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**Session 3: Time to address the root causes of systemic racism: Remedies,
Reparations, Accountability and Justice
Wednesday, December 2, 2020**

It's a pleasure to share my recommendations and be part of this important conversation, for those that did not attend the Western Europe and North America session:

My name is Derrick León Washington. I'm 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*.

In regards to remedies, reparations, accountability and justice, I recommend a re-imagining of education, culture, and strategic, multilateral implementation.

I recommend centering what I define as "defiant joy" as a strategy for strengthening recommendations by colleagues and experts today. Defiant joy is the unification of pleasure and purpose, embodied through the cultural production that Africans and people of African descent have created, innovated, or modified.

With numerous images of death and violence inflicted upon Black people, fuelling urgent calls for organizing and protests, defiant joy creates spaces for re-imagining justice, transnational solidarity, and healing so that the struggle for civil and human rights might continue. This gives people the space to tell their own, unique stories, and center needs of their communities.

To address some of the root causes of racism, I recommend we strengthen transnational networks between Africans and people of African descent through specific tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

The Transatlantic Slave Trade from the 15th to 19th centuries facilitated the transportation of millions of Africans to the Americas. Diverse African ethnic groups such as the Akan, Arará, Yoruba, Efik, and Kongo, with distinct cultures, helped form a template of music and dance making that incorporated Indigenous, European, Creole, and Arab practices.

From these traditions, we have music and dance traditions that have become “national” symbols of the countries where they began. Such as:

- Bomba and plena from Puerto Rico
- Reggae from Jamaica
- The roots of reggaeton from Panama
- Soca from Trinidad and Tobago
- Rumba, guaracha, mambo, and conga from Cuba
- Samba from Brazil
- Blues, jazz, swing, rock & roll, hip-hop, and house music from the United States.

Continuing with what I was not able to finish during my previous oral recommendation, curated exhibitions bring to light possible remedies, reparations, and ideas of justice in open and accessible ways. At the Museum of Modern Art PS1 in New York City, the exhibition, curated *Marking Time: Age in the Time of Mass Incarceration*, features 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.

Recommendations

First, the prioritization of tangible and intangible heritage as a crucial way of connecting and disseminating messages, specifically by using popular music and dance forms such as reggaeton, hip-hop, jazz, mambo, etc.

Second, discussions of reparations, remedies, and justice should include recommendations for funding local, national, and international cultural bearers, arts, and arts educational organizations that actively preserve, disseminate, and promote tangible and intangible heritage created, innovated, or modified by peoples of African descent.

Thank you for your time