

= State of the World ( song ) =

" State of the World " is a song recorded by American singer Janet Jackson for her fourth studio album , Janet Jackson 's Rhythm Nation 1814 ( 1989 ) . It was written and produced by Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis , with additional writing by Jackson . While recording the album , Jackson and the producers watched television , especially news channels , and created the song inspired by that . " State of the World " focuses lyrically on homeless people . It was released as the eighth and final single from the album on February 6 , 1991 , by A & M Records .

The song was not released commercially in the United States , making it ineligible to chart on the Billboard Hot 100 or the Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Songs , but it reached number five on Billboard 's Hot 100 Airplay chart . No music video was made to accompany the song . Jackson has only included " State of the World " on her Rhythm Nation World Tour in 1990 .

= = Background and release = =

Following the commercial and critical success of her 1986 album , Control , Jackson was motivated to continue songwriting and took a larger role in the creative production of her new album . Executives at A & M requested that she expand on the ideas presented on Control , suggesting a concept album entitled Scandal that would have been about the Jackson family . She wrote a song titled " You Need Me " which was directed at her father Joseph , but was unwilling to devote an entire album to the subject and substituted her own concept for theirs . She commented that " [ a ] lot of people wanted me to do another album like Control and that 's what I didn 't want to do . I wanted to do something that I really believed in and that I really felt strong about . " The concept of Rhythm Nation emerged as Jackson was a TV watcher , " We would watch BET , MTV ... then switched over to CNN , and there 'd always be something messed @-@ up happening . It was never good news , always bad news " , producer James " Jimmy Jam " Harris recalled . " State of the World " was one of these songs , influenced by TV and news . Jam recalled that with the song , they were trying to do something like Marvin Gaye 's song " What 's Going On " although we never could hope to achieve that , but still wanted to make people aware of what was happening in a way they could dance to it . Released on February 6 , 1991 , " State of the World " was the eighth and the final single of Janet Jackson 's Rhythm Nation 1814 . The record label reckoned that they would boost album sales with a radio @-@ only promotion .

= = Composition = =

" State of the World " focuses lyrically on homeless people . According to Jon Pareles of The New York Times , Jackson tries to stay optimistic with the world 's state : " Let 's weather the storm together " , and compared the song musically to the music by Prince . In the book Born in the U.S.A. : The Myth of America in Popular Music from Colonial Times to the Present by Timothy E. Scheurer , the author noted that she " attempts to deliver a message of hope " . According to him , the song is like a " medical diagnosis in which Jackson proposes education as the key to settling problems " . Pace magazine described the song as an " aggressive dance assault " . Eric Henderson from Slant Magazine noted that the producers " loosened their rigid backbeats in acquiescence with new jack 's standard three @-@ on @-@ one swing " as noted in the song .

= = Critical reception = =

Jon Pareles of The New York Times considered that " despite its platitudinous message , [ the song ] has stark edges and angles " . Sputnikmusic 's Zachary Powell commented that " ' State of the World ' keeps the upbeat motion that Rhythm Nation begins , but with more of a socially conscious twist . It shares with the preceding track a groovy beat and danceability , but takes it to another direction lyrically and shows the caring side of Janet Jackson " . Dennis Hunt of Los Angeles Times commented positively saying that the move to social commentary was a rocky decision . However ,

he felt that " State of the World " was not interesting enough musically to carry the messages .

On the book Michael Jackson A Life In Music : A Life in Music , by writer Geoff Brown focusing on Jackson 's brother Michael , he noted that like her brother , she can focus on problems as shown on the song , but she offers no solutions to them . The New Rolling Stone Album Guide commented that " heartfelt pleas for racial unity and cloudy musings on the ' State of the World ' don 't obscure the pulsating beat of other songs " from the album . Jonathan Van Meter from Spin was critical of the song , saying that " State of the World " , " Rhythm Nation " and " The Knowledge " formed " a Spike Lee @-@ esque trilogy made even less convincing by a tiresome house music back @-@ beat and that unfortunate , outdated beat on every fourth count " . AllMusic 's editor Alex Henderson called the song " disturbing " .

= = Chart performance and live performance = =

In the US the song was released as a radio @-@ only single , and was therefore ineligible to chart on the Billboard Hot 100 and Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Songs . However , it peaked at number five on the US Billboard Hot 100 Airplay and number nine on the Hot Dance Club Songs charts . Author Fred Bronson noted it likely would have been the album 's eighth top ten hit if a commercial product had been distributed . In Australia , the song received a commercial release , and peaked at number 94 on the ARIA Singles Chart in July 1991 .

Jackson has only performed the song on her Rhythm Nation World Tour .

= = Track listings = =

Australian CD single

" State of the World " ( LP Version ) ? 4 : 49

" State of the World " ( State of the World Suite ) ? 14 : 09

Japanese CD maxi single ? The Remixes

" State of the World " ( United Nations 7 " ) ? 4 : 20

" State of the World " ( State of the House 7 " ) ? 4 : 32

" State of the World " ( Third World 7 " ) ? 4 : 26

" State of the World " ( LP Version ) ? 4 : 49

" State of the World " ( State of the House 12 " ) ? 4 : 59

" State of the World " ( United Nations 12 " ) ? 7 : 50

" State of the World " ( United Nations Dub ) ? 6 : 15

" State of the World " ( United Nations Instrumental ) ? 4 : 49

" State of the World " ( Third World Dub ) ? 3 : 08

" State of the World " ( Third World Instrumental ) ? 4 : 47

" State of the World " ( Make a Change Dub ) ? 4 : 45

" State of the World " ( World Dance Mix ) ? 4 : 52

" State of the World Suite " ? 14 : 09

= = Credits and personnel = =

Locations

Recorded at the Flyte Tyme Studios

( Minneapolis , Minnesota )

Mixed at the Flyte Tyme Studios

( Edina , Minnesota )

Personnel

Janet Jackson ? lead vocals , background vocals , songwriter , co @-@ producer , keyboards , rhythm and vocal arranger

Jimmy Jam ? producer , songwriter , keyboards and drum programming , percussion , rhythm and vocal arranger

Terry Lewis ? producer , songwriter , percussion , background vocals , rhythm and vocal arranger  
René Elizondo , Jr . ? background vocals  
Steve Hodge ? background vocals , recording and mixing engineer  
Brian Gardner ? mastering  
Credits adapted from Janet Jackson 's Rhythm Nation 1814 album booklet .

= = Charts = =