General Statement
September 2019

To all participating states,

Through this written statement I would like to spread and raise awareness on a very important subject/issue, that we tend to forget about while discussing such topics as racism, xenophobia, discrimination, hate crimes and anti-semitism.

Mental illness is something that is very common in todays's society and that has been documented since the age of days in many different forms and ways. It just might not always have been interpreted for what it actually is.

By some it has been put off or delivered as a curse put upon families by something they may have done in their past, a demonic take over or other understanding as such, when in fact it has been nothing other than mental illness that often has been caused at the hand of others or other input.

To start with the beginning of days. Pre-colonial African identity has been fluid and without persecution meaning that one moment the pre-colonial African would base their identity on being a subject to mischief, and then an other moment as a member of that cult, and then another moment as a part of the clan, and yet another moment as an initiate in the professional guild, meaning that the concept of boundaries and hyraces of authority and dominance that is prevalent today and leading to issues such as xenophobia. This is a result of colonial construction, hence a result of racism, which also issues to colorism and lack of intolerance for a diversity of sexual expression outside the institution of heterosexual marriage.

Fast forward. Today this so called African identity has been internalized together with the harmful messages and stereotypes about racialized communities. Creating high rates of mental illness, with the highest rates seen among the africans (including people of African descent and the African diaspora), especially African women. This has been linked to racism, which is the source of xenophobia, colorism, discrimination, hate crimes and similar issues.

In order for us to constructively deal with these issues we first need to acknowledge that mental illness does exist, even within marginalized communities, not only by others but even ourselves that live within these marginalized communities. By acknowledging these issues we'll have a better inside look on why for example discrimination and xenophobia take place within out marginalized communities.

"It's not us versus them but it is all of us against injustice. Create allies between the different ethnicities and genders." We have to stop focusing on the differences between all of us and instead come together as one and fight for justice and equality for all. Separatism prevents progress. It stands in the way of us seeing and acknowledging the real problem at hand. Us versus them creates unsafe space for the marginalized communities to effectively fight racism, xenophobia, hate crimes, anti-semitism, intolerance or discrimination.

We need to create allies between the different ethnicities and genders. Cause if I support you, you will support me..

Kyoma de Volder *(representative of AfroSwedes during HDIM 2019)*
Sweden, the Netherlands.