

African countries, Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing Countries:

Turning the tide, regaining lost ground and embarking on the road to the SDGs", which will take place on Thursday 13 July, from 4:15pm to 6:00pm.

Madam moderator, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

My name is Yacoubou Ibrahim Oumarou from Niger, a land locked country in west Africa. I represent the Stakeholder Group of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent.

Across west Africa, these Descent Communities are known by many names such as Haratin, Limalmine, Jongo and many other variations of said names. They are characterized but by being born into a lineage of perceived "lowest" caste and their respective professions. We are also called '*former slaves*', by the dominant groups. When our groups attempt to free themselves, they are violently suppressed to re-establish what is perceived as the proper "social order".

But the phenomenon is not limited to Africa. The Quilomibla people in Latin America, the Dalits in Asia and Buraku communities in Japan or the Romani in Europe and across the world are a few examples of communities who also have similar experiences.

From the perspective of a Rights Expert from Descent Communities and musician and artist who has toured in West Africa under the name of Sage Soldat, I therefore first of all recommend to harness the energy of music and art to reach some of the most maritized communities.

Investment cannot stop at basic services. We must also fund and harness the power of arts and music, through which we can change the world. One song at the time is my answer.

I connect to young people through good rhythms and dark humour, which is often needed when real opportunities are lacking. My songs are also about not to fall into the trap of extremism and avoid the enemies of peace, which is crucial for the future of Sahel.

Secondly, from our study conducted in the Sahel region on climate change, I would like to share three main points:

The poorest and most vulnerable communities throughout the world disproportionately suffer climate change impacts, because of their lack of resources to

cope with, and adapt to climate change. Climate injustice is intimately connected to systemic discrimination that governs unequal socioeconomic positions within a society.

The increase in desertification and a subsequent decline in soil fertility has reduced crop availability and increased malnutrition. As a consequence, education of children of *'former slaves'* can no longer be financed, perpetrating children's vulnerability. Moreover, the lack of land titles and ownership prevalent amongst those communities make many shy away from labour intense work to avoid corrosion and land degradation.

Thus, my second recommendation is to establish clear land titles and ownership for all, including and especially to protect the most marginalized, particularly Descent Communities.

My third recommendation is to call for recognition of the hierarchical oppression of these pre-colonial forms of slavery which continue to exist to this day. Only when we recognize that this phenomenon exists and put mechanisms in place to address them can we ensure that those most marginalized are not left behind.

Lastly, to strengthen democratisation, development and empowerment of young people, access to the internet and technologies in general is crucial – it may serve people in Africa not only to listen to my music but as a gateway to the world.