

Caribbean Rastafari Organisation



Repatriation and Reparations Lobby

Chair, Repatriation and Reparations Committee: Ras Iral Talma, Barbados

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Rastafari Call on European Union and African Union to factor in Reparations

The Caribbean Rastafari Organisation is calling upon Member States of the African Union (AU) and Member States of the European Union (EU) to include Reparations for Chattel Slavery and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade within the framework of the Second Action Plan (2011-2013) to be adopted at the 3rd Africa EU Summit in Tripoli on 29 and 30 November 2010.

From the perspective of critically conscious, justice-loving, world citizens it is evident that a meaningful partnership between the EU and the AU must have outcomes of poverty reduction based on the synchronization of trade goals with sustainable development objectives.

With reference to the Joint Declaration from the 4th AU/EU College-to-College meeting in Addis Ababa on 8 June 2010, the Summit's positive response to this call will facilitate a Rastafari contribution to furtherance of:

- the AU/EU dialogue on Human Rights and Governance
- incorporation of the cultural dimension in the AU/EU cooperation framework
- the establishment of the Pan-African University
- the African Diaspora's involvement in Africa's development to address the challenge of the 'African brain drain'.

As reluctant residents in a region whose socio-economic structures of inequity reflect the damaging legacy of the plantation system based upon the trans-Atlantic trade in African people;

As descendants of those Africans who were kidnapped, reified and sold as chattel to provide slave labour in that acknowledged crime against humanity, as well as of Europeans whose countries profited and continue to profit immensely from centuries of that despicable enterprise;

As citizens of the European Union living in the non-independent Territories of the Caribbean Region, bearing witness to the debilitating prejudices that characterize colonial relations and that are still manifest in neo-colonial economic arrangements;

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Rastafari have transcended barriers of race, class, language, political and cultural diversity and are united as sons and daughters of Africa and of Europe, in the call for Reparations.

The Rastafari Nation notes with interest, the treatment of Reparations in the United Nations Durban Plan of Action (POA, 2001). Section IV of the POA (i) recommends 'provision of effective remedies, recourse, redress, and other measures at the national, regional and international levels;' and (ii) proposes 'Facilitation of the welcomed return and resettlement of the descendants of the enslaved Africans.' Article 157 of Section IV of the Durban POA recognizes the efforts and challenges of developing countries to address poverty and underdevelopment and calls for additional financial resources. Article 158 of the said section links 'historical injustices' with '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.'

It is in this spirit that Rastafari calls for the inclusion of Reparations in the strategic actions to be implemented in the short and medium terms. However, careful distinction must be made between Reparations and the various aid packages agreed by the international community to alleviate the persistent poverty created by the colonization of African peoples, forced removal from their homelands and enslavement in the plantations of the Americas. Matters of trade and mutual cooperation are a normal component of international negotiations which are quite separate from compensation for the specific historical injustice which continues to dog the lives of Africans. The misery perpetuated in Haiti strongly suggests the need for such distinction.

The global Rastafari community applauds President Wade and the Government and People of Senegal who recently accepted 160 Haitian students in response to the most recent catastrophe in Haiti, as a sterling example of international morality and African solidarity. We would like to see this Summit extend that sense of connectedness and responsibility towards Africans in the Diaspora displayed by an African State in this situation, to the Rastafari demand for repatriation to receptive African countries. This consistent demand goes beyond a response to disaster or provision for *Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons* and must be appreciated as the demand of free Africans, legitimately claiming the Right of Return, African citizenship and the restitution of lands.

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Given factors of small size, limited capacities and differences in political status, mechanisms such as the European Citizens Initiatives are not accessible to the Rastafari community in the Caribbean at this time. However, we are fully prepared to engage on this matter with EU Member States who are administering powers of Overseas Countries, Territories, Departments, Regions, Collectivities and Special Municipalities; with the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate and Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the AU Commission; with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and with the United Nations Forum on Minority Issues.

Submitted on Monday 15 November 2010 by email to:

His Excellency, Dr. Jean Ping, Chairperson, African Union Commission, Addis Ababa

His Excellency, President José Manuel Barroso, European Commission, Brussels

His Excellency, Ambassador Koen Vervaeke, EU Special Representative to the African Union and Head of the Commission Delegation, Addis Ababa

and copied to the following:

Dr. Jinmi Adisa, Citizens and Diaspora Directorate, AU Commission, Addis Ababa

Mr. Khafra Kambon, Coordinator, AU Diaspora Network in the Caribbean, Trinidad & Tobago

EU Civil Society Contact Group, c/o Social Platform, 18 Square de Meeus-1050, Brussels

Ms. Cecelia Babb, Coordinator, Caribbean Policy Development Centre, Barbados

Dr. Verene Shepherd, UN Group of Experts on People of African Descent, Jamaica

Ms. Gay McDougal, UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues, UN OHCHR, Geneva
