

THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON REPARATIONS ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

September 15th – 17th, 2013

Repatriation and Reparations

FORMAL GREETINGS & INTRODUCTION:

The Ethio-Africa Diaspora Union Millennium Council *aka* The Rastafari Millennium Council (RMC) emphatically welcomes the decision by the Caribbean Communities – CARICOM, Heads of State to pursue the agenda on Reparations through the initiation by its future Chairman – Prime Minister Ralph E. Gonsalves in accordance with the declaration at the United Nations World Conference Against Racism (UN'WCAR) held in Durban, South Africa 2001. We are equally pleased that 168 Nations had ratified the Durban Declarations and have set about establishing National Reparation Committees.

From as early as the 18th Century there was always an advocate for the repatriation of African slaves to their ancestral land. The immigration of African-American, Caribbean, and Black British slaves to Africa occurred mainly during the late 18th century to mid 19th century. In the cases of Liberia and Sierra Leone both were established by former slaves who were repatriated to Africa within a 28 year period. The repatriation of African American slaves and freed persons to Africa was first advocated by the American Colonization Society (ACS), founded in 1816 by Charles Fenton Mercer, of which Thomas Buchanan (brother to future president James Buchanan) was a member. This soon developed into the **Back-to-Africa Movement** also known as the **Colonization Movement**. Other notable members of the ACS includes Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe, Abraham Lincoln, James Madison, Daniel Webster, John Marshall, and Francis Scott Key. Noted repatriates are:

- Joseph Jenkins Roberts - first President of Liberia and founding father
- Thomas Peters (black leader) - African American Black Loyalist leader and founder of Freetown, Sierra Leone
- William Coleman - President of Liberia
- Stephen Allen Benson - President of Liberia
- David George - African American Baptist preacher
- Boston King - African American Methodist missionary
- Henry Washington - African-born slave to first U.S. President George Washington
- Daniel Coker - African American missionary to Sierra Leone
- Edward Jones (missionary) - American missionary to Sierra Leone
- Edward J. Roye - President of Liberia, and first president from the True Whig Party

What history has recorded was that all attempts for repatriation were driven by economics – a chance to make a better life on the continent. It records that those who opposed repatriation insisted that America could provide those conditions and would rather struggle to obtain equality instead. Also Liberia leaders at that time were very cautious in receiving massive influx of repatriates with their proposed provisional governance. It was clear that the colonial industrial systems were adamant that Africa's resources must remain in their control.

The struggle to gain sovereign rights over our own continent developed into bitter confrontations. Thus Ethiopia with her sovereign His Imperial Majesty (HIM) Emperor Haile Sellassie the first (I) became the pivotal example for liberation and international morality. A clear example of how savage the opposition forces were against the Back-to-Africa movement was displayed through the persecution of Marcus Garvey – the Provisional President of Africa, and his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA).

What is very important to note is that reparations for colonialism and slavery atrocities were never pursued by these Back-to-Africa movements!

It was because of these persistent interferences and destructive elements towards repatriation why the Rastafari Communities in Jamaica and worldwide have advocated for repatriation with compensation since history clearly records the persecutions Africans encountered in establishing their own economic platforms; and only by reparations can these imbalances be finally resolved.

The Rastafari Movement itself was even targeted and brutally persecuted by both the colonial and local governments from as early as 1937 for our Afro-centric principles and Back-to-Africa stance to the point that there were even directives by the governments to 'kill on sight.' The Coral Gardens massacre of 1963 is edged in Jamaica's history. It is for these reasons that one particular Mansion – The Ethiopia Africa Black International Congress founded by King Emmanuel Charles Edwards, registered its Organ within the United Nations (UN) in 1967 and championed the cause for these violations against Human Rights. Indeed, it is the first recorded protest within the UN by a group for human rights violations which was the prelude to the recognition of slavery as seen as a crime against humanity leading up to the Durban Declarations.

The major Mansions had submitted documents at the Rastafari Global Reasoning in Jamaica, 2003 which the RMC has woven into our draft Position Paper – **The Rastafari Nation Fundamental Rights for Repatriation and Reparations** which also presents a chronology of our agitations and persecutions. It essentially addresses two factors in the UN'WCAR Durban Declarations' Programme for Action as outlined in Paragraph 158:

- **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;**

Whereas other Afro-centric Groups and National Reparation Committees have indicated other factors outlined in Paragraph 158 as their primary objective, the RMC is guided by the current Laws against Human Trafficking (modern slavery) and the precedent established by the formation of the State of Israel through reparations – the Nuremburg Trials. Base on these, we insist the need for what we call the “**Parental Value**” to be emphasized within the African and its Diaspora deliberations not as an **option** but as a **prerequisite** for reparations claims. We refer to the **Legacy Project** presented by the Africa Union (A.U.) that was drafted at the Global African Diaspora Summit (GADS), South Africa 2012 as a developing roadmap that could shape CARICOM policies to the AU:

- (a) The production of a skills database of African professionals in the Diaspora;**
- (b) The establishment of the African Diaspora Volunteer Corps;**
- (c) Establishing the African Diaspora Investment Fund;**
- (d) A program on the Development Market-place for the Diaspora as a framework for facilitating innovation and entrepreneurship among Africans and the Diaspora;**
- (e) The establishment of a Remittance Institute;**
- (f) A Diaspora Advisory Board is to be established that will address Reparations and the Right-to-Return for Africans in the Diaspora.**

We strongly believe that it is prudent before any other reparations submissions by Countries populated by Black Peoples, the restoration of Africa’s holocaust must be the concurrent priority as the evidence for reparatory JUSTICE to be fully served! Without going into specifics, the Parental Value outlines three fundamental Rights that have to be addressed because of the horrific tragedy that Colonialism and Slavery created:

- (1) References to the current Laws against Human Trafficking which addresses modern slavery;**
- (2) African Cultural Heritage retentions throughout the Diaspora;**
- (3) African dual Citizenry.**

In short, Nations will have to address the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Natives) who were invaded, murdered, and dispersed by colonial slavery and whose lands were forcibly replaced by our fore-parents. Nations will have to address how our fore-parents acquired a new nationality without acknowledgment either through **Marriage Dowry** or **Sale of Birthright** whereas Indentured Servants in the same lands maintained their identity hence their dual citizenry.

Understandably, Caribbean countries are embracing their Diasporas even those born in a foreign land through Caribbean Parenthood, to broaden economic ties. So likewise our ancestry should also be re-embraced for the very same reasons. How can one embrace ones offspring and not ones ancestor; are they not the same genes? What is therefore really needed through reparations is a massive Educational Programme to sensitize the majority African populace in the Caribbean about their ancestry’s grand cultures before the onslaught of colonialism and slavery to remove all stigmas on African Cultures – re connecting our umbilical heritages. The achievements of H.I.M. Emperor Haile Sellassie I – Father of the liberated Africa and the Hon. Marcus M. Garvey – Father of Pan-

Africanism must be greatly emphasized and their Philosophies and Opinions becoming our blueprints!

We take note that the £20 million compensation paid to owners effecting Emancipation was addressing primarily the cost of transportation imbedded in the sales value of our fore-parents with the mark-up value representing their net worth – nothing to do with wages! Their net worth can assist in evaluating wages as well as the comparison to the indentured labour force. Prof. Sir Hillary Beckles in submitting the Caribbean’s Case to Britain presented a valuation if Britain were to pay 2 million enslaved Africans at the lowest wages in the 18th & 19th Centuries including the value of trauma and loss of assets; it would amount to £7.5 trillion at 2005 revaluation.

Several attempts were made to attain reparations after the premeditative destruction of the Pan-African movement. The most significant being the Back-to-Africa Mission of 1961 sponsored for £12,000.00 by Premier Norman Manley. A Bond proposal of £300 million to resettle the entire African population was made to the Queen by Mr. Scarlett – leader of the 1961 delegation. It was alleged that the Colonial Secretary – Mr. Ian McLeod, stated Her Majesty would repatriate Africans from her Caribbean Colonies with £140 million for resettlement if Africa wanted us. This matter needs to be thoroughly investigated!

Africa’s reclaiming her children was re-emphasized by Emperor Haile Sellassie I during His visit to Jamaica in 1966 where He offered a seat within the then Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) to connect Jamaica and the Caribbean into African liberation and re-development. We thank the Right Hon. Prime Minister Portia Simpson-Miller as a mark of the O.A.U. and Jamaica’s golden 50 years celebration, for appointing a representative for Jamaica within the A.U. in 2013. It is quite fitting that this is occurring under the JUBILEE celebrations as under this Law of the Land, “all servants must be returned to their families and possessions.”

The countries of the world are now facing a new era for global trading described as Globalization orchestrated by the Bretton Wood Institutions. Colonialism and Slavery was driven by capitalism, and **GLOBALIZATION** now threatens a new surge of capitalism by neo-colonialism that is reshaping following the post Independence era. With the emergence of South – South viable Trading and an upsurge in the African Nations economies along with vast international investments, the very near future of Africa rising as an economic force is inevitable! CARICOM should therefore make every effort to strengthen the A.U. 6th Region Diaspora initiatives and capitalize on the framework of the Legacy Project from the GADS. Culture Tourism, Exchange Programmes, etc, even Trans-linkages – the Hub between the United States trading into Africa which is fast becoming a reality, have to also become CARICOM economic future. The Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific Group (ACP) of Nations must take advantage of these developments. The important factors in all of this are the **Bridge Builders**, and this is where THE REPATRIATES are going to, even unconsciously, become the major

influence in cross-trading. Rastafari as one African Group is already shaping these realities with emerging villages on the continent.....

The European Union (E.U.) has to abandon preferential Trade Agreement with their former colonies because of new trading Laws orchestrated by the World Trade Organization (WTO). This has caused the E.U. to establish a new market field for sustainable trading in Creative Industries. It is already impacting on Indigenous Communities in the Caribbean whose Culture value have already been targeted and exploited. The RMC is countering this by creating Intellectual Property Policies endorsed by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) to develop its own Intellectual Property Authority as a means of establishing economic partnerships with governments. We have just concluded a UNESCO workshop on Intangible Cultural Heritage for African Retention mapping incorporating Rastafari Culture and our creative transmitter Reggae.

Rastafari have been the vanguard for African Liberation and now culture protection and therefore should be partnered by all the Caribbean Countries through CARICOM to be the educational and promotional force to sensitize the peoples on Reparations, but must first be defended by this CARICOM initiative in our self-determination within this region.

Reparations for the atrocities committed against Rastafari by the State must be paid!

Caribbean leaders facing these WTO new Laws to begin from 2015 are now establishing branding mechanisms to capitalize and challenge this global market space that will show no mercy to developing countries. The Executives of the RMC are advancing within these realities to ensure that the Rastafari Communities reborn in Jamaica moving into the Caribbean with our vast Culture value, will not become assimilated within any colonial cultures because of these economic hostilities, and are determine that our policies and position papers by law re-integrate us within the foundations of our Divine Ancestors in accordance to our Divine Rights i.e. to say within the A.U.! We conclude with the prophetic utterance of H.I.M. Emperor Haile Sellassie I at the Belgrade Conference in 1961: **“If we turn to one or another of the major power groups, we risk engorgement, that gradual process of assimilation which destroys identity and personality.”** The Hon. Marcus M. Garvey emphasizes this: **“Take away INDUSTRY from a people; Take away their POLITICAL FREEDOM and you have a GROUP OF SLAVES!”** We dire not make this mistake, TWICE!

Give thanks and Praises!