



**INPUTS OF THE EUROPE PAN AFRICAN FORUM FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN
DESCENT-EPAFPAD FOR AFRICAN UNION ECHO 2025 YEAR OF
REPARATION**

THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF REPARATION

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The imposition of colonialism altered African history and natural development forever. African modes of thought, patterns of cultural development, and ways of life were forever impacted by the change in economic and political structure¹. Foreign laws, languages, religions, and cultural practices were imposed by Europeans while they demonized and ridiculed Africa's civilisation, and extracting its resources, cultural heritage and wealth for their own benefit. Prior to the "Scramble for Africa"² by the major European nations, African economies were advancing in every area, particularly around trade, but these significantly changed through economic policies that encouraged the development of a trade network to link the total economic output of the African countries to the demands and enrichment of the Europeans nations. Colonial African economies focused on the production of one or two agricultural products or single cash crop production for consumption in the world markets³, while Africans were impoverished. Economic exploitation was accompanied with human exploitation and violence which involved forced labour and slavery. One key example of this was the Belgium Congo under King Leopold II's rule. The extraction of rubber from Congolese forests led to widespread violence against local populations including mutilation and murder, with millions who died during this period due to starvation or disease resulting from forced labour. These acts were genocidal, extermination and the unfortunate result of a highly lethal form of economic exploitation⁴.

The social structure of many African societies was irrevocably altered by colonialism and its economic demands, which set the stage for the future problems in Africa's economic development⁵. While economic policies were designed to keep prices low, under colonialism, agriculture and land became increasingly commercialized. However, colonialism completed the process of fully integrating Africa into the world economic system, but like the slave trade system, Africans were made to be unequal partners in the arena of international trade and economics. West Africa countries were made to pay the bill of colonialism through the taxation on trade⁶.

The Transatlantic Chattel Slave Trade of African people is one of the unique tragedies in the history of humanity. It is a crime against humanity which is unparalleled". In the transatlantic slavery African were sold into slavery as animals. ⁷This process is known as the chattelization of Africans by Europeans slave traders that included the following phases: capture and sale of Africans; the forced trek to the slave dungeons on the coast and to ships in the harbours; their internment in the slave dungeons and ships; the notorious Middle Passage; their sale in the Americas and the Caribbean; and their forced and unpaid labour on the plantations. This form of trafficking in humans was supported throughout its duration by a well-organised and systematic trade in slaves. ⁸European States promoted the establishment of companies to trade in the practice of transatlantic chattel slavery. ⁹In his book, Britain's *Black Debt*, Professor Beckles asserts that "the King and the Parliament combined to establish England as the premier slave trading nation." for example, 'the Company of Royal Adventurers' (established in 1663), a name that was changed to 'the Royal African Company' (in 1672), which became the premier trading entity in transatlantic chattel slavery. The King's brother, the Duke of York, and himself were investors in this company; in fact, the Duke of York managed the company.

In the book (Biekman, 2018)¹⁰ that deals with forms of institutional racism, reference is made to the Resolution of the Dutch States General (12/11/1789) in which it is established that "The Negro trade ought to be regarded as inseparable from its prosperity, and from the whole Commerce which derives its life from the Colonies, except that the Negro trade is to be kept in itself for one of the most advantageous branches of commerce, inasmuch as it spreads its influence over a multitude of manufactures and manufactures, whose flow is thereby increased."

¹ [The Impact of Colonialism on African Economic Development \(tennessee.edu\)](https://tennessee.edu/)

² [General Act of the Berlin Conference on West Africa, 26 February 1885 \(sdsu.edu\)](https://sdsu.edu/)

³ [The Impact of Colonialism on African Economic Development \(tennessee.edu\)](https://tennessee.edu/)

⁴ [The Crime of the Congo \(Chapter 24\) - The Cambridge World History of Genocide](#)

⁵ [The Impact of Colonialism on African Economic Development \(tennessee.edu\)](https://tennessee.edu/)

⁶ [The Impact of Colonialism on African Economic Development \(tennessee.edu\)](https://tennessee.edu/)

⁷ [Report on Reparations for Transatlantic Chattel Slavery in the Americas and the Caribbean \(brattle.com\)](https://brattle.com/)

⁸ [Report on Reparations for Transatlantic Chattel Slavery in the Americas and the Caribbean \(brattle.com\)](https://brattle.com/)

⁹ [Britain's Black Debt—Reparations for Caribbean Slavery and Native Genocide by Hilary McD. Beckles \(review\) \(researchgate.net\)](https://researchgate.net/)

¹⁰ <https://impublishers.nl/product/uitsluitingsmechanismen/>

Even after the abolition of slavery, Africans who were freed in the American and Caribbean colonies still suffered racial prejudice. In January of 1865, an order to divide land into forty-acre tracts and distribute them to freedmen was given. By June of 1865, about 40,000 freedmen had been allocated 400,000 acres of land¹¹. However, by September of 1865, President Andrew Johnson began the process of rescinding title to the land, and the Acres of land as compensation for slavery that was distributed to the freed African as reparation were all reclaimed by the federal government and routed to the white slave owners.

The National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations define *Reparation as payment of a debt owed; the act of repairing a wrong or injury; to atone for wrongdoings; to make amends; to make one whole again; the payment of damages; to repair a nation; compensation in money, land or materials for damages*¹².

Between 1953-2019, Germany paid billions of dollars to holocaust victims in compensation as reparations for injustices they suffered¹³. For 500 years, Africans suffered of the “Maangamizi” a term to define the Holocaust of enslavement and economic exploitation and thus are entitled to the same compensation and repeated apologies received by different countries for the historical and contemporary injustices they suffered. For the African nations, the past transatlantic slave trade and colonialism are consequences of Africa’s underdevelopment. This tragedy has resulted in substantial and lasting economic, political and cultural damage to people of African descent. So, reparations, for Africans should not just be the mere recognition or apologies for the suffering Africans and its Diasporas had to endure, but a call for compensation and non repetition as established in international law, as well as the re-ordering of international relations and geopolitical power to give Africa more representation in the “highest decision-making bodies” and, in particular, a permanent seat on the United Nations’ Security Council. These should be the pathways.

The Europe Pan-African Forum for People of African Descent(EPAFPAD) demands for reparations from that European countries that were involved in the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism in Africa, the Roman Catholic Church and all those involved. The church owes the African descents the “moral debt” for the vital role it played in providing the so-called moral justification for invasion of Africa through the Papal Bull (Dum Diversas)¹⁴ issued in June 1452 by Pope Nicholas V. The EPAFPAD calls on European countries to sign and adopt the 2001 Durban Declaration Program of Action against Racism¹⁵ as part of its moral debt for reparation towards the African people, to eliminate the legacy of slavery and colonialism. Slavery is more than theft and the loss of freedom in forced labour, it deprived Africans of their dreams and stripped them of their civilization and produced collective psychological trauma that have influenced all succeeding generations of African descent.

The African Union 2063 Agenda, Declaration Program of Action against Racism, the Accra Proclamation on Reparations¹⁶ have provided the Guidelines for Reparations for African people and the establishment of a trust fund for reparations. The reparations for African people should promote a better understanding and recognition of the culture, history and heritage of people of African descent and recognized in school curricula and end the falsification of African histories; to recognize the memory of the victims of these tragedies and their descendants through the establishment of sites of memory testifying to this past by the Western countries and not those who perpetuated these acts; and to encourage the international community to honour this memory.

In this regard, we proposed the Ubuntuconomics strategy. An economic philosophy and framework inspired by the African concept of "Ubuntu," which emphasizes community, mutual care, and interconnectedness. Often translated as "I am because we are," reflects a worldview where the well-being of the individual is intrinsically linked to the well-being of the community. Ubuntuconomics seeks to create a more humane and just economic system by integrating these principles into economic policies and practices, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and collective prosperity.

¹¹ [Forty Acres and a Mule on JSTOR](#)

¹² [defining-reparations.pdf \(m4bl.org\)](#)

¹³ [German Holocaust Reparations \(jewishvirtuallibrary.org\)](#)

¹⁴ [Dum Diversas - Doctrine of Discovery](#)

¹⁵ [22. Durban Declaration and Programme of Action \(2001\) | OHCHR](#)

¹⁶ [Accra Proclamation on Reparations | African Union \(au.int\)](#)

