

“Equity is the Heartbeat of Our Future”

Querida comunidad,

For me this is a homecoming. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to Ana Marie Argilagos Presidente and CEO of Hispanic in Philanthropy and to the entire team involved in the selection process. Your dedication to honoring those who lead with compassion, service, and integrity is truly commendable. I bring this audience a warm greeting from the island nation of Puerto. Urban musician Bad bunny reminds us of all that despite more than 500 hundred years of colonial rule the Puerto Rican nation stand strong in the face of adversity. Our belonging to our respective nations—the Mexican, the Pueblos, the Apache and the Navajo--is the common thread that connects us for collective action.

We are living in a historic moment—a moment when the multicultural fabric of this country and the richness its ethnic diversity is threatened by the distorted notion of a superior race. Silence is no longer an option because neutrality is complicity. Equity is not just a dream, but a demand from the soul of our people. We cannot plan for the future without dismantling the legacies of colonialism, exclusion, and silence.

Paradoxically, our nations are interwoven by nationhood and inequities. *Racial Equity* is not a side issue. It *is* the issue. It's the thread that runs through housing, education, disaster recovery, philanthropy, and economic development. And let's be clear: there is no just recovery if that recovery does not center the voices of Black Puerto Ricans, of Afro-Latinx leaders, of LGBTQ+

resilience, of the grassroots organizing that has always been the heartbeat of liberation.

The path forward is paved by stronger nations and collective action. Three years ago, Puerto Rico Community Foundation launched the Racial Equity Building Institute for the Americas, a platform that connects and support African descendant networks from Canada to Argentina: representing more than a 130 (21%) million people. It is a powerful undertaking. It will be equally powerful if we envision the potential of connecting I invite you to imagine the possibility of connecting native American networks from Canada Inuit, Mohawk; Apaches and Pueblos in NM; Guaranis in; Quechuas and Mapuches in Chile. 58 millones +800 pueblos. (9 millones en los EU; 574 entidades tribales; 5,742 pueblo) I invite you all to imagine the coming together of networks 800 tribes and nations in a major conclave in the Americas for the sole purpose of connecting; coalescing; and and celebrating the richness of our diverse cultures. Just Imagine.

The HIP Corazón Award is not just a recognition—it is a commitment. It is a statement that we will no longer wait for institutions to catch up. We are building the future *now*. We are choosing to center love—yes, love—as a radical force. Love for our people. Love for truth. Love for dignity. Love for the communities. Because love without justice is sentiment. But love with justice? That's power.

This work isn't easy. Racial equity is uncomfortable. It demands we look at who has power, who holds the pen, who controls the money. It calls us to change

how we lead, who we fund, how we tell our stories. But it also gives us something beautiful: it gives us back our wholeness. It gives us a Puerto Rico, and a Latin America, where no one has to shrink to belong.

So, let us be bold. Let us be loud. Let us be committed to justice. The transformation depends on whether we are willing to embrace equity not as a checkbox—but as a way of life.

. Receiving the **Corazón Award** is a deeply meaningful honor, and I am sincerely grateful for the trust and recognition.

¡Gracias! ¡Adelante siempre