

National Council of Black Studies statement on the International Year of People of African Descent
And the Historic Demand for Reparations

On December 18, 2009, the United Nations General Assembly designated 2011 as the “International Year of People of African descent” (IYPAD). The resolution calls for “the permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade” and “strengthening national actions” towards the “full enjoyment of economic, cultural, social, civic and political rights, their participation and integration in all political, economic, social and cultural aspects of society, and the promotion of a greater knowledge of and respect for their diverse heritage and culture...” The National Council of Black Studies (NCBS) acknowledges the “International Year of People of African descent”.

NCBS recognizes the tradition of our heroic Ancestors and predecessors. Our formerly enslaved Ancestors in the South demanded land to till after the Civil War. During Reconstruction, “40 acres and a mule” became a popular slogan among African descendants who served in the Union Army. Hundreds of thousands of our Ancestors joined the National Ex-Slave Mutual Relief, Bounty, and Pension Association, led by Callie House and Isaiah Dickerson in the 1890s. This organization demanded compensation for the survivors of enslavement in the United States. The Universal Negro Improvement Association, led by the Honorable Marcus Garvey, issued the “Declaration of the Rights of Negro Peoples of the World” in 1920s. The NAACP issued an “Appeal to the World” in 1947 charging the U.S. with human rights violations and racism. Four year later, the Civil Rights Congress presented “We Charge Genocide” to the United Nations. The International Committee for Reparations for Descendants of U.S. Slaves and the Association of Ethiopian Women, led by Queen Mother Audley Moore, presented two petitions again raising the questions of genocide, national self-determination, and reparations to the U.N. in 1957 and 1959. The influence of Queen Mother Moore’s inspired other the Lost Found Nation of Islam, Malcolm X

Society, and the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika (PGRNA) to form positions to adopt positions demanding reparations for the descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States. The PGRNA, the National Conference of Black Lawyers, and the New Afrikan Peoples Organization combined forces to form the National Coalition of Black Organized for Reparations in America (NCOBRA) in 1987. NCOBRA has organized on the grassroots campaigns for reparation for over two decades. Grassroots organizations of Africans and African descendants globally lobbied the United Nations World Conference on Racism (WCAR) in Durban, South Africa in 2001. WCAR declared the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade a crime against humanity due to the efforts of this global campaign to bring recognition and resolution to the historic oppression of our Ancestors and its contemporary legacy.

On the basis of academic excellence and social responsibility, we continue to promote the above principles of this year and in the future, but again raise the question of Reparations for Africans and African descendants for enslavement, colonialism, apartheid, and institutionalized racism. 2011 is also a decade since The 2001 World Conference against Racism (WCAR) in Durban, South Africa. One of the most significant resolutions of WCAR was the declaration that the Trans-Atlantic traffic of captive African labor was a "Crime against Humanity." Our interpretation of the 2001 resolution is that the Middle Passage was a heinous assault on African humanity. The legacy of this heinous assault include slavery in the western hemisphere, institutions of apartheid/ segregation designed to keep African descendants in an inferior status, institutionalized racism that persists in the oppression and marginalization of Africans in the Americas, and the colonialism, dependency and underdevelopment of the African continent. Our Ancestors and generations unborn cry for justice for the violations of human rights and the historic genocide committed against Africans and people of African descent on the Mother continent and throughout the African World. Justice must be achieved through recognition, remembrance, restitution, and reparation before true healing and reconciliation can take place.

We embrace our responsibility as Africana Scholars to actively research the horror of the Great cataclysm that our Ancestors experienced during the Middle passage and the systems of hierarchy, violence, and exploitation that resulted from it. It is also our task to further document and interpret the history and its contemporary for ourselves, future generations and the World. We must also recognize, remember, and acknowledge those who challenged the tragedies of enslavement, apartheid/ segregation, colonialism and racism and established the foundation for our current fight for self-determination, political, cultural, social and economic rights. As scholar/ activists, we are also charged with community engagement, organizing and education on our respective campuses and communities.

We call upon our member departments, programs and center, as well as individual members, whether faculty, students, or community workers, to:

- 1) Engage in study around the concept of Reparations
- 2) Participate in research on issues of the Reparations
- 3) Build on Reparations scholarship
- 4) Organize colloquia, symposiums, and forums related to Reparations and the status of Africans and African descendants.
- 5) Initiate activities and collaborate with Reparations advocates and local committees organizing efforts in support of the IYPAD.