

The Jamaican Reparations Movement

SOLEMN DECLARATION

This document acknowledges the many prior efforts, committees, letters of request, petitions, declarations and conferences regarding Reparations made by Africans and African Descendants in Jamaica and the world, including the Vienna Declaration of 2000, the Abuja Declaration of 1993, and especially the efforts of the Rastafari Nation over the past 70 years.

Most especially, this document is prepared in response to directives issued to all States at the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Intolerance and Xenophobia (WCAR).

At the historic UN World Conference Against Racism held August 31ST --September 8TH, 2001 in Durban, South Africa, a major step forward was achieved when nations of the world adopted a declaration and programme of action which stated:

“We acknowledge that slavery and the slave trade, including the Transatlantic Slave Trade, were appalling tragedies in the history of humanity not only because of their abhorrent barbarism but also in terms of their magnitude, organized nature and especially their negation of the essence of the victims, and further acknowledge that slavery and the slave trade are crimes against humanity and should always have been so, especially the Trans Atlantic slave trade, and are among the major sources and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and that Africans and peoples of African descent, Asians and peoples of Asian descent and indigenous peoples were victims of these acts and continue to be victims of their consequences.”

The Durban document explicitly recognizes the relationship between this legacy and the current unequal condition of African people worldwide. Despite its shortcomings, this document has helped to advance the position of Africans and African descendants for Reparations, Justice and Equality.

At the dawn of the 21st Century, the defining demand for Africans and African Descendants is for Reparations, Justice and Equality. All over the world Africans and African Descendants are adding our voices to those of our ancestors demanding that the nations of the world assume responsibility for their heritage and confront, acknowledge and redress the continuing legacy from the barbarism and inhumanity of the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade, slavery and colonialism, perennial ‘crimes against humanity’. These odious and pre-meditated crimes, which have been unequalled in history, have led to the exploitation of African Diaspora nations for centuries, leaving them economically crippled and the vast majority of our people in the African Diaspora in poverty, undereducated, economically, physically, psychologically, politically and culturally

subordinated and over-criminalized, while being bombarded with hate crimes, violence and justifications, dissembling, untruths and denials based on doctrines of Western and White Supremacy.

The legacy of the Slave Trade and Colonialism has resulted in anti-Black racism and the continuing and on-going downpression of Africans and African Descendants. African people remain scattered across the continents of the world, often unaware of our true history, divided among ourselves by gender, language, culture, class, colour, phenotype, self-hatred, egotism, Euro-centrism, egotism, opportunism leading to individual aggrandizement, leadership failures and greed, apologists for the oppressors, and conflict arising from artificially imposed borders.

Whereas the beneficiaries of this legacy of racism deny the true history of these crimes against humanity, belittle the artificially advantaged and elevated position they hold in society and among governments from these crimes, wrap themselves in emblems of entitlement, supportive racism mythologies and untruths, dispute the casual relationship between these crimes and the current subjugated condition of African peoples worldwide and deny any obligation to the African, indigenous and Asian populations which they have exploited. This legacy of racism can only be eradicated for the good of humanity by the vigilant and forceful advocacy of African people and their allies.

From the vantage of moral and legal right, African people envision a world in which those nations and entities unjustly enriched by their politics, practices, laws and actions in the past will be compelled to return to African people the sum of wealth extracted from the enslavement of our ancestors, the physical toil of our labour, the sexual exploitation of the bodies of our women, the rape of our land and mineral resources, the segregation and genocide of our people, and restore our people from physical, moral, cultural, psychic, spiritual, economical, political and financial destruction that we have suffered during these centuries of oppression, exploitation and negation of our humanity.

It is clear that Africans and African descendants need not only strong legal mechanisms and targeted beneficial social programming for true equality, but also comprehensive Reparations that will address the totality of the continuing injury to Africans and African Descendants from the barbaric and oppressive past.

True equality demands total economic empowerment which can only be accomplished through the restitution by the nations and entities of the vast wealth stolen from us and denied us each and every day through the operation of racism and racism discrimination. We seek not favours but the return of that owed to us. Through Reparations in its broadest context African and Caribbean nations would acquire wealth and a stronger position of influence in the world community, and African Descendants would be justly compensated and restored to positions of dignity and true equality. (Excerpt from African and African Descendants Caucus Permanent Structure Proposal)

FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIVES

We Jamaican descendants of slaves join in the struggle of all international movements for a new and just world.

Accordingly, we Jamaican descendants of enslaved Africans have united as the Jamaica Reparations Movement with the following objectives:

- *To raise public awareness, education and participation in the issue of African Reparations
- *To establish Reparations Committees in each Parish, coordinated by a Steering Committee, to carry out the work of public awareness, education and participation.
- *To develop a Jamaican Reparations Document which will be a comprehensive report on the issue, including the historical, numerical and financial facts and the desired forms of such Reparations.
- * To gather signatures on a national Reparations Petition.
- * To link with Reparations committees, groups and individuals across the African Diaspora.
- * To continue interaction with the United National Commission for Human Rights and its follow up to the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Intolerance and Xenophobia.

JaRM Interim Steering Committee

Patron: Ambassador, Hon. Dudley Thompson - Pan-Africanist and member of Group of Eminent Persons (GEP)

Co-Ordinator: Barbara Makeda Blake Hannah, NGO Delegate to UN-WCAR

Chair, History Committee: Professor Verene Shepherd, UWI Department of History

Chair, Media Committee: Mrs. Andrea Williams-Green, Producer, IRIE-FM

Secretary: Sister Beulah Davis.

Honorary Members: Hon. Parnel Charles; honorary African Chief; Lord Anthony Gifford, Q.C., attorney-at-law; Mrs. Sheila Monteith, Overseas Liaison Desk, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

FORMS OF REPARATIONS

THE JAMAICA REPARATIONS MOVEMENT THEREFORE SETS FORTH ITS CLAIM FOR JAMAICAN REPARATIONS GUIDED, BY THE UN WCAR FINAL DECLARATION UNDER THE HEADING:

IV. PROVISION OF EFFECTIVE REMEDIES, RECOURSE, REDRESS, AND OTHER MEASURES AT THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS (Para)158. ...The conference recognizes the need to develop programmes for the social and economic development of these societies and the Diaspora, within the framework of a new partnership based on the spirit of solidarity and mutual respect, in the following areas:

Debt Relief

Poverty Eradication

Building or strengthening democratic institutions

Promotion of foreign direct investment

Market access

Intensify efforts to meet the international agreed targets for Official

Development Assistance (ODA) transfers to developing countries

New Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) bridging the digital divide

Agriculture and food security

Transfer of technology

Transparent and accountable governance

Investment in health infrastructure in tackling HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria, including among others through the Global AIDS and Health Fund

Infrastructure development

Human resource development including capacity building

Education, training and cultural development

Mutual legal assistance in the repatriation of illegally obtained and illegally transferred (stashed) funds in accordance with national and international instruments

Illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons

Restitution of art objects, historical artifacts and documents to their countries of origin in accordance with bilateral agreements or international instruments

Trafficking in persons, particularly women and children

Facilitation of welcomed return and resettlement of the descendants of enslaved Africans

STRUCTURAL PROPOSALS

That a Steering Committee be set up of Jamaican Descendants of African slaves to work towards the granting of Reparations to this former slave colony, Jamaica and that nominations be invited for persons to serve on this Committee.

That the JaRM Steering Committee be composed of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, with power to appoint sub-committees as appropriate and necessary for the proper running of the organization.

That those members of the JaRM Interim Steering Committee be empowered to continue working voluntarily in their capacities until a formal Committee is appointed. (Present Committee Members: PATRON, Ambassador Dudley Thompson; CO-ORDINATOR, Barbara Blake Hannah; CHAIR - HISTORY SUB-COMMITTEE, Professor Verene Shepherd; SECRETARY, Sister Beulah Davis.)

That the JaRM Steering Committee seeks funding to cover its operational costs from the Government of Jamaica, the United Nations, private donors and public subscription.

That the JaRM Steering Committee shall invite membership from a broad cross section of African Descendant Jamaicans, from whom 10 representatives shall be appointed to sit on the Steering Committee.

That the Steering Committee shall be empowered to appoint a Council of Elders as advisors to serve without voting power, to advise the Steering Committee and to perform designated functions. Recommendations for this Council of Elders is invited.

(Recommendations for Council of Elders made and accepted Feb.22, 2003: Queen Mother Marianne Samaad, Garveyite; Ambassador Dudley Thompson, Ras Jah Lloyd (Ethiopian Peace Foundation); Chief Parnel Charles; Lord Anthony Gifford.)

THE CALL FOR REPARATIONS

1. The JaRM calls on the Jamaican Government through the Ministry of Finance to provide the Jamaican Reparations Movement Steering Committee with a detailed financial account of the National Debt, as well as proposals for all projects which can be put in place to effect a total national upgrading of all schools, roads, hospitals, inner-city ghetto restoration, re-education programmes, free education to tertiary level for all citizens, pension and unemployment programmes, free medical care and health programmes for mental health care, control and eradication of all diseases including

HIV/AIDS, development of new programmes in agriculture and industry, restoration and value of intellectual and cultural property rights.

2. With respect to the above (11), The JaRM calls on the Government to provide the JaRM with a list of the national debt broken down into countries, so that negotiations can be initiated under the umbrella of Reparations to write off the present debt owed by our country as debt-for-equity swaps by the nations identified. The JaRM calls for the adoption by the Jamaican Government of national public policies funded by Reparations, with special emphasis on Education, Health Care, Children and the Aged.

3. The JaRM calls on the Rastafari Nation in Jamaica to present a detailed proposal and costs supported by research for the Repatriation and Resettlement in Africa of its members who so desire.

4. The JaRM calls on Jamaican historians, lawyers, accountants, bankers and investment analysts to lend their skills and services to the compilation of a Jamaican Reparations historical account and financial assessment of debt due for unpaid slave labour.

5. The JaRM proposes to research and document the identity of all companies, organizations and individuals from whom a debt of Reparations is due for their involvement in the enslavement of Africans in Jamaica, and to present those companies, organizations and individuals with proposals for programmes and projects that can be funded by them to repair and compensate for their involvement in the enslavement of Africans in Jamaica.

6. The JaRM proposes that failure to co-operate by these companies, organizations and individuals identified as participants in the enslavement of Africans in Jamaica, will result in collective penalties being sought at national and international levels against them.

7. The JaRM calls for a Jamaican education curriculum related to the interconnection of the effects of the TransAtlantic Slave Trade, slavery and colonialism, the resulting negative social and economic manifestations on all aspects of life in Jamaica, and the need for Reparations nationally, regionally and internationally to correct these negative manifestations.

8. The JaRM calls for the adoption of culture-specific media programmes to inform, educate and prepare the Jamaican people to use Reparations in ways that will improve the nation.

9. The JaRM calls for the adoption of mechanisms to counter the interconnection of race and poverty in Jamaica, especially in the context of the continuing issues of globalization.

10. The JaRM calls on the Jamaican Government to declare a National Slavery Holocaust Commemoration Day to honour our ancestors who suffered and died in three hundred

years of forced enslavement, to ensure that their sufferings will not be forgotten or erased by time and other cultural influences.

11. The JaRM calls for the immediate implementation by the United Nations of the provisions of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, including the establishment of a permanent forum in the United Nations on Africans and African Descendants.

12. The JaRM calls on the United Nations to honour its commitment to provide funding for the establishment and operation of Reparations committees across the African Diaspora, in particular the Jamaican Reparations Steering Committee.

13. The JaRM calls on the Jamaican Government to comply with the provision in the WCAR Final Declaration which states the United Nations' readiness:

“To receive reports from States, non-governmental organizations, and all relevant institutions within the United Nations system on the implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and make recommendations to States for their national plans of action, bearing in mind the resource constraints of the developing countries.” (Para.11a).

PLAN OF ACTION

The JaRM endorses the intention of Member of Parliament Mike Henry to bring a Resolution on Reparations in Parliament so that all Members of Parliament can debate the issue and vote by conscience, not Party position.

The JaRM will support this Parliamentary debate by encouraging its members and the public to show support and solidarity by attending Parliament on that day.

The JaRM proposes to send a letter to the Jamaican Council of Churches (1) urging each of their member churches to state its position on Reparations, (2) to establish a programme of education within their member churches to explain and inform on the issue of Reparations, the role of the Church in the enslavement of Africans, and (3) inviting them to work with the JaRM to promote the cause of Reparations and assist in achieving it.

The JaRM proposes to involve the Jamaican media as widely as possible in publicizing the issues of Reparations, and in facilitating widespread public education in Jamaica and Jamaican communities in the African Diaspora.

The JaRM will support the continuous writing of letters to the government and leaders of England, inviting them to act with morality and justice in granting Reparations to Britain's former colonies in the West Indies, and especially Jamaica.

The JaRM will petition the Jamaican Government to seek accommodation within the Africa Union Constitution to recognize Jamaicans of African descent full nationality rights as Africans, and to permit every Jamaican of African descent the right to enter Africa as an emigrating citizens and become a citizen of an African state without needing a visa or other form of entry permit, as was proposed in the original founding principles of the Organization of African Unity.

The JaRM proposes that a copy of this document be sent to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, the Nuremberg Tribunal, the International Court at the Hague, the Africa Union, Amnesty International, and all international organizations involved in the cause of Human Rights and Justice.

ATTESTATION

This document was prepared in collaboration with 28 members of the Jamaica Reparations Movement meeting at the Neville Hall Lecture Theatre, UWI, Mona on Saturday, February 22, 2003, and after consultation with the members of the proposed Council of Elders, and is hereby solemnly signed and promulgated by the Members of the Interim Steering Committee on the 28th day of February, 2003.