



AFRICAN RENAISSANCE AND DIASPORA NETWORK

PATHWAYS TO GENDER AND RACIAL EQUALITY

ARDN Notes in Relation to the Women of the Diaspora Summit

BACKGROUND

On 18 September 2020, the Republic of Costa Rica, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the African Renaissance and Diaspora Network convened the Women of the Diaspora Virtual Global Summit on Gender and Racial Discrimination, in close collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the National Council for Negro Women (NCNW). Over 1,300 participated in the Summit.

SUMMIT PROCEEDINGS

Context

- Peace cannot prevail as long as oppression, poverty, injustice, and inequality infect the heart of society; to aspire towards peace is to work towards ensuring that the marginalized, disenfranchised and forgotten amongst us are not alone.
- All persons must be able to pursue their destiny, potential and promise, without being discriminated against based on gender, race, or other status; they must be empowered to do so with confidence and conviction so long as it harms none.
- The world is witnessing the largest generation of youth in history. Young people, and especially young women, must be provided the support and platform to advocate for their rights and be strong supporters of gender equality. This is especially true for women and girls who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including racial discrimination.
- Education is extremely important inside and outside the classroom in ending gender and race-based violence and discrimination, and xenophobia.
- In the game of football (soccer in the United States), a red card signifies a serious and inexcusable infraction of the rules. We emphasize that discrimination and violence against women and girls must be viewed as serious and inexcusable violations of the rules and norms of society that should not be tolerated.
- In 2013, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2015 to 2024 to be the International Decade for People of African Descent, with the theme: recognition, justice and development.

Opinions and Facts Shared During the Summit

- Women and girls of the diaspora are doubly burdened because they face discrimination and violence not only on account of their gender but also their ancestry.
- We live in a male-dominated world where men dictate, and women and girls are expected to follow, even on matters that are fundamental to a women's personhood. In response, we should

amplify the voices of women and girls, stand up and speak out against those who impair their equal dignity and rights to help open a path for women and girls.

- This should be a world where every woman and girl will live free from violence and harm, and where the rights and potential of people everywhere are respected, protected and fulfilled. We should strive to build peace in the home and in our societies by ensuring that the rights, choices and bodies of women and girls everywhere are fully their own.
- Amidst the global COVID-19 health crisis, incidents of domestic violence as well as other forms of violence have been on the rise. There should be zero tolerance for men and boys who perpetrate or encourage violence against women or girls
- Further, the structural economic disadvantages faced by women have been exacerbated by the global pandemic. With ending poverty being a lynchpin of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring women's economic empowerment must be addressed and advanced in the aftermath and recovery post-COVID-19.
- Women's health and wellbeing is important in achieving sustainable development. The right of women to control all aspects of their health is important, in particular their sexual and reproductive health, is basic to their empowerment.

Proposed Next Steps

- All should join together, in the spirit of our common humanity, to denounce discrimination, racism, and violence based on gender and race, as repugnant violations of human rights, and commit to advancing universal equality, justice and dignity.
- Because of the importance of partnerships in achieving the world we want and deserve, those who identify as men and boys should be called on to be equal partners in the struggle towards ending all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls.
- All should ensure that leaders who consciously or recklessly perpetuate gender- or race-based discrimination or violence, or xenophobia of any kind should be held accountable for their action and inaction.
- There should be commitments to ensuring that the young in our society are raised to respect the equality and dignity of all human beings, in pursuit of the vision of a generation with zero gender- and race-based discrimination and violence, and that they are provided the space and support to make their voices heard, particularly young women.
- Investing in women is investing in the future. Accordingly, we call upon the international community, governments, the private sector, civil society, academia, the media and the world of arts, sports and culture, to invest in the education, health, safety, and social, educational, political, psychological and economic empowerment of women and girls
- It is important that we ensure that all members of our human family commit to giving a red card to all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls by signing the Red Card Pledge at <https://www.redcardpledge.com>.

- We must make full use of existing global processes, including the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Program International Conference on Population and Development, and related processes such as “Generation Equality” to drive broad support and concrete actions towards the elimination of racial and gender-based discrimination.
- We must intensify our efforts for the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action, Key Actions for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and mobilize stakeholders across sectors towards zero sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices, and the elimination of structural barriers that hinder the realization of the full socio-economic potential of women and girls.
- The conveners of the Women of the Diaspora Summit should convene further summits focused on economic opportunities and equity, safety concerns, education, environment, health, civil and political empowerment, and sports and arts.
- Efforts to have the international community recognize 31 August as the day of Afro-descendants should be supported.

ENDNOTES

- The Summit is the first in a series of events and activities, within the framework of the International Decade for People of African Descent, focused primarily on Sustainable Development Goal #5, gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, as described in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations.
- The Summit is organized under the Pathway to Solution’s Initiative, an international, multilateral special project for the United Nations to popularize the Sustainable Development Goals. The initiative is spearheaded by ARDN, in collaboration with various United Nations system entities, the international community, civil society, the private sector, academia, the world of sport and culture and governments.
- The Summit brings together several other global organizations, including the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, the African Union, the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), the U.S. African Development Foundation, the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, the Global Partnerships Forum, and Webster University, and represents a broad base of women leaders.
- We express our deep appreciation and congratulations to the Republic of Costa Rica for its continued leadership and commitment to an inclusive and human rights agenda of people and communities of African descent, and of the empowerment of women and girls.

These notes were prepared by ARDN as part of its commitments to support the principles and objectives of the ICPD25 Nairobi Summit, Beijing+25 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and may not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the other conveners or partners.