans* people I work with daily, our ancestors who were invisibilized in their efforts for Black liberation, and the young ones pulling us forward to freedom. While demands of the state for equitable access to health care, housing, employment and to be free from violence and persecution are echoed across the globe by LGBTQI persons of African Descent; the call to action to those in this room is much deeper. We are demanding full inclusion of our humanity, wisdom, and leadership into shaping the culture and platform coming from the forum. Our inclusion can not be just in euphamistic terms of "equality for all", but explicitly pointing to how issues brought forth in this forum are compounded when considering the intersections of sexuality and gender identity. This will require intra-cultural healing, where those who are in power are willing to acknowledge the harms we face in our families, communities and nations, make space for our grieving, and become partners in repair. As this forum evolves I recommend issues presented include the the voices of LGBTQI persons on the ground, visible representation of LGBTQI civil organizations, and focused sessions on LGBTQI issues to help delegates increase their knowledge of our issues, and follow our leadership in campaigns for justice. Finally, LGBTQI communities' creation of alternative systems should be used for models for creating thriving Black solutions that go beyond the state-based interventions proposed in these proceedings. I thank you for your consideration of these recommendations and willingness to have this forum reflect the fullness of People of African Descent.

Emanuel H. Brown

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