



# SAMUEL DEWITT PROCTOR CONFERENCE, INC.

*With Vision...By Faith...Through Action*

*Strengthening Churches...Empowering Leaders...Transforming Communities*

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND RIGHTS OF DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT  
SUBMITTED BY REV. DR. IVA E. CARRUTHERS, GENERAL SECRETARY  
SAMUEL DEWITT PROCTOR CONFERENCE, NGO, USA  
5.3.2023

I am Dr. Iva Carruthers, General Secretary of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, a 20 year old ecumenical and global justice and faith policy and organizing NGO based in Chicago Il USA. I am also professor emeritus from Northeastern Il University and founding director of the Center for Reparatory Justice, Transformation and Remediation at McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago. All roads lead to commitment to the human rights of people of Africa descent and on behalf of our global constituency and network, please accept our gratitude and full support for the exemplary leadership of our outgoing and presiding chair of this working group.

As we move from a declaration of an International Decade to a Permanent Forum for People of African Descent, we also acknowledge the long road ahead which will require vision, tenacity and unity. And it's in the spirit of the Sankofa bird that I also submit this comment honoring the ancestral legacy and blessings of Callie House, mother of the US reparations movement, Dr. Conrad Worrill, my university colleague who was so effective organizing the US delegation at Durban and our beloved recent ancestor Atty. Randall Robinson.

Focusing on the theme of economic empowerment and rights of development for this 32<sup>nd</sup> session of the Working Group of Experts on POAD, I want to implore us to consider the impact of regenerative and emergent technologies and Afro futurism and the Right to Development. Given what we know and have lived related to global, transgenerational, systemic and institutionalized racism, the convergence of new technologies and cultural worldviews demand our scientific, ethical and spiritual considerations as POAD. We must assess and be prepared to navigate and mitigate the potential harm, unintentional and intentional, related to profound changes in the global economic landscape being shaped by innovations leading to 1) a metaverse and race to space with a business model based on a tiered privatization of knowledge creation and distribution 2) artificial intelligence (AI) which privileges and prioritizes norms of white cultural dominance and ways of knowing and being and 3) genomics, epigenetics and eugenics - based innovation in health care, pharmaceuticals and security systems that are changing the way we think of what it means to be human and live in community.

Lest we forget, during the COVID pandemic, the wealth gap expanded and unprecedented profits were made by many. The George Floyd murder, as exemplar of state sponsored violence against black bodies, further exposed what's at stake. Therefore, no doubt, we must address the questions related to whose power structures and in whose interests will these technologies be deployed? How do these new ecosystems of economic growth impact development opportunity and sovereignty of POAD? What do our experiences of increased Afrophobia, objectification, racialized hate speech, micro and macro aggressions portend for POAD in this period of dynamic global demographic shifts, environmental challenges and humanitarian demands? From a U.S. perspective, an informed, organized unity agenda of POAD could contribute greatly to impact outcomes for our future.

As we think about Afrofuturism, these three areas of development will certainly shape new global growth economies and quality of life for all peoples. As POAD, it is imperative that we, intentionally

and with collective purpose, engage these areas as active agents of knowledge creation, economic beneficiaries and ethical standard bearers.