

81st Session UNGA UNDP Africa-OHBCUD Side Event**RENEWING THE CALL • FULFILLING THE MISSION •
ENSURING THE FUTURE****OHBCUD: Celebrating 10 Years!****Supporting HBCU Partnerships with African Universities**

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Theme	Renewing the Call, Fulfilling the Mission, Ensuring the Future! OHBCUD: Celebrating 10 Years, and Supporting HBCU/PBI Partnerships with African Universities
Date	23 September 2026
Venue	UNDP Africa Headquarters, One UN Plaza, New York City (hybrid)
Convened by	UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa • Office of HBCU Development & International Cooperation (OHBCUD) • National Business Deans Roundtable • African Renaissance & Diaspora Network (ARDN) • Africa International House (AIH) • International Medical Exchange, IME-Inc. / Cobb Institute • ICON Holdings, LLC- Colleges of Nursing and Medical Sciences
Participants	~40+in-person and 200+ virtual — senior African leaders, HBCU presidents, administrators, professors, students, UN Member States, NPHC/Divine Nine leadership, HBCU alumni, civil society, entrepreneurs, allies.

*Ten years of partnerships, progress, and Pan-African commitment.***I. PURPOSE AND SPIRIT OF THE CONVENING**

Our 7th Annual United Nations General Assembly HBCU Side Event convenes in a year of profound meaning. It marks a full decade since the founding of the Office of HBCU Development and International Cooperation (OHBCUD) in 2016, and seven years since the signing of the landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between OHBCUD and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa on 23 September 2019 — arguably the most consequential HBCU-UN partnership ever forged. The Second International Decade for People of African Descent has dawned, as we near completion of year one in the African Union's Decade of Accelerated Action for the Transformation of Education and Skills Development in Africa. We convene with these milestones in mind.

Guided by the Sankofa spirit — the ancient wisdom that we must look back to move forward — this gathering is at once a homecoming, a reckoning, and a renewal. We pause to honor what has been built, recognize those who built it, and recommit, with deepened resolve and expanded coalitions, to the decade ahead.

The 2026 convening affirms the Ubuntu principle that has always animated this work: I am because we are. Not competition, but collaboration. Not isolation, but collective sovereignty. In a moment of renewed global pressure on civil and human rights, DEI, and the funding lifelines of all too many institutions...Continental, African American and Diaspora institutions in particular...the call to self-reliance and mutual uplift has never been more urgent — or more possible.

II. A DECADE OF COURAGE: LOOKING BACK TO LEAP FORWARD

OHBCUD was founded in 2016 on an audacious premise: that Historically Black Colleges and Universities, long overlooked as instruments of international development, could become irreplaceable bridges between the African American community and the African continent. The journey from that founding to this anniversary is a testament to sustained vision, sometimes unlikely alliances, and the enduring power of collective purpose.

2016

OHBCUD Founded

Establishment of OHBCUD as a non-profit tax-exempt organization, anchoring HBCU/PBI international engagement within a dedicated institutional home.

2019

Historic UNDP MOU

First-of-its-kind MOU signed with UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa at the 74th UNGA, committing both institutions to ten joint activities over the decade.

2021–2024

IDLI Launched, USAID MOU Signed

International Distance Learning Initiative (IDLI) delivers online education through HBCUs to 280 registrants across 26 African nations, accelerating HBCU global reach despite pandemic disruption. USAID MOU signed and programmatic support initiated before administrative pause.

2020–2026

30+ HBCUs, 36 Nations

Formal academic partnerships between HBCUs and African institutions of higher education documented and mapped across all five AU regions, and linking the 6th region (Diaspora participation included Guyana and U.S. schools), laying groundwork for institutionalized coordination.

2025

EADiS, ARDN, and Additional Collaborations

Education for Africa Dialogic Summit and African Renaissance and Diaspora Network engagement deepens Sixth Region mobilization strategy, connecting diaspora idea exchange, relationship-building, capital and expertise to continental development priorities.

2026+

Key New Alliances Forged, Schools and Countries Added for Next Decade

Expanding beyond Business core focus, to Health, Culture, Education/AI Leadership, Creative Industries, Sport, Agriculture. National HBCU Pitch Competition planned launch at future NBL Conference, Atlanta University Center — spotlighting the next generation of African Descendant entrepreneurs. Intentional youth, women, elder lens throughout OHBCUD initiatives.

Recognition: The Unsung Heroes and Sheroes

No institution sustains a decade of work without those who give far more than they receive public credit for. At this convening, we take deliberate time to name and honor them.

Categories of recognition include: founding board members and volunteers; HBCU faculty and administrators who championed international engagement; African government and AU officials who opened doors; UNDP Africa staff who made the MOU real; community members and donors who gave without recognition; student leaders who carried the vision forward.

To each of you: this anniversary belongs to you as much as to any institution. Thank you.

III. THE CHALLENGES THAT SHARPEN OUR RESOLVE

Ten years of progress have been achieved against a backdrop of persistent, structural adversity. The Brookings Institution confirmed (January 2024) that for every \$100 in wealth held by White U.S. households, Black households hold just \$15. More than 72 million young Africans remain outside employment, education, or training (ILO/ILOSTAT, 2023). In some Chicago neighborhoods, nearly half of all teens and young adults are neither in school nor employed.

A 2025 Presidential Executive Order and accompanying federal mandates have reversed decades of civil rights protections in housing, education, and employment. Federal funding threats to HBCU programs, DEI initiatives, and African American cultural institutions — including the National Museum of African American History and Culture — have made institutional self-sufficiency no longer aspirational but existential.

“The same conditions that demand our resistance also sharpen our clarity. We do not gather to lament. We gather to build.”

— Spirit of UNGA 2026

African Americans hold an estimated \$1.98–\$2.1 trillion in consumer buying power (Selig Center, University of Georgia), yet less than 2% is reinvested in struggling African American institutions and communities. Beneath Africa’s surface lies nearly half the world’s gold, one-third of its precious minerals, and the largest reserves of cobalt, diamonds, platinum, and uranium on earth. The paradox of extraordinary collective resource alongside persistent structural deprivation remains the defining challenge of our time — and the animating purpose of this coalition.

IV. FULFILLING THE MISSION: PRIORITY PILLARS FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Building on a decade of partnership infrastructure, UNGA 2026 launches the next phase of work, in full alignment with UN Agenda 2030 and AU Agenda 2063. Rather than starting over, we scale what is already proven. Six priority pillars define the coalition’s programmatic horizon through 2035, each anchored in Ubuntu — the understanding that individual and institutional flourishing is inseparable from collective flourishing.

 Artificial Intelligence & Digital Equity HBCUs and African universities co-develop AI curricula, digital infrastructure, and sovereign ethical AI governance frameworks relevant to African and African Descendant communities — ensuring these communities shape the technology shaping their futures.	 Business, Workforce & Entrepreneurship Helping scale HBCU Pitch Competition model nationally and in Africa; building HBCU-rooted business accelerators linked to the African Union’s continental trade architecture; expanding micro-granting, apprenticeship and workforce pipelines.	 Health & Telemedicine HBCU health sciences programs partnering with African health institutions to deliver telemedicine, maternal health, mental health, and preventive care solutions to underserved communities on both continents and the Caribbean.
 Youth Leadership & Agency Centering young people not as beneficiaries but as architects. Youth delegates, co-leaders in our	 Women’s Advancement & Gender Equity Two-thirds of Africa’s 72 million NEET youth are young women. HBCU/PBI	 Elder Wisdom & Intergenerational Legacy Honoring and institutionalizing the knowledge of founding leaders and

work, pitch competition winners, and student exchange alumni take seats at UNGA side event tables — business start-ups, and in coalition governance.

women's leadership programs, entrepreneurship networks, and health initiatives explicitly prioritize gender equity as a development multiplier.

community elders across all sectors. Oral history, mentorship, and legacy documentation programs bridge generations and preserve the institutional memory that sustains movements and cultures.

V. THE INSTITUTIONS THAT MAKE IT REAL: HBCUS AS GLOBAL ASSETS

HBCUs are not simply participants in this coalition. They are its engine. UNCF's 2024 Economic Impact Report confirms that HBCUs generate \$16.5 billion in direct national economic impact annually and support 136,000 jobs. Twenty-five percent of African American STEM graduates come from HBCUs. HBCU graduates demonstrate higher socioeconomic mobility than peers at comparable institutions.

More than thirty HBCUs currently maintain active academic partnerships with universities across 36 African countries. The goal of the next decade is to move from institution-to-institution agreements to a coordinated, resourced, and monitored network — aligned with UN Agenda 2030, AU Agenda 2063, and the specific SDG targets that UNDP Africa and OHBCUD have jointly committed to advance.

The National Pan-Hellenic Council — the Divine Nine — with approximately 4 million members, and a broader HBCU alumni network of nearly 940,000, represents one of the most potent organized communities of educated African Descendants in the world. That network is a strategic asset, not merely a constituency.

VI. THE OHBCUD 40 ACRES INITIATIVE: A RESOURCE STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Self-sufficiency requires more than vision. It requires revenue. The upcoming OHBCUD 40 Acres Initiative is the coalition's collective resource-mobilization strategy — not a pitch, but a covenant among people of African ancestry to fund their own future, and ensure the circularity and sustainability to deliver on our MOU goals.

Phase I — 2026 to 2030: \$40 Million Development Fund

From a national cohort of ~5 million HBCU alumni and NPHC members, a 2% participation target of 100,000 people contributing \$40/month generates an initial \$40 million Development Fund by 2030.

Phase II — 2030 to 2036: \$885 Million Annual Pool

10% of 18.5 million African Descendant U.S. households contributing \$40/month generates \$885 million annually — enough to fund four-year tuition for ~22,000 students or provide \$50,000 startup grants to ~17,700 new African Descendant-owned businesses each year. This is our stretch target for OHBCUD and partners' 2nd Decade. Even a portion of this will be a game-changer for the Continental, Diasporan, and HBCU/PBI beneficiaries.

Annual revenues will be directed to five initial priority areas: (1) SDG implementation through UNDP Africa Finance Sector Hub; (2) HBCU/PBI national endowment and Africa university partnerships; (3) student scholarships; (4) preservation of African American cultural institutions facing federal funding cuts; and (5) Women, Youth, and Elder led priorities, per above pillars.

VII. UBUNTU: OUR GOVERNING PHILOSOPHY

The coalition gathered here does not operate on a model of competition or scarcity. It operates on Ubuntu — the recognition that our flourishing is bound together. HBCUs do not compete with African universities. African American communities do not compete with African nations. The Sixth Region — the diaspora — is not a donor to the continent. It is kin to the continent.

This is the model that OHBCUD has practiced for ten years, and that UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa, the African Union, the Permanent Missions of Nigeria, Uganda, South Africa, the National HBCU Business Deans' Roundtable, and our other collaborators have affirmed through sustained partnership. It is the model that has attracted 30+ HBCUs, connected to 26 African nations through distance learning, and is now drawing youth, elders, women's networks, health practitioners, technologists, and entrepreneurs into a single, purposeful coalition.

In the face of assault on our institutions, on Pan-African solidarity, and on the very idea that our communities deserve public investment — we continue to choose collaboration over competition, covenant over convenience, and collective sovereignty over dependency.

“Ten years in, the mission is not complete. It is more necessary, more urgent, and more possible than ever before. We renew the call. We fulfill the mission. We ensure the future.”

— OHBCUD 10th Anniversary Convening — UNGA 2026

VIII. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. **Measurable Outcomes by UNGA 2027.** Our symbolic renewal of the shared commitment is evident by in person and virtual participation during UNGA81. Pledged collaboration translates into data by 2027 and continues into the next Decade. Key metrics: # of Schools added, Courses Completed, Micro-grants to entrepreneurs, IDLI Scholarships provided, Youth / Women / Elders served, etc. (see Pillars) .
2. **Pillar Launch.** Launch of six programmatic pillars — AI/Digital Equity, Entrepreneurship, Health/Telemedicine, Youth, Women's Advancement, and Elder Legacy. Post-UNGA next steps will yield named institutional leads and initial work plans to ensure delivery against MOU goals.
3. **Recognition Ceremony.** Public recognition of unsung heroes and founding contributors across ten years of coalition work.
4. **Ubuntu Declaration.** A shared declaration of Ubuntu principles and collective self-reliance, pledged by all hosting institutions and open for endorsement by HBCU/PBI presidents/administrative leads, NPHC chapters, and civil society partners.
5. **Survey Results.** Action research will be conducted via e-survey to obtain feedback from participants.

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