

ACHA/PFPAD STATEMENT

STATEMENT FROM THE DESK OF THE ACHA PRESIDENT



STATEMENT BY THE AFRICA CARIBBEAN HERITAGE ALLIANCE ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIRST FORUM FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT FOCUS ON CLIMATE JUSTICE, RAPARATORY JUSTICE

Madam Chairperson, Excellencies, greetings.

Thank you for yet another robust session.

In the area of climate justice, we call for attention on what is happening in Nigeria with unprecedented flooding leading to loss of lives, insurgencies in the northern parts of the country affecting the safety, security and livelihoods of indigenes, violence against women (especially those vying for political office in the upcoming 2023 elections) and general sexual and gender based violence on girls and women. Nigeria has been experiencing ethnic violence which has made most of the country unsafe for the repatriation of People of African Descent and the diaspora to the country. We call on the Permanent Forum to institute sustained dialogue with the Nigerian government and with engagement of Civil Society Organizations working in this field.

In the context of the decolonization of the Caribbean spaces and building linkages for reparatory justice, we must not forget that colonialism still exists in different Caribbean spaces occupied by the Dutch, French, and English. I like to specifically bring to bear what is happening in the region of Sint Maarten, colonized by France & Netherlands. St. Martin fought and in 10/10/10 became an autonomous country although still under the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Self-determination was incomplete. It is one of the islands that will be extinct in 40 years due to climate change. I and my family were affected during hurricane Irma in 2017. The island was flattened. They still struggle to reconstruct to the level affordable for their people. Though local autonomy exists, key development and financing governance decisions are still administered by the Dutch and French from the Hague and France,

in a mere 37 square miles area. After the Hurricane Irma of 2017, attempts were made to put a border between the islands with the Dutch and French police guarding each side. The people rose up and fought against it. The same islands are still struggling for their rights. I understand that the Netherlands is planning an apology, but without due process and engagement. France and Netherlands, where are you? What do you say to a call for a referendum, apology and reparations for the people of St. Martin. Where are you with addressing the health-related trauma of enslavement, then, and now with the rehabilitation, reconstruction and sustainable development post hurricane Irma, post Covid and within the framework of the Forum for People of African Descent? We call on the Special Rapporteur to engage with those with lived experiences from these regions in the addressing of the issues. We call on the Special Rapporteur to request a report from the Netherlands and France that is contributed to by the affected islands.

Thank you.
Amb. Okama Ekpe Brook
Founder & president, ACHA

ACHA as an organization has a focus of bringing and building awareness to the Caribbean and vice versa through teachings on histories and cultural unique differences through related lecture series, hosting and participative workshops, educational exchanges, etc. We also organize events and festivals in dance, cuisine, fashion, folklore, music.

With support from our partners, we have implemented projects in the Caribbean including St. Maarten, Curacao, Jamaica, St. Croix; in Africa including Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana and in the Americas including Canada, USA. In 2019 ACHA secured funding to implement the 'Innovation and Reconnection project' (IR project) with some of its focus areas in Nigeria. The thematic area of interest in this project is access to social services, health and education. This will be achieved through edutainment and sports.
