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June 3, 2020

TO: Our Partners, Friends, and Community:

FROM: Dr. Ernest Uwazie, Director
Dr. Jessie Gaston, Board Chair
Dr. Michael Walker, Board Secretary

RE: Honoring Our Ubuntu

We read with sincere appreciation President Nelsen's recent Update- **A Commitment...** <https://www.csus.edu/president/presidential-communications/> to the campus community regarding the crisis that engulfs our country, and has captured global attention at this moment of national crisis of faith in the US justice system. We concur with President Nelsen's thoughtful insights and frank lamentations about police brutality and racism, particularly against blacks. We accept his call for partnership for action-- to transform the status quo and uphold the dignity of blacks and ensure equal justice in our society. The death of Mr. George Floyd, 46, a black man, at the hands and knee of a white police officer in Minneapolis is shockingly inexplicable, among the other recurring instances of the dehumanization of blacks by law enforcement. Clearly the protest by a diverse group of people and unfortunate violence in the aftermath of Mr. Floyd's killing has unsettled society, and reminded us of our shared humanity, or the African *Ubuntu*.

The root causes of the current crisis can best be analyzed from the prism of the western history of colonialism and slavery, comprised of intertwined processes of oppression and unfathomable degradation of humanity. The sequels to these processes thrive in contemporary scourges of violent racism or anti blackness, injustice, and pronounced inequality. One visible manifestation of this systemic, institutionalized oppression is police brutality against people of color, including the disturbing frequency of the killing and mass incarceration of black and brown people in the US.

With sorrowful, painful hearts, we mourn the victims of police violence, particularly Mr. Floyd's tragic death. We decry the trauma and deleterious impact of racism in the health and well-being of the disproportionate black victims, often with lingering, cumulative inter-generational effects. We call for accountability in Mr. Floyd's homicide. We honor those who stand for peace and justice, despite the challenges. We propose critical re-examination of police practices, policies and personnel processes that result in racist, anti- black, or unfair outcomes. We demand equal protection under the laws of the country and global community. We express our love for black pride and stand in solidarity with black folks who are particularly in great pain and suffering at this difficult time, along with allies. We appreciate our human diversity and hope that none of us should be made to carry a daily, unearned burden of racism and injustice. We must be each

other's keeper and prepare to *breathe* for the vulnerable. The CAPCR is committed to social justice and peaceful resolution of conflicts and will be a partner in the search for any meaningful solutions, especially through its research, educational, service, and training programs.

The Center for African Peace and Conflict Resolution (CAPCR) was established in 1996 at California State University, Sacramento, to provide conflict resolution and reconciliation services for agencies, governments, institutions, businesses, civil society, community organizations and other groups through training, education, research and intervention. CAPCR also hosts the annual international Africa Diaspora conference with participants from USA, Africa, the Diaspora – Caribbean, South/North America, Europe, Australia, Asia, etc. Its current initiative aims to develop the next generation of peace leaders through the Africa Peace Fellows training program.

We are hopeful that together we can produce effective meaningful change. As a center with extensive local connections and international reputation, we imagine possibilities for peace that draw on historical, comparative examples that aim to honestly address or confront a difficult past in order to make sustained, meaningful change. We strive for peace, knowing that the most important foundation for peace is justice. Our center is committed to being part of the process to positively change the culture of the campus and beyond, so that we may not only be a safe haven for diversity and inclusion, but an example of what is possible and promising for honoring human dignity in a just society. As we stand in a united response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we hope for same compassion for each other and dedication to peace and justice.