**Tufts University Seminar 2023: Power and Prejudice: Race and International Relations**

Slavery Reparations

**Briefing Paper for the African Union**

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**Introduction**

*Representative: Sasha Estime*

 We have reached a pivotal point in the legacy of slavery and colonialism internationally. After centuries of exploitation, abuse, and racism, countries and nations affected by the brutality of the West are calling for justice via reparations, including the African Union. Composed of 55 member states and encompassing almost the entire continent of Africa, we as the African Union have created a united continent by connecting diverse regions and countries while working together as a body on the international stage. We believe in Pan-Africanism and are committed to building “an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.” Our body is composed of individual committees and departments to maximize representation and efficiency. We strive to advocate for our people locally and globally.

Our land, people, and resources have been taken advantage of for centuries, and reparations for past atrocities are imminent and necessary. Between various slave trades, the “Scramble for Africa,” and the rampant racism during and after those periods, our continent has been destroyed. The West industrialized because of our labor and resources, and as a result, we have not been able to catch up to them industrially and economically. We have also not had equal representation and voice in global politics which has prevented international change from happening. This can go on no longer, and we as the African Union are taking steps to request various forms of legal, political, symbolic, educational, and financial reparations to help our descendants and build a future free from the legacies of colonialism and slavery.

**Key Points**

* Due to legal precedent, the African Union has established groups with the main purpose of implementing global policy to repay a moral debt to our continent. However, with our current form of governance and Western hegemony, a true push for reparations is impossible. We must reform and unite to collect retribution for our ancestors' struggles which persist to this day.
* The African Union aims to support both financial and symbolic reparations, meaning both a transfer of funds and moral compensation for human rights violations. Forms of financial and symbolic reparations include a request of $777 trillion along with public acknowledgment/apology and memorialization for victims. While requests have been made, concrete plans pertaining to the distribution of reparations have not been made to the African Union.
* The proportion of African children who reach the minimum level of competency at the end of primary school is only 35% in reading and 22% in math, and our continent represents the highest proportion of children who are not in schools worldwide. Slavery and colonialism denied the majority of our population an adequate education while also underfunding schools. Monetary reparations are key to restructuring and improving our education system.
* Reparations are necessary for the descendants of slavery in both the African Continent and the African Diaspora to acknowledge the systemic effects of slavery. Reparation programs for descendants should address both social and material challenges such as formal apologies, public acknowledgment, direct individual payments, trust funds, and investment in infrastructure. There are no plans on distributing funds to individual descendants, but rather to each nation’s governing body.
* Slavery and European colonialism have left a tremendous impact on our population, economics, government, and culture. Our population is half the size it would have been if the slave trade did not occur, 490 million people today are living in poverty, polygyny is common and has increased our HIV rates, and many of our governments were unable to rebuild and strengthen. To end this cycle and repay for the past, reparations are necessary to build a better future.

**Identity**

 The African Union (AU) is a continental union comprised of 55 countries in Africa. The AU was created as a successor to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) which was established in May 1963. The goals of the OAU were to create a coalition of African nations to focus on diplomacy, support African liberation movements, mediate boundary conflicts and wars, and research economics and communications to “rid the continent of the remaining vestiges of colonialism and apartheid.” In 2000, Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi of Libya proposed replacing the OAU with the AU, and the Sirte Extraordinary Session in 1999 decided to officially establish the AU. The change would primarily be a shift in the focus; the AU was to be more economically focused, more similar to the European Union, focus on African development, and would have an all-African parliament. The Constitutive Act of the African Union was drafted after the Lome Summit in 2000, and the African Union was established officially in 2002 with the Durban Summit.

 Our goal as the AU is to create “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.” Some of our main objectives include achieving unity between different countries and peoples of Africa; defending the sovereignty and independence of our Member States; encouraging international cooperation and working with the United Nations; establishing conditions that enable the entire continent to play a rightful role in the global economy; and raising the living standards of African peoples.

 Our headquarters are in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and we are organized into different bodies to maximize efficiency and guarantee an equal voice for all Member States. The main supreme body of the AU is The Assembly, which is made up of Heads of State and Government. Our Executive Council is composed of Ministers or Authorities designated by the governments of Member States and The Commission is composed of the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson, and eight Commissioners and Staff Members. The Commission is key to the AU as it deals with day-to-day management and defends the union’s interests. The Chairperson of the AU is the ceremonial head of our body. The Chairperson’s term is one year and they are elected by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

 Lastly, the Member States within the African Union are diverse and within those states is even more cultural diversity. Containing 55 Member States, almost all people living on the continent of Africa are under the African Union. To ensure equal representation, each year the Chairperson is from a different region of the continent than their predecessor. There are five regions on the continent; North, South, East, West, and Central Africa. We also recognize the African diaspora as a sixth region and include those of African descent who live outside the continent. Our current Chairperson for 2023 is the president of Comoros, President Azali Assoumani, representing East Africa.

**History With Slavery**

Slavery has existed on the African Continent for centuries and has been categorized into three main slave trades: the Trans-Saharan, Indian Ocean, and Transatlantic slave trades. The Trans-Saharan slave trade, also known as the Arab slave trade, began in the seventh century after Arabs invaded Northern Africa. The Arab Muslims tapped into previously established trade routes within Africa, where trade in gold, salt, and slaves was well established, and they began trading slaves in North Africa as well as the Middle East. Over the course of 1,250 years, about 6 to 7 million Africans were enslaved and trafficked across North Africa. Similarly, the Indian Ocean slave trade began in the ninth century as Muslim Arab and Swahili traders gained control of the East African coast. Slaves were captured and taken from areas, such as the present-day countries of Kenya, Mozambique, and Tanzania, and were brought to the Indian and Middle Eastern coasts where they still remain. Both the Saharan and Indian Ocean slave trades were brutal as they trafficked, tortured, and killed millions of people.

 Of the three slave trades, the magnitude and brutality of the Transatlantic slave trade made it the most detrimental to the entire continent. The trade began with the Portuguese in the 1480s as they captured Africans to work on sugar plantations in the Madeira Islands and Cape Verde. The trade grew exponentially in the 1500s with the Spanish and Dutch as well as in the 1600s with the French and English. The Europeans established slave trading posts along the west coast of Africa to traffic slaves from the interior and bring them to the Western Hemisphere. Along with the Europeans, African people from West Africa, as well as Central Africa, played a critical role in the slave trade; African tribes, kingdoms, and communities captured, kidnapped, and enslaved other Africans to then sell into the Transatlantic slave trade. Over the span of 300 years, approximately 12 million Africans were enslaved in the Americas but an estimated total of 20 million African people were captured, many of whom died in the process or were not recorded because they were transported illegally. The Transatlantic slave trade destroyed communities, economies, politics, and governments within Africa due to the mass amount of people who were removed from the continent. Additionally, the influx of guns and weapons brought in exchange for slaves created a more hostile environment. We, as the African Union, are calling for reparations for the lasting impacts the slave trade and colonialism have left on our continent today.

**Politics**

*Representative: Ben Kassan*

**Reparation Discourse**

* The Organization of African Unity (OAU), the predecessor to the African Union (AU) began strides for reparations for the whole continent of Africa. MKO Abiola, a Nigerian politician, spearheaded it with the First Pan-African Conference on Reparations in 1993 in Abuja, Nigeria. They established a committee of 12 members called the Group of Eminent Personalities (GEP). Their goal was to pursue reparations for all of Africa.
* The next big political step by the now-African Union for reparations occurred at the Durban Conference in 2001. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was established. This recognized the legacy affects slavery and colonialism have on the world. The proclamation established the link between colonialism and global racism. This allowed the GEP and AU to make further steps in reparations moving forward in the forms of apologies, transparency, and monetary reparations.
* With little political power on the global stage, the GEP decided to gain the support of university students around the world to begin a social movement for reparations.
* AU Summits are held yearly which discuss and reinforce their view on reparations but little action has been taken.
* In 15 years little in the movement has occurred, but in 2022 a renewed hope and allegiance towards the reparations movement has spurned in the AU. John Ikubaje, the secretariat, has made it clear reparations are one of his largest goals.

**The Debtors and Indebted**

 **Debtors**

* The GEP declared reparations should be given to Africa as a continent and the whole African Diaspora. This would include people of African descent.
* Individual leaders who change every year focus on individual countries, generally their country of origin.

 **Indebted**

* We want reparations from every nation that has committed genocide, atrocities, slavery, and any form of colonialism on Africa or towards African descendants. This includes the EU, USA, and Arab world.
* We want formal declarations of past crimes and apologies, but more importantly financial compensation.

**Reparation Drawbacks**

* MKO Abiola, the leader of this movement in the AU, was assassinated in 1998
* The chairperson of the AU changes yearly which causes agendas to shift without direct action taking place.

**Leaders of the Push**

* Muammar Gaddafi was one of the most prominent leaders of the African Union in the field of reparations.
	+ He established the African Union
	+ He then addressed the UN as president of the AU and asked for the prosecution of people benefiting from colonial legacy and for financial restitution and Arab atrocities in Africa.
	+ Then he planned to organize a continental African Army to strong-arm the West into paying reparations.
* AU leader in 2018 and Rwandan dictator Paul Kagame calls for and then receives apologies from France and Emmanuel Macron to apologies for Algerian and Rwandan atrocities.
	+ The apology was informal and followed by almost no action
* AU leader in 2021 and the DRC’s president Felix Tschisekedi pushed for Belgium to apologize for its atrocities to the globe.
	+ King Philippe of Belgium apologized, but no further efforts were made.

**Legal**

*Representative: Jordan Marasigan*

**Countries That Owe Reparations**

* The wake of colonialism, which includes the depletion of resources, racism, and crimes against humanity, has held our members back—breeding warfare, chaos, and several injustices.
* We aim to hold the nations involved in the imperial conquest of Africa responsible for their actions: namely Britain, France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Belgium, and Portugal.

**Legal Concerns About Reparations**

* The 2001 World Conference against Racism (WCAR), or Durban I formally acknowledged the breaking of international law in a call for reparations from the Western world.
* Several of our present-day issues stem from the arrival of colonialism. With international laws and precedents having been established, we are working to claim our rightful financial reparations from those who are responsible. Below are problems stemming from colonialism that have been ignored.
* Article 13 of the 1949 Geneva Convention states that:
	+ “Any unlawful act or omission by the Detaining Power causing death or seriously endangering the health of a prisoner of war in custody is prohibited, and will be regarded as a serious breach of the present Convention.”
	+ Despite this decree, it has been violated many times in Africa, yet has garnered little to no attention from the international community.
		- Burundi has held Congolese refugees and prisoners of war in inhumane conditions, sheltering them in abandoned schools.
		- Angola, Mozambique, Somalia, Sudan, Liberia, and Sierra Leone are all guilty of using child soldiers and laborers and sexually abusing women and children.
* Article 33 of the 1945 Charter of the United Nations
	+ “The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice.”
	+ France violated this law when it forcibly clung to its colony in Algeria. The Algerian War (1954-1962) was fought mainly by means of guerrilla warfare and crimes against humanity after this international law was put in place. France still denies the events of Algeria to this day.
* We are attempting to develop legal framework to compensate for the damages done by colonialism and ensure that our voices are heard on a global stage.

**Legal Precedent for Reparations**

* In the 1990s, several Jewish groups began to advocate for reparations for atrocities committed in the Holocaust. As of 2018, the German government has paid $86.8 billion in reparations and restitution to Holocaust survivors and the families of Holocaust victims.
* We merely ask for equal treatment: if Jews are able to get reparations for the Holocaust, then we deserve reparations for colonialism and the slave trade.

**Symbolism**

*Representative: Jude Hong*

**Claims made for Symbolic Reparations:**

* Through the February 2019 Transitional Justice Policy, we have defined symbolic reparations to be a moral, non-material, form of justice to rectify and compensate for human rights violations and losses victims have suffered
	+ Transitional justice refers to the interdisciplinary measures of various policy measures and institutional mechanisms for societies to adopt to overcome past inequalities from the systemic gross violations of human rights.
		- The transitional justice policy encapsulates traditional justice mechanisms: acknowledgment of responsibility and the suffering of victims, showing remorse, asking for forgiveness, paying compensation or making reparation, and efforts for reconciliation
	+ Victims refer to persons, physically or psychologically, affected by an impairment to their fundamental rights and overall human rights law.
* The notion of symbolic reparations can also be seen through our Abuja Proclamation made during the “Pan-African Conference on Reparations” held in Abuja, Nigeria, sponsored by the GEP and the Commission for Reparations of the Organization of African Unit
	+ The Abuja Proclamation calls upon a moral debt owed to Africans by countries engaged in slavery and colonialism, and neo-colonialism to compensate for the exploitation and humiliation of African peoples
* We recognize forms of symbolic reparation to include the following
	+ Public acknowledgment and apology to victims
	+ Disclosure of information about victims’ death or mistreatment
	+ Identification and honoring of victims of past atrocities for burial ceremonies
	+ Memorialization

**Memorialization as a form of Symbolic Reparation**

* Measuring beyond rehabilitation and healing, memorialization is the most impactful form of symbolic reparation. Memorialization works to publicly acknowledge victims’ suffering, promote discussion across generations, and non-impunity on a national level
* Examples of memorialization as a form of symbolic reparation to the AUHRM, African Union Human Rights Memorial, include the following:
	+ Erection of commemorative activities of colonialism through monuments/statues
	+ Renaming of public buildings and other infrastructure idealizing colonialist leaders
	+ Re-evaluation of cultural expressions such as national symbols and holidays that stem from colonialist ideas
	+ Revision of historical texts taught in school curriculum
* Memorialization also recognizes the need for multiple narratives, having different understandings of the past among different discourses of people including women, and youth. Memorial processes should include the younger generations to symbolize agents of change and guarantee of non-recurrence of violence

**Past Efforts and Calls for Symbolic Reparation**

* No specific symbolic reparations have been delivered to the AU, but some African countries part of the AU have requested efforts for or experienced various forms of symbolic reparations.
* South Africa has taken internal efforts to pay moral reparations for the atrocities faced during Apartheid through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC advocated for various forms of symbolic reparation including memorialization, commemoration, and public apologies. The TRC also held many public hearings to bring to light individual victim stories, further integrating the stories into the broader national narrative
* Tanzania seeks not just financial reparation but a formal apology for Maji Maji war crimes. Furthermore, the German government returned to Tanzania some artifacts stolen by their empire during colonization.
* In Sierra Leone, the Bunce Island Coalition has launched a $5 million project to build a museum of the castles along their West African coast, once used to transport slaves.

**Financial**

*Representative: Morgan Amoils*

**Past Efforts Pushing for Financial Reparations**

* Past efforts pushing for financial reparations have emphasized a longing for reparations that are distinct from aid that is currently being provided. The money being given to Africa should be in addition to the current aid that countries are sending, thereby acknowledging the respective nations’ role in African colonialism and/or the African slave trade and how the effects are still seen today. Rather than initiating an aid-based framework, initiating a blame-based or reparations framework would call for the lasting effects of slavery and colonialism to be acknowledged by the perpetrators themselves.
* At a meeting in Abuja, Nigeria on June 28th of 1992 we swore in a 12-member Group of Eminent Persons (GEP) with the goal of pursuing reparations to Africa. To us and the GEP, reparations mean financial compensation, despite reparations meaning various things in the context of international law.
* At the 1992 meeting, then-President of Nigeria, Ibrahim Babangida, promoted the idea of reparations and officially dedicated $500,000 to it; however, the funds were apparently received from Abiola’s private stash and not from the Government of Nigeria.
* In 1999, a “Truth Commission Conference'' was held in Accra, Ghana with the members being private individuals from 9 African countries, the United States, the United Kingdom, and three Caribbean countries. The conference concluded that “the root causes of Africa's problems today are enslavement and colonization of African people over a 400-year period” and that Africans were owed $777 trillion in compensation (plus annual interest); however, there was no indication of how the $777 trillion figure was calculated.
* Academic author, Daniel Tetteh Osabu-Kle proposed a $100 trillion figure for Africa based on the population difference between Africa and Asia and the assumption that without the slave trade and the subsequent population decline, Africa would be as heavily populated as Asia. Using this, he calculated that each “lost” person would be worth $75,000 based on the Warsaw Convention for assigning value to the loss of human life after aircraft crashes.
* Although little progress has been made in terms of nations committing to carry out these financial reparations, in 2023 we are starting to see some progress, for Germany has agreed to pay Namibia €1.1 billion in reparation for the genocide committed during the colonial-era occupation of the country.
	+ Additionally, in December of 2022, under President Biden, the U.S. agreed to commit $55 billion to Africa over the next three years.

**Forms Financial Reparations Could Take**

* Inspired by the post-World War II Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe, the GEP devised the Middle Passage Plan, aiming for the former slave-owning and colonial nations to transfer funds in efforts to rebuild Africa. In addition to a transfer of funds, the plan would also include a skills transfer to Africa with educational scholarships for African students and a power transfer, providing more voting rights to Africans in the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the United Nations Security Council.
* In addition to a transfer of funds, we also propose African debt cancellation. All African debt should be written off as a part of reparations to make it so that the African continent is no longer subservient to the West.
* We also call for the return of stolen goods, artifacts, and other traditional treasures, such as the Benin Bronzes, stolen by British soldiers in 1897 and worth an estimated $13 billion, which are currently scattered across Western museums and galleries.
* When it comes to the United States’ recent $55 billion agreement with Africa, the funds will specifically go towards improving health programs in Africa, supporting African conservation efforts, new trade and investment, and advancing women’s economic participation on the continent.
	+ While it still remains unclear whether the intentions of this agreement are aid-based or reparations-based, it is clear that our goal in transferring international funds, albeit not the initially proposed $777 trillion, is taking place with clearer distinctions as to where the money will be spent.

**Descendants**

*Representative: Ben Kassan, Jude Hong, Morgan Amoils*

**Descendants as Recipients of Reparations**

* Reparations, whether symbolic or financial, should be given to rectify and compensate for the losses victims have suffered, while also encompassing Africa as a continent and the whole African Diaspora.
	+ The AU term of “victims” can be seen under symbolic reparations (pg 10)
	+ Going along with this definition, descendants of slavery in the African diaspora should also receive compensation to acknowledge the systemic effects of colonialism.
* Reparations programs for descendants address both psychological and material damages from slavery and racial discrimination
	+ Reparations programs for descendants include both forms of reparations such as formal apologies and public acknowledgment but also direct individual payments, trust funds, and investment in infrastructure.
	+ Reparations programs must have professional staff to oversee operations and in tracing enslaved people of African descent.

**Current Debates Over Who Should Receive Reparations**

* We created a GEP consisting of 12 members who would focus specifically on the reparations.
* Since the creation of this group, the initiative of reparations has been volatile in the African Union given the constant change in leadership.
* While we believe that descendants of slavery within the African continent and the African Diaspora should receive reparations, there are no plans on distributing funds to individual descendants, but rather to each nation’s governing body.

**The Generational Legacy and Impact of Slavery**

* Not only does the generational legacy of slavery impact Africans within the continent and the AU member states, but the generational legacy of slavery has also had profound impacts within the African Diaspora.
* The Transatlantic slave trade led to the long-term increase of polygyny across our continent due to the fact that mostly men were taken from Africa, creating an off-balanced sex ratio.
* A severe decrease in population in which there would have been 112 million more Africans if there was no slavery trade
* Despite the African continent’s population being approximately 1.39 billion people and covering 25,596 miles, the continent only accounts for 2.8% of global economic output.
	+ As the slave trade caused men and women to be taken off the African continent at their prime age has contributed to the poverty experienced today. If slavery never took place, the major wealth gap between Africa and the rest of the world, estimated 72%, would not be as severe.

**Global Connections to African Slavery**

* In the United States, African Americans experience much higher rates of poverty, incarceration, unemployment, and adverse health outcomes. Additionally, generational trauma and social prejudice have led to a negative impact on the psychological and social health of African Americans.
* In Brazil, education inequality is directly connected to inequalities caused by slavery. Past land inequality, which is caused by land previously used in plantations, has led emerging towns on said land to have poorer school attendance and quality.

**Education**

*Representative: Jamie Appelbaum*

**The Countries of our Governing Body Contending with Having Enslaved People and Having Had its People Enslaved**

* Our history with slavery is a complicated one. The transatlantic slave trade was a tragic and horrific system that took our best, brightest, strongest men and deprived Africa of their opportunities. What was lost can never be replenished.
* However, we are also a community that has taken part in slavery. Africans of means and power often sold slaves to the Europeans at European coastal trading centers, and the systems of slavery were already in place before Europe and the Americas involved themselves. However, it was a much different system: slaves were often incentivized to remain loyal to their masters by being offered the possibility of social and economic mobility, and, outside of the royal sphere, slave labor often supplemented the families’ fieldwork; it did not replace it.
* Unfortunately, we are still struggling to rid ourselves of the prevalence of child labor, human trafficking, and other forms of modern slavery in our society. We are fully committed to ending this part of our society.

**Educating About these Issues in Schools**

* Less than half of our children are meeting the minimum level of competency in reading and math. In 2019, even before the COVID-19 pandemic was in full effect, there were 105 million children of primary and secondary school age who were not in school, which makes up 41% of the global number. And, only 3% of Africans between the ages of 15 and 24 are enrolled in vocational education.
* We are severely under-equipped with the number of qualified teachers needed to achieve universal primary and secondary education, and we will need 17 million additional teachers to satisfy this by 2030. The problem is currently very poorly addressed by some of our member states, who are turning to recruiting unqualified teachers to fill the deficit. 22% of pre-primary school teachers, 11% of primary school teachers, and 20% of secondary school teachers were unqualified in 2019. Eritrea, for example, conscripts teachers to teach in secondary schools and gives them no choice of the location of their deployment or the subject they are assigned, and this leads to poor quality of instruction.
* Currently, our quality of resources, curriculum, and access to education are far too underdeveloped and unregulated to be able to establish a strong and universal syllabus for how slavery should be taught in our schools. What we are first focusing on is working to establish a strong, foundational system that provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the workforce and join society as groundbreaking, innovative thinkers and leaders that will help Africa to achieve the future we have envisioned. This includes placing Africa firmly within the core of the global knowledge economy. What we need now is financial assistance to construct schools, obtain the necessary resources for a proper education, and train teachers to become professionals in their field/subject.

**Educating Citizens on Slavery**

* Through landmark events like the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade on March 25, we focus on a theme each year to highlight important aspects of slavery and the struggle for freedom. Each year, we, along with member states of CARICOM, plan activities and events for the Remember Slavery Program.
* Our member states have also put together successful and important projects that help educate the members of the African diaspora about the history and legacy of slavery, such as Ghana’s Year of Return. This project includes planned visits to old slave fortresses and tours of the dungeons in which slaves were kept, accompanied by guides who help enlighten participants about the truths of slavery.
* It would align with our interests to consider partnering with UNESCO’s projects that focus on deconstructing the history of slavery and racism and teaching the international community about the origins and legacy of slavery. Some of these projects include the Transatlantic Slave Education Project (TST)—which is under the umbrella of the Associated Schools Project Network—and the Routes of Enslaved Peoples project.

**Addressing the Issue of Slavery in Schools Head-on**

* While certain member states do address the issue of slavery, or at least certain parts of their history relating to history (such as the Herero and Nama genocides that are addressed in Namibia’s school curriculum), we do not have a standard curriculum for teaching about slavery at present. However, that is something that we will certainly establish in conjunction with improving our education system and incorporating methods for teaching critical thinking skills.

**Future**

*Representative: Sasha Estime*

**Slavery’s Impact Today and Its Most Significant Legacies:**

* Because of slavery, there is a 72% average income gap between Africa and the rest of the world. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 490 million people today in Africa live under the poverty line of 1.90 PPP$/day.
* 20 million people were taken from our continent and by 1800, our population was half of what it would have been if the slave trade had not occurred. Population expansion and size is directly linked to industrialization and progress, as seen in Europe and the Americas. A smaller population during the age of industrialization has resulted in our continent being underdeveloped and nations under the AU are still to this day trying to catch up with the West.
* AU nations have been stripped of their resources, which widened the wealth gap between Africa and the West. European nations dominated raw material exports from their African colonies, such as gold, diamonds, timber, oil, and ivory. These controls on trade and exports established during the Slave Trade and Scramble for Africa enabled Europe to make a profit while our continent was exploited of its finite resources and labor.
* The Transatlantic slave trade led to the long-term increase of polygyny across our continent due to the fact that mostly men were taken from Africa, creating an off balanced sex ratio. The remaining men left in Africa had multiple wives. The demand for men was greatest on the western coast and less in the Indian Ocean slave trade. As a result, today, polygyny is more prevalent in the west than in the east of Africa. An increase in polygyny has also caused an increase in HIV rates and as of 2019, 5 million people in West and Central Africa are living with HIV. There is a direct correlation between HIV and slavery.
* The capturing and transportation of African people by other African people during the Transatlantic trade caused weaker governments and an increase in military force and weaponry. Relations between communities became hostile and stunted the formation of larger ethnic communities on the continent, causing high levels of ethnic conflict, fractionalization, and wars today.

**Lessons Learned From Seeing People As Property**

* Owning someone as property fostered racist ideologies across the globe. It further established institutionalized racism in several areas, including the United States and Europe, as western nations profited and were built on slave labor. The enslavement of African people has only fostered the racist idea of black people being seen as inferior and as a result are experiencing rampant racism. Examples include racism against African refugees and discrimination and bias in White Western nations.

**Modern Slavery in the African Union**

* Child labor and slavery are extremely prevalent in the AU. In 2016, 72 million of our children were in child labor, 3 million adults were in forced labor, and 5.8 million people in forced marriages. As a result of these high statistics, we as the AU created the *Ten Year Action Plan on Eradication of Child Labour, Forced Labour, Human Trafficking, and Modern Slavery in Africa* in 2020 which hopes to end exploitation in the next decade.
* The main underlying cause of modern slavery and child labor is widespread poverty across the continent. Poverty is linked to Africa’s primary use of subsistence farming, informal economies, high levels of unemployment, and the inadequacy of social safety nets. These issues can be traced back to slavery and colonialism as the destruction of the African Continent during those periods made it impossible for nations and people to establish themselves.

**Addressing the Issue Internationally to Eradicate it in the Future**

* Many of the problems that our people have been experiencing and will continue to face without change. Within the AU, we are pushing for unity and protecting and improving the lives of our people and the health of our nations. Externally, Western nations are responsible for paying reparations to Africa for the impact of the slave trade and colonialism.
	+ Education about the slave trade and colonialism is essential to understanding the current state of our continent and to prevent such atrocities from occurring again.
	+ We are requesting for the billions of dollars stolen from our continent and symbolic reparations to help rebuild and reconstruct.