



## **PPAD STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF AFRICAN COMMUNITIES TOGETHER (ACT)**

Madam Chair, esteemed African brethren,

I am truly honored to address this esteemed assembly today as a representative of Louisiana Organization for Refugees and Immigrants (LORI) and African Communities Together (ACT), a national non-profit that mobilizes African immigrants for positive change for themselves and their families. In my role as National Network Director, I convene the African Immigrant Legislative Forum (AILEF), which is a collective of leaders and institutions united by their commitment to empower and uplift People of African descent locally and globally. It is my honor to be here today in the company of so many trailblazers and visionaries, working towards the same goals for our people.

There is no doubt that the task before us is monumental- eradicating all forms of structural and systemic racism. However, for systemic issues, we know we must have systemic solutions to even begin to chip away at centuries of oppression and persecution against peoples of African descent around the world. In this room alone, we have the lived experience, talent and expertise, to be able to collectively build comprehensive and impactful solutions.

As an organization, African Communities Together has dedicated our work to meeting both the immediate needs of our community and addressing the long-term, systemic changes that our immigration system needs in order to provide equitable pathways for African immigrants. From advocating for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for African countries, to challenging and overturning rules hindering Africans' access to the Diversity Visa lottery, to fighting for-profit bond companies in New York State that prey on vulnerable immigrants, ACT is proud to be part of this fight.

We propose three transformative steps to uproot systemic racism and facilitate reparations for People of African descent. This might not be the complete plan but we believe these are the first steps:

**First, we need to harness the power of education.** This means developing an inclusive curriculum that authentically reflects our histories, our contributions, and our experiences, thus eliminating the narratives that perpetuate racial prejudice and ignorance.



**Second, we must advocate for and bring about policy reforms across all sectors**, be it immigration, healthcare, employment, or criminal justice. We cannot allow continued perpetuation of disparities that disproportionately affect our communities; we cannot ignore the historical injustices suffered by descendants of enslaved Africans.

**Reparations for People of African descent**, including financial compensation, access to quality education, health care services, and economic development initiatives in Black communities, are not just a desire but a demand for justice.

Only through these collective efforts can we effectively dismantle systemic racism and fulfill the promise of reparations. It is our unified power and potential that will bring about this much-needed change. I am grateful for your shared commitment to our common cause, and I urge us all to seize this moment to act, to empower, and to transform. Together, we can write a new chapter, a chapter that champions justice, equity, and dignity for all People of African Descent. Thank you.

**Dauda Sesay**

National Network Director, African Communities Together