AFRICAN COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

Remarks for the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent Theme: United for Reparatory Justice in the Age of AI

Distinguished delegates, fellow advocates, and Honorable Chair,
My name is Dauda Sesay, the National Network Director at African Communities Together (ACT). I lead the African Immigrant Leadership Forum (AILEF), a collaborative of over 210 leaders/members representing 110 African-led and African-focused organizations in the United States.

I bring warm greetings on behalf of African leaders working at the intersection of migration, justice, and liberation. Today, as we gather under the theme *"United for Reparatory Justice in the Age of AI,"* we must boldly name the truth: the anti-immigrant rhetoric sweeping across the globe is not just xenophobia—it is racism repackaged. It is the legacy of slavery and colonization resurfacing to criminalize Black migration, erase our stories, and undermine our right to move, to belong, and to lead.

Modern borders are the walls that slavery built. And the surveillance and exclusion of African migrants—now supercharged by artificial intelligence—is a digital continuation of colonial control.

But we are not just survivors of a broken system. We are the architects of a freer one. As Kwame Nkrumah reminded us, *"Freedom is not something that one people can bestow on another as a gift. They claim it as their own and none can keep it from them."*

So how do we decolonize from within?

1. **We must rewrite the migration narrative**—centering our lived experience and wisdom, and rejecting the notion that we are threats.
2. **We must build our own digital resistance tools**, ensuring AI does not reproduce anti-Black bias, but becomes a vehicle for visibility and justice.

3. **We must invest in the healing and leadership of our communities**, because reparations are not just about money—they are about memory, dignity, and power.
4. To our leaders, both on the continent and across the diaspora:
   Let us rise to a higher calling—**to place the needs and well-being of our people at the center of every decision**. Above all, let us commit to **peace across our continent**—for too long, our lands have been soaked in the blood of conflict. The time has come to stop the destruction and choose unity, economic advoncement, and life.

Let us leave this forum not only united in purpose—but organized in action. Because our ancestors did not survive the Middle Passage for us to merely endure—they endured so we could rise. May we move forward together, not in fear, but in collective power and hope.

Thank you.
Dauda Sesay
National Network Director