

Dear distinguished members of the United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, I stand before you today as a proud member of the global Black Indigenous and African community, as a Global Goodwill Ambassador, and as a passionate advocate for unity, peace, and justice for all those who have suffered under the yoke of colonial oppression.

As we gather here to discuss the critical issues facing Indigenous people and people of African descent worldwide, we are reminded of the profound impact that centuries of enslavement, exploitation, and violence have had on our communities. But despite the many challenges we face, I am inspired by the resilience and strength of our people, and by the vision of modern-day Pan-Africanism that has guided us and brought us thus far.

At its core, Pan-Africanism is about the unity of all Black and African nations, and the recognition that our struggles for freedom and justice are intimately connected. It is a call for solidarity, mutual support and respect, and for the recognition that we are all part of a single global community that should be united as one.

But Pan-Africanism is not a monolithic ideology. Rather, it is a diverse and multifaceted movement encompassing a wider range of perspectives and approaches. From the revolutionary visions of Her Excellency Madame Ambassador Dr. Arikana Chihombori-Quao and Professor PLO Lumumba, to the Pan-African trade and investment strategies promoted by The African Continental Free Trade Agreement, to the cultural expressions of the diaspora, Pan-Africanism is a living and evolving movement that speaks to the hopes and aspirations of millions of people worldwide.

As we continue our work towards a more just and equitable world, it is essential that we recognize and celebrate this diversity, and that we remain committed to building bridges of solidarity and mutual understanding across our many differences. We must recognize that our struggles are not just against the legacies of slavery and colonialism but against the ongoing forces of racism, imperialism, and economic exploitation that continue to shape our world today.

And we must be clear about our goals and our vision for the future. We must seek not just equality, but true justice and liberation for all those who have been oppressed and marginalized. We must work towards a world in which the principles of democracy, human rights, and sustainable development are applied equally to all nations and peoples, regardless of their race or ethnicity.

To achieve these goals, we must come together in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity. We must engage in constructive dialogue and debate and be willing to listen to and learn from one another. And we must be bold and visionary in our actions, recognizing that the struggle for justice and liberation is a long-term project that requires patience, perseverance, and determination.

As we move forward, let us draw strength and inspiration from the rich and diverse history of Pan-Africanism. Let us celebrate the many achievements of our people, and let us rededicate o

urselves to the vision of a world in which all people, regardless of their race or ethnicity, can live in peace, prosperity, and dignity. Thank you.

*Her Excellency Madame Ambassador Shanta Lana Hereford*