



UN DECLARATION FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS: CAN IT SERVE AS A STRONG VISIONARY & MORAL COMPASS?: A CIVIL SOCIETY DISCUSSION

FINAL Proposal for SoTF Action Day Side Event

Submitted to AFRO4UN & Other Possible Co-Sponsors

by Dr. Paula Rhodes, AFRO4UN, IWG/ICSWG PFPAD & AdNA Ubuntu Member*;

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FINAL PROPOSAL, 19 AUGUST 2024_pdf version

OVERVIEW

This coming September 2024, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) will gather world leaders to establish a new global agreement concerning how to create a better world today and how to better shape and safeguard the future. As part of this convening at the UN, world leaders will consider and likely adopt a Pact for the Future, which includes a Declaration on Future Generations as well as a Digital Compact. Links to the current drafts are on the UN Summit website here: <https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future#:~:text=Having%20welcomed%20the%20submission%20of,will%20take%20place%20this%20year> .

The UNGA will publicize a limited number of civil society side events held on the two UN Action Days, 20-21 September 2024, immediately prior to the Summit. The AFRO4UN's All Black Futures Summit will hopefully be one of those events. This summit will consist of a series of panels focusing on future needs and rights of People of African Descent in Africa and the African Diaspora including our need for self-determination, autonomy, and connectedness, both now and in the future. This is a proposal for a **hybrid AFRO4UN session** with a panel discussion focusing on the Draft Declaration for Future Generations as part of the Black Futures Summit. The panel discussion will be centered around the draft Declaration on Future Generations as a possible strong visionary, moral and spiritual framework for not only strengthening global governance, but for use by civil society at all levels of society to more effectively address the systemic problems that the SDGs relate to from an international human rights lens (as well as from a needs-based approach).

The discussion will also be partially framed by the traditional African principles and values established long ago which continue or at least should continue to play a crucial role in framing the future, especially regarding: the interconnectedness of our world; the importance of learning from our past; and how to become greater stewards to our communities and the environment both locally and globally. The two principles that will be highlighted are Sankofa (To Go Back and Retrieve in order to move forward) and Ubuntu ("I am because You are").

Format

We are proposing a panel that will be a structured discussion among three panelists who will share their perspectives and analysis of the draft declaration's strengths and weaknesses in relationship to specific topics related to work the panelist and their organizations are engaged in; topics will also need to be ones that have been or are

relevant to major issues generally related to civil society groups' work regarding SDG's, international human rights and/or the intersection with UN PFPAD role(s) and work.

The session will start with a welcome and, possibly, a short overview by an Elder, who will then turn it over to the Panel Moderator ("Moderator"). During the overview [by either Elder or Moderator], the Panel Moderator would explain the panel's format and general topic, and briefly introduce the panel as a whole, including summarizing information about the panelists' respective NGOs (panelists, if they wish, may provide additional information as part of their presentations). The Panel Moderator would place emphasis on the opportunity for participants and civil society organizations to submit written input, either through their networks or individually, to the UN on draft.

Each panelist would have 15 minutes to share their perspectives on the draft (i.e., highlighting specific subtopics). For instance, the representative of the Garifuna Nation would highlight re self-determination and food security, and how language in the draft could help or hinder the Nation's work. Another panelist would highlight reparatory/retrospective justice work and how the declaration relates to it. The moderator [with assistance from organizing team members who would be monitoring the Q's and the chat, if enabled] would ask each panelist to answer key written questions. If, as likely, there's not enough time to respond to all questions, then AFRO4UN, individual panelists, and respective organizations could at least assure that all questions would be shared with sponsoring organizations.

The moderator and the panelists, ideally, would be young adults both to be more representative of future generations and also to enhance chances of the panel being part of the Youth Action Day.

Note that, hopefully, the Action Day event would be preceded by more informal prep sessions among the organizing team, possible panelists and other representatives of sponsoring organizations to select a combination of areas covered by the declaration that has both depth and breath.

Moderator and Panelists, Including SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUB-TOPICS & PANELIST

This final proposal contains specific information re the organizations who have agreed to co-sponsor this panel, including any specific sub-topics and panelist they are recommending be addressed by panelist from their organization or others. None of above cosponsors are putting forth any recommendations for specific individuals to serve as the

Elder or the Moderator. All sponsors, subject to any limitations listed in this section below agree to serve as cosponsors and have any unfilled speaker positions filled by the AFRO4UN and/or other participating Co-sponsors, subject only to any limitations listed below.

The Garifuna Nation through its President Egbert Higinio has agreed to be a cosponsor of this panel because it believes that the subject matter directly relates to major facets of the Garifuna Nation's struggles throughout the Americas as both an indigenous nation and as People of African Descent, including the Nation's struggles in Trinidad-Tobago around self-determination, reparations and food sovereignty. These are among the topics that they think are important for the panel to touch upon and are recommending that one of their young adult members be one of the chosen panelists; President Higinio and others are in the process of identifying a particular Garifuna young adult.

The Black Quaker Project (BQP), which “celebrates the lives and contributions of Quakers of Color worldwide and documents and addresses their concerns,” has also agreed to be a cosponsor of the panel (<https://www.theblackquakerproject.org/>).

Reparatory/Retrospective Justice is a major focus of its outreach and in-reach work, guided by the Quaker testimonies of Truth, Peace, Equality, Community and Justice. Dr. Harold D. Weaver Jr. is its Founder and current CEO. As an Associate at Harvard University's Hutchins Center for African and African American Research, and the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies. Hal spent his earliest days on a small Black college campus in Savannah, GA, later moving to Pennsylvania and attending Westtown School and Haverford College. From his early experience in Communist Moscow as a member of an official USSR-USA young adult exchange group, Hal has been a lifelong cultural ambassador. He has traveled the world breaking down barriers and building bridges between cultures, often using film as the medium through The BlackFilm Project and the China-Africa-Russia Project. A pioneer in Africana studies, he founded and chaired the Africana Studies Department at Rutgers. Last fall, Hal continued his mission to correct Cold War historiography by delivering lectures in Moscow, the UK, and Istanbul, on Paul Robeson, African decolonization, African students in the USSR, and his own transnational experiences in cultural diplomacy. Hal continues to break down barriers within the Religious Society of Friends, too, with his ministry, The BlackQuaker Project. He has served in governance roles with several organizations, including the Quaker United Nations Office and the American Friends Service Committee. Much of his work, including within Quaker spaces, centers on learning from and utilizing the international reparatory/retrospective justice movement to heal communities, repair past harms against Black people across the diaspora, and to build a better future.

BQP is not and will not be recommending any specific speakers or panelists. However, because of the importance of its **Reparatory/Retrospective Justice** work using the highlighted terms, this terminology needs to be used in the BQP summary as a cosponsor. Additionally, the general topic of reparations or related work needs to be substantively addressed to some degree and Dr. Weaver is confident that it will be based on the Garifuna Nation’s panelist if chosen. For a recent example of BQP’s work on this very issue here—in conjunction with the world-renowned South African human rights activist and politician Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge (<https://youtu.be/gTULHYiY1YI?feature=shared>)—you can view the recent video of the presentation by Dr. Weaver at the recent 2024 Friends World Committee for Consultation hybrid World Plenary held in South Africa here: (<https://youtu.be/Tr8oOoHHlyI?feature=shared>). FWCC is one of the civil society organizations that has ECOSOC consultative status at the UN. Dr. Weaver’s presentation.

Dr. Marie Lemy is a cosponsor in her individual capacity as a Co-Leader of ICSWG PFPAD in the hope—shared by Dr. Rhodes and others—that one panelist will be able to emphasize the relevance to mental health issues (especially those related to intergenerational trauma). She has been able to reach out to Dr. Evan Auguste a well known young adult (i.e., thirtysomething) clinical psychologist and educator who has agreed [while on vacation] to serve on the panel if asked to present on this topic. For more info about Dr. Auguste here’s a link to a bio sketch: <https://www.evanauguste.com/bio>.

More About Dr. Paula Rhodes & Dr. Anthony Alexander, her International Human Rights Law Clerk

Dr. Rhodes—ably assisted by Dr. Anthony Alexander who is serving as her part-time International Human Rights Clerk—has been the primary drafter of this summary proposal in her individual capacity as a member of both AFRO4UN and the IWG/ICSWG PFPAD. She retired from her career as a law professor in 2017 to continue her lifelong human rights work and to focus more on interdisciplinary work, primarily with civil society groups at all levels, including as a member of the above-mentioned international networks. Her contact information is below.

Dr. Anthony Alexander holds his Juris Doctor from the Northeastern University School of Law. He has dedicated his career to public interest work in the areas of environmental and disability rights and justice. He is most passionate about using legal tools, policy

advocacy, and collective action to drive for change and the empowerment of marginalized individuals.

If this panel with changes and/or additions is approved, both Dr. Rhodes and Dr. Alexander will continue as primary organizers of the panel and help during the event. However, neither is led to serve as one of its speakers or panelists.

Dr. Paula Rhodes

International Human Rights Educator, Advocate, & Attorney

Pronouns: She/her

Colorado, USA (residing in the ancestral territory of *Hinono'eino'* (Arapaho) and *Tsitsistas* (Cheyenne) nations.)

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“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” Nelson Mandela

“I truly believe the only way we can create global peace is through not only educating our minds, but our hearts and our souls.” Malala [Yousafzai]

“Everyone has the right to education... Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the sense of its dignity and to the strengthening of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship...” Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26

“... {Further}... education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society ...” International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights, Article 13

LOGO CREDITS



Sankofa Symbol

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Image of AfroFuturism

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Black Quaker Project Logo



Garifuna Nation Logo