



**IHRAAM STATEMENT/INTERVENTION  
DELIVERED TO  
UN WORKING GROUP ON PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
21 JANUARY, 2016**

DEAR MEMBERS OF THE UN WORKING GROUP ON PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT, MEMBERS OF THE US DEPARTMENT OF STATE-UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW TEAM (2015), THE FRANKLIN LAW GROUP, PC - THE ANCHOR ORGANIZATION AND FACILITATOR FOR THIS HISTORIC GATHERING OF COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES - AND TO ALL OUR DISTINGUISHED PARTICIPANTS

On behalf of the International Human Rights Association of American Minorities (IHRAAM), an UN/NGO in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), we welcome, with gratitude, the opportunity to make this intervention. We respectfully, yet firmly advise, that the Members of this uniquely mandated UN Working Group, take full measure of the testimony and evidence it will receive - relative to the increasingly deteriorating plight of People of African Descent in the United States of America.

Similar evidence was gathered in the US over 15 years ago by the inaugural investigation conducted by your colleague and then special UN Rapporteur Maurice Glele-Ahanhanzo. The UN Team noted the gross disparities between African-American and European-American communities - relative to such major socio-economic indicators as: health, education, housing, employment, political participation, economic development, criminal justice, the application of the death penalty, police violence, and incitement to racial hatred. IHRAAM, at that time, was privileged to have provided direct testimony at UN Headquarters. Sadly, nearly a generation later, the results gleaned from your distinguished Working Group's visit this week, will most likely result in a reconfirmation of the same negative, if not worsening, indicators of social well-being for people of African Descent throughout America.

The challenge, therefore, is how might we collectively, within the legitimate framework of customary and international human right law create a new paradigm for the identification, assessment and potential resolution of the widening array of deeply entrenched socio-economic and political ills that continue to systemically plague our communities? Respectfully, IHRAAM has already proposed, in its Alternative Report to the recent US UPR, a partial - but nevertheless - potentially effective solution, which concerns the crisis presently facing Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs).

While under current stress, HBCUs represent the historical US institutionalization of African American Higher Education. Collectively, the 109 HBCUs and 91 Predominantly Black Institutions (PBI) of higher learning, have played a significant role in the training of African American professional sectors and in the reciprocal economic viability of African American communities at large. However, recent US government policies and US Supreme Court decisions have disproportionately impacted the very survival of these special institutions. HBCUs remain under threat despite their international legal protection under numerous instruments.

Therefore, IHRAAM submitted an Alternative Report (AR) to UN Human Right Council (UNHRC) in response to the US Universal Periodic Review (UPR). IHRAAM presented and defended its position at a side-session at UN Geneva Headquarters last May 2015. Subsequently, IHRAAM representatives were invited to participate in the US State Department UPR Team's Interagency Working Group on July 20, 2015. I will briefly summarize here the highlight of the interventions/recommendations made at that time, which, hopefully, has relevance to today's gathering:

In light of the well over 300 State-based recommendations made in response to the US UPR, People of African Descent in America, working in collaboration with the US Department of State US UPR Interagency Team call for the following:

1. The US ratification of all international Human Rights (HR) Treaties to which it is not a party;
2. The establishment of a National Human Rights Institution (HRI);
3. Adoption and implementation a Plan of Action consistent with the Durban Declaration and Program of Action;
4. Strengthen and implement existing laws and legislation to eliminate all forms of racism and discrimination;
5. Actively promote the right to education for vulnerable minority and ethnic groups and fully consult with them to correct historical and present injustices; and finally

6. The US should take full note of the Alternative Report submitted by IHRAAM which calls for the creation and government recognition of an OFFICE OF HBCU DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.

While these documents have already been filed with the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and US Department of State, we would like to leave members of this esteemed UN Working Group with personal copies of IHRAAM's Alternative Report to the US-UPR, our July 20th intervention before the US State Department's UPR Interagency Team, as well as a recently released book which clearly details the crisis confronting our HBCU's and the African-American

Community at large. Creative and collaborative solutions are proposed, which are deemed to be fully consistent with the rule of both international and domestic laws. We trust you will take these recommendations under advisement. Thank you !

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