



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CBCI Joint Juneteenth Statement with Fellow UN ECOSOC Organizations

Washington, DC – Friday, June 19, 2020 – Today, the Congressional Black Caucus Institute (CBCI) along with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, NAACP, and Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated released the following statement in honor of Juneteenth 2020:

Today, in honor of Juneteenth in the United States, the Congressional Black Caucus Institute (CBCI) stands in solidarity with fellow United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC) African American organizations—Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, NAACP, and Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated—to bring global awareness and support for actions to combat the many challenges facing African Americans in the United States of America.

This year, Juneteenth feels decidedly different. It is less of a celebration of the final vestiges of slavery being relayed to all that were enslaved and more of a reminder of how far we still have to go for all of us to live free and equal in this society. It is a reminder of how systemic racism back then, caused so many to remain enslaved and how systemic racism now, still dispossesses us of life and liberty. Today, our current climate should serve as a warning that our progress can be rolled back with the stroke of a pen or by the capriciousness of those whose vision for the future is reminiscent of an unjust past for African Americans.

On this Juneteenth, African Americans across the nation get up each morning obliged to put on a suit of armor to battle the health disparities of the global COVID-19 pandemic that has hit our communities like no other and to protect ourselves from the systemic racism and injustice of police brutality that kills us, like no other. The convergence of these two pandemics centering on the inequalities in our system towards African Americans has made our fight for justice and equality, not just a national crisis, but a global one as well.

The world is witnessing our plight in real-time and standing with us in unprecedented ways denouncing the heinous acts of injustice being perpetrated on American citizens on American soil and collectively calling for change to old systems and practices. In recent days, 54 African Heads of State demanded that the UN Human Rights Council create "an independent international commission of inquiry ... to establish facts and circumstances related to the systemic racism, alleged violations of international human rights law and abuses against

Africans and of people of African descent in the United States of America and other parts of the world".

So, on this day, we will use our voice as a platform to continue advocating for the African diaspora everywhere but also collectively before every United Nations forum afforded to us within ECOSOC. African Americans have a strong history with the United Nations, starting at its inception 75 years ago in San Francisco. We stand on the shoulders of and expound on the bold legacies and traditions of African American pioneers in international advocacy and diplomacy like Dr. Ralph Bunche, the first African American to receive the Nobel Peace Prize and considered the "Father of Peacemaking" at the UN; NAACP Founder W.E.B. DuBois and Executive Secretary Walter White, Mary McLeod Bethune, Founder of the National Council of Negro Women and who, as a trusted friend and advisor to Eleanor Roosevelt, contributed to the content of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

On this Juneteenth, as the world watches our struggle against police brutality and systemic racism, against the backdrop of a global pandemic, we seek the following:

- We implore the United Nations to denounce racism globally.
- We support the debate on racism at the UN Human Rights Council.
- We urge UN World Health Organization to create a task force inclusive of HBCU medical schools to target underserved communities within the United States from a holistic health perspective and provide test kits, contact tracing training.
- We implore the United States of America to participate in finding a successful vaccine in collaboration with WHO and its Member States, and that is accessible to all.
- We urge the United Nations to provide guidance for elections during a health pandemic as well as sending election monitors for the November 2020 elections in the United States.

We stand together before the eyes of the world today, Juneteenth— in commemoration of the triumph of our ancestors over the inhumane brutality of slavery. At 8:46 a.m., we ask the world to join us in a moment of silence in honor of the minutes and seconds that George Floyd, who was also COVID positive met his untimely death. It is a reminder of the urgency of today's challenges that continue placing all our lives and future in danger.

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The CBCI is a 501 (c)(4) working to raise the awareness of issues affecting the African American community . Its programs educate voters, train new political leaders, and advocate powerful solutions. For more information about the CBCI visit <https://cbcinstitute.org>