

**UN PERMANENT FORUM ON PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT
THEMATIC DISCUSSION: UN DECLARATION ON
THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT (10:00 A.M.)
CIVIL SOCIETY WRITTEN STATEMENT**

My name is Shereen Arthur White. I am the Director of Advocacy & Policy at U.S. NGO Children's Rights.

In August, I spoke at the CERD session and shared about my own experience with the intergenerational impact of policies and practices that promote the destruction of families of African descent.

This Forum is an opportunity to EXPLICITLY uplift the importance and value of families of African descent and the right of our parents to raise their children.

A shared consequence of slavery and modern day child welfare systems, more aptly called family regulation systems, is the barbaric separation of children from their families. In documents focused on the formation of the U.S. child welfare system in 1912, white policymakers stated "children are not safe and happy if their parents are miserable and parents must be miserable if they cannot protect a home against poverty."

Their solution? Separate poor children from their families.

Our solution? End this web of racism, poverty, and family destruction and support children and families.

This is why a plan for the economic development of people of African descent is critical to advancing the human rights of our children and families.

If we can reach sustainable goal number one, no poverty, we move toward reducing the family separation crisis that exists in the U.S. and beyond.

If we do not center the importance of our families, then no one will. The Declaration of Rights for People of African Descent must include the right to family integrity so that governments are held accountable for ending the forcible separation of families of African Descent.

And to the U.S. specifically, you are not immune to these commitments. Your words require action.