



Dear United Nations (UN) and the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent (PFAD),

We, the Lineage Equity and Advancement Project (LEAP), and Kamilah V. Moore, Esq., Chairperson of the California Reparations Task Force, have come together to share our dedicated journey towards achieving reparations through a lineage-based framework for descendants of Africans enslaved in the United States. Originating from the heart of Los Angeles, California, LEAP has been at the forefront of advocating for historical and ongoing justice for this community.

Our mission intricately aligns with the critical themes of the third session of the PFAD — "Reparations, Sustainable Development & Economic Justice," "Education: Overcoming Systemic Racism and Historic Harm," "Culture & Recognition," and "The Second International Decade for People of African Descent: Expectations and Challenges." These pivotal themes emphasize the comprehensive approach required to dismantle the legacies of slavery and systemic discrimination, advocating for economic justice, the pivotal role of education, the recognition of African American culture and identity, and addressing the overarching challenges within the Second International Decade for People of African Descent.

In 2020, LEAP's collective efforts with Dr. Shirley N. Weber, then a California Assemblywoman and now California's Secretary of State, led to the landmark Assembly Bill AB3121. This bill was historic, establishing the first U.S. task force dedicated to developing reparations proposals for African Americans, highlighting California's influence as a global economic powerhouse (the fourth largest economy in the world) and its critical role in United States policy making (the most populous state in the U.S.).

A significant achievement of the California Reparations Task Force was its decision to determine eligibility for reparations based on lineage instead of race. This pivotal choice, reinforced by the expertise of constitutional scholars like Erwin Chemerinsky, Dean of Law at UC Berkeley, was crafted as a deliberate strategy within the present political landscape, laying a critical groundwork for the enactment of reparations laws. Focusing on lineage offers a robust foundation that not only acknowledges African Americans as a core part of the U.S. foundation but also recognizes us as a unique group with distinct cultural and ethnic identities. This lineage-centric approach is crucial for our formal acknowledgment, ensuring that reparations precisely

address the specific and enduring injustices encountered by descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States.

By echoing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s poignant reflection in his final book, "Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?" published in 1967, "Who are we? We are the descendants of slaves. We are the offspring of noble men and women who were kidnapped from their native land and chained in ships like beasts. We are the heirs of a great and exploited continent known as Africa. We are the heirs of a past of rope, fire, and murder. I for one am not ashamed of this past. My shame is for those who became so inhuman that they could inflict this torture upon us," we emphasize the profound legacy and the necessity of addressing this shame through reparative measures. This lineage-based approach not only seeks to rectify the wrongs of the past but also honors the resilience, contributions, and enduring spirit of African Americans, ensuring that reparations serve as a meaningful step toward justice and recognition.

Following the Task Force's final report in July 2023, which proposed over 115 reparations recommendations, several pivotal pieces of lineage-based reparations legislation are currently advancing through the California State Legislature:

- **Restitution:** Measures such as **Senate Bill (SB) 1050**, focusing on restoring lands or properties taken through eminent domain, and **SB 1007**, ensuring access to housing, highlight the steps towards restoring victims to their original situation.
- **Compensation:** **SB 1331** aims to create a new state fund for reparations, addressing economically assessable damages such as physical or mental harm, lost opportunities, and legal expenses.
- **Rehabilitation:** **Assembly Bill (AB) 2064** seeks to create a grant program to decrease violence, contributing to the medical, psychological, and legal rehabilitation of African Americans.
- **Satisfaction:** Efforts like **CA SCR113** cease continuing violations and restore dignity by acknowledging the historical injustices against African Americans and affirming California's commitment to rectification.
- **Guarantees of non-repetition:** **SB 1403** proposes the establishment of the California American Freedmen Affairs Agency, aiming to prevent the recurrence of systemic racism and discrimination.

Furthermore, **AB 3152** introduces a novel approach to funding reparations by proposing an excise tax on gold, cotton, and other items historically produced with slave labor, to fund housing loans and education for descendants of American slaves. This innovative measure underlines the necessity to address the economic disparities wrought by slavery and systemic discrimination through reparative justice. These legislative initiatives underscore the depth of our commitment to lineage-based reparations, advocating for the official recognition of African Americans as a distinct ethnic group by the UN and the global African descendant community.

Our involvement in the UN PFAD and the broader reparations movement is inspired by the principles of the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), founded by Malcolm X. Malcolm believed in the importance of each Afro-descendant group in the Americas working on their own unique political projects, then collaborating across the Americas, and ultimately uniting with the African Union for global reparatory justice. We embody this vision by hyper-focusing on lineage-based reparations for descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States. Yet, our participation in the PFAD is in the spirit of the OAAU — we come to share our unique fight, but also to unite and learn from others across the Americas and Africa, advocating for regional and global reparatory justice.

Drawing inspiration from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s deep reflections on lineage and Malcolm X's strategic vision for unity and self-determination, we urge the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent (PFAD) to acknowledge and bolster our efforts toward lineage-based reparations. This approach is not only legally sound, ethically grounded, morally compelling, and politically feasible, but it also aims to rectify the economic and social inequities stemming from slavery while paying homage to the rich cultural and historical heritage of African Americans. As an essential component of both the United States and the broader global African diaspora, the recognition and redress of our unique experiences are paramount.

Furthermore, we advocate for the PFAD to: **1)** formally recognize and support the monumental work done by LEAP and the California Reparations Task Force during the First International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024), **2)** actively support existing reparations initiatives worldwide, notably those underway in California, **3)** encourage the adoption of lineage-based reparations criteria tailored for individuals of African descent in other nations, and **4)** seek the official acknowledgment of African Americans as a distinct ethnic group by both the UN and the international community of African descendants.

This comprehensive strategy underlines our commitment to a global framework for reparatory justice, reflecting a unified effort to learn from, contribute to, and collaborate with diverse communities in the Americas and Africa towards achieving justice and equity for all descendants of the African diaspora.

In solidarity,

The Lineage Equity and Advancement Project (LEAP) &
Kamilah V. Moore, Esq., Chairperson, California Reparations Task Force