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Thank you, Madame Chair, distinguished guests, and comrades. My name is Abena Abraham I am the co-founder and co-director of the Black Immigrant Collective. We are a Minnesota based organization that works at the intersection of Blackness and Immigration. We serve the upper Midwest region of the United States.

Yesterday, we had a very robust conversation about the impact of migration on people of African descent. I want to bring us back to that conversation to talk about how the lack of quality health and recognition of the wellness of Black people in the US impacts Black migrants. When Black folks go through the migration process they are met with hostility, violence, intimidation and an intentional lack of resources.

When they finally make it to their new homes – they experience new forms of systematic and systemic racism. These experiences have detrimental impacts on the overall health and wellbeing of Black people. There are very few states within the United States that offer health benefits to people without immigration status.

When it comes to the overall discussion regarding migrants and immigration. Black migrants are often excluded or thought of last. This is especially true in the healthcare space. The healthcare space should be a place of refuge or security, but oftentimes is a space and a system that continues to perpetuate the same discriminatory practices and systems Black people face in their everyday lives. Black migrants also bear the brunt of this treatment. Whether done intentionally or in good faith practice, the healthcare system often causes more harm than good. Contrary to their common practice and well known motto of “do no harm”.

We also join others in demanding that irregular migration be decriminalized. There is absolutely no reason why someone should be locked up because they are seeking to make a new life elsewhere.

Our recommendation is that member states call on the United States to end the discriminatory practice of detaining asylum seekers and honor its commitments to asylum rights; and to interrogate and address the inequalities within the US Healthcare system.