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Thank you Mr. / Ms. Chairperson,

My name is Derrick L. Washington. As a cultural anthropologist with a specialization in the African Diaspora and curatorial practice, current OHCHR Senior/Regional Minority Fellow, and director of *Urban Stomp: From Swing to Mambo*, I am committed to productive, multilateral dialogues.

What follows is an abridged summary of what has been happening in the U.S. in the last 5 years, what has been working, effective strategies, and what I would like, as a member and representative of various African Diasporic communities in the United States, prioritized in the next 5 years.

What has been happening in the last 5 years in the U.S. in relation to people of Africa descent?

According to the African American Policy Forum, the “school to prison pipeline” refers to the interaction of national, state, and local policies and practices that serve to push young people, disproportionately African Americans, out of schools and into the criminal justice system¹.

For example, in New York, African American male youth described as “Black” in census or statistics, are 10 times more likely to be expelled compared to their counterparts identified as “White”².

In New York, African American female youth described in census or statistics as “Black”, are 53 times more likely to be expelled compared to their counterparts identified as “White”³.

Finally, The Movement for Black Lives, which according to four recent polls and several respected scholars, might be the largest social movement in the United States’ history⁴. This movement has become a global rallying cry to address intersectional, systemic racial

¹ <https://aapf.org/school-to-prison-pipeline>

² ibid

³ ibd

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html>

and ethnic injustices at all levels of society. Protests, which have led to the ratification of new local and national laws, have occurred throughout the United States and abroad in London, Seoul, Rio de Janeiro, and Idlib, Syria.

What has been working and effective strategies?

Grass-roots, collective organizing has been an effective strategy in terms of democratic and voting equity. Stacy Abrams', U.S. politician and lawyer, created Fair Fight, a voting rights nonprofit organization that promotes fair elections in Georgia and around the U.S. It has had unprecedented success in registering and re-registering African American voters not only within the state, but nationwide. Her work has furthered the democratic process, and affected the outcome of the 2020 U.S. presidential election.

Strategic usage of social media has aided in intergenerational organizing. This has been a space where the Movement for Black Lives has organized millions of people across national borders. Transgender activist, Janaya Future Khan, shares much of her civil and humans rights work on social media platforms such as Instagram. With her large social media following, she advances notions of gender equality by inserting the voices of transgender and gender non-forming people. Additionally, her organizing work centers the voices of young people and people often marginalized in high level discussions related to people of African descent and human rights.

Tangible and intangible cultural heritage, from music to curated exhibitions, brings issues like incarceration, to the forefront of public debates. At the Museum of Modern Art PS1 in New York City, guest curator Nicole Fleetwood and guest assistant curator of the exhibition, Amy Rosenburg Martín, curated *Marking Time: Age in the Time of Mass Incarceration*.

The exhibition featured the art of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people. Using video, visual art, and sculpture, the exhibition viscerally illuminated the school to prison pipeline in ways that has shaped local and national discussions on prison policy in the U.S.

What I would like to see prioritized within the next 5 years?

First, the prioritization of tangible and intangible heritage as a crucial way of connecting and disseminating messages related to recognition, education, and justice to civil society

Second, greater usage of various social media platforms by WGEPAD and associate groups to better facilitate inter-generational, multi-lingual, multi-national conversations and programs that actively engage people of African descent at all levels of society.

Third and finally, discussions of development include the inclusion of recommendations for funding local, national, and international cultural bearers arts, and arts educational organizations that actively preserve, disseminate, and promote African Diasporic cultural forms.

Thank you for your time