

Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action African and African Descendants

April 28 - April 29, 2001

Declaration:

1. Africans and African descendants share common root, a common history (slave trade and slavery, and colonization), a common experience (anti-black racism). It is this common root, history and experience that bind us as a community; and as a community we are committed to eliminating anti-black racism every where it occurs, in any part of the World.

2. Our motherland, Africa, is unique in the history of slavery. It is the only continent whose population was enslaved to contribute to the development of other nations. This exploitation took place particularly in the New World which became the World hub for growth.

Africa, prosperous up to that time, fell victim to slavery, underdevelopment and marginalization in a definitive way. After the Slave Trade, Africa was plunged into a new form of enslavement, colonialism.

Dismembered and divided among European powers, Western monopolies and the exploitation of raw material vital for Western industries which were flourishing at the time have cost African nations millions of lives .

3. To ensure total control over Africans and African descendants, the West resorted to violence,

brain-washing, enhancing Western history and values and falsifying and negating African history and values. The African culture must be revalued and respected; cultural imperialism must be eliminated in Africa.

4. The Black slave trade (trans-Atlantic, trans-Saharan and trans-Indian Ocean), and the colonization of Africa are Black Holocausts. Out of Memory of our Ancestors, these two Black Holocausts must be respected and never forgotten.

5. The two Black Holocausts, unprecedented genocides and systematic violations of human rights and the rights of Africans and African descendant People, constitute crimes against humanity.

6. The Western countries and all other ancient slave holders have an obligation to provide Africans and African descendant people with reparation for all the wrongs done to them culturally, demographically, economically, politically, socially and morally.

Reparations should be effected in the form and manner to be determined by African and African descendants civil society institutions.

7. Africans and African descendants are commonly victims of anti-Black racism and of multiple forms of discrimination.

The most pernicious are institutional, systemic and structural policies and practices. The impact of institutional and structural racism is felt in every aspect of life:

housing, employment, education, civil and criminal justice, economic development. Many of these policies and practices are perpetrated by the states themselves. During the Nazi period, many Africans and African descendants were submitted to bad treatment and genocide. Their Memory should be preserved and compensations paid to their descendants.

NN#. Many African and African descendants suffer from multi-oppressions structured around class, gender, disability, immigrant status, sexuality. These forms of oppression must be eliminated.

8. Anti-Black racism (both past and present) is fundamentally rooted in white supremacy ideology and the economic profits of the colonial and neo-colonial oppressors. Acknowledging the specific nature of anti-Black racism is essential to effectively combating it.

9. The development of Africa, greatly impeded by the global imbalances in power that has been created by slavery, colonialism, and other forms of exploitation, is maintained and extended today by neo-colonial policies and practices. In addition to the pillage of the human and material resources of Africa, its financial resources are being drained by foreign debt services. Slavery has just taken other forms. The right to life and liberty of the person of Black people is being regularly violated with complete

indifference whether in Western countries or by African dictators who are very often supported and protected by Western countries.

10. "Negative ethnicity" is tearing the African continent apart through ethnic genocide, ethnic cleansing and ethnic culture war. The struggle against racism must go hand in hand with struggle against negative ethnicity in Africa.

11. African and African descendant women play (and have played) a fundamental role in the development and maintenance of our families, peoples, communities and nations, even though historically they have faced worst conditions, the greatest marginalization and systematic exclusion. Although men and women are not the same; they are nevertheless equal and must be treated so.

12. Racism is a major health determinant. Historical and current discrimination against Africans and African descendants and colonial and neo-colonial policies have resulted in Africans and African descendants having significantly lower health status, less or no access to health care and poorer quality health care as compared to white Europeans and European descendants.

13. Media and new technologies play a significant role in the maintenance of structural and cultural anti-black racism.

14. Anti-black racism cannot be eradicated without the elimination of social ghettoization and demonization of Africans and African descendants.

15. Environmental racism refers to any government, military, industry or other institution's action, or failure to act, which has a disproportionate negative environmental impact on Africans and African descendants, on Indigenous, Latino, Asian, migrant or other ethnic groups or the places where they live.

Environmental racism, although not new, is a recent example of the historical double standard as to what is acceptable in certain communities, villages or cities and not in others. The mobility of corporations has made it possible for them to seek the greatest profit, the least government and environmental regulations and the best tax incentives, anywhere in the world. Natural resource extraction techniques, chemical uses and disposal of wastes unacceptable in white communities are routinely employed in African descendants communities.

16. African and African descendants are victims of grave discriminatory treatment in the legal and judicial processes (as well as police procedures).

This includes the framing up of accusations against Africans and African descendants, the duration of prison sentences, the inhuman state of prisons and the death penalty (where it exists) which particularly

affects Africans and African descendants.

17. The struggle against anti-black racism is inevitably linked with the struggle against poverty, racism against others, imperialism, globalization and war. Africans and African descendants express solidarity with other peoples who are similarly oppressed and exploited.

18. In a world where people are valued and devalued according to a given level of economic development, it is essential that the economic development of Africa be promoted as a means of fighting racism.

19. Africans and African descendants have significantly contributed to world history in all corners of and for the benefit of the world. Their achievements need to be re-assessed within the context of world's history, so that due respect may be given to the high performances by Africans and African descendants.

20. Africans, African descendants and others must be educated and reeducated about the accurate history of Africa, Africans and African descendants. Such education must include accurate descriptions of the impact of the double Holocaust (colonialism and slavery).

21. Educational steps to combat racism must also include challenging racist language and eradication of words and terms with a racist content especially when

used by authorities.

Plans of Action (or Recommendations?)

22. European and American States, as well as Arab nations, must unconditionally and separately adopt a Declaration of recognition of the two Black Holocausts (Slave trade/Slavery and colonization) as crimes against Humanity.

NN#. Arab nations who benefitted from trans-Saharan and trans-Indian Ocean slave trade, are invited as well to adopt an equivalent Declaration.

23. European and American States must unconditionally and separately adopt a Declaration which asks for forgiveness for the exactions committed during the Black Holocausts and for their lasting effects on the Africans and African Descendants, on psychological spheres as well as on economical, social, political and cultural ones.

24. Arab nations who benefitted from trans-Saharan and trans-Indian Ocean slave trade, are invited as well to adopt an equivalent Declaration.

25. The German Government must also ask by a Declaration for forgiveness for the exactions and genocide committed during the World war by the Nazis against Africans and African descendants.

26. States, surviving corporate interests, churches and non-governmental agencies involved in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the resulting slavery and

colonization must acknowledge their wrongdoings and make restitution. The form and amount of restitution should be determined by what is acceptable to the affected African and African descendant communities.

The victims of slavery and colonization (not the oppressors) should define the form of reparation and compensatory measures.

27. African and African descendant victims of Nazism have the same right to compensatory measures from the German Government as Jews or Romas.

28. Governments of the World must make the offence of the denial of double Black Holocaust denial, negationism or revisionism severely punishable by law.

29. The Governments of the World must condemn the trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean slave trade which, like the trans-Atlantic slave trade, brought serious damages to Africa . Unlike the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the trans-Saharan slave trade continues this day unabated (specifically in Mauritania and Sudan).

30. The Office of the High Commissioner must authorize a representative of the African and African descendants to address the World Conference against Racism, Racial discrimination Xenophobia and Related Forms of Intolerance in South Africa.

31. Governments of the World must recognize anti-Black racism as a form of racism which has its own specificity in the same way as anti-Semitism and to be

differentiated from all other forms of racism,
discrimination and intolerance.

32. Governments of the World should support to and participate in the actions undertaken in favor of the struggle against anti-Black racism in the social, cultural, educational, legal, economical spheres, especially by organizations formed by Black immigrants and which promote anti-racism, an inter-cultural dialogue, a multi-cultural and tolerant society.

33. The trafficking of African children for slavery and forced labour must stop. In particular, sexual trafficking and the sexual exploitation and profiling of African and African descendant women must be challenged, protested and terminate in all forms of media with all vigour.

34. All organizations (multilateral, financial, development and human rights) must formulate diagnostic indicators of the impact and effectiveness of their policies and programs on African and African descendant communities.

35. The criminalization of blackness has had, and continues to have, a negative impact, and must be stopped.

36. Many artefacts and antiquities of African civilization have been stolen or taken out of the country without permission. Museums must return or compensate the countries from which these antiquities

were taken.

37. Governments (and others) must condemn any political, economic or social structure that has the effect of promoting, encouraging, or facilitating anti-Black racism.

38. African governments and the international community must support the equitable redistribution of land on the continent and the right of all Africans and African descendants to return home without limitations or discrimination.

39. European, American and other governments must repatriate funds stolen from African countries/people and stored in European and American banks to the African countries of their origin.

40. States must eliminate racial disparities in education, housing, economic development and health care affecting Africans and African descendants.

41. States, and United Nations organizations (such as World Health Organization), must routinely and systematically collect race, gender and socio-economic class data related to education, housing, health care, employment and environmental racism.

42. States must adopt effective mechanisms for monitoring and eliminating all forms of racial discrimination, placing particular emphasis on institutional and structural anti-Black racism in education, environment, housing, employment, police,

and the legal system.

43. States, and the international community, must develop effective anti-discrimination laws which provide an adequate institutional framework for redress that is specific to eliminating institutional and structural anti-Black racism.

44. States, and the international community, must introduce in schools courses of Geography and History which bring to light more about the African countries and populations, with emphasis on the double Black Holocaust, and the contributions of Africans and African descendants contributions to the economic and technologic progress of the World.

45. States must adopt a prohibition against racist documents including books for children which convey a depreciative image of Blacks.

NN#. Civil society groups should help develop advocacy strategies that link environmental issues (including environmental racism) to human rights. Governments should adopt and enforce legislation and policies that protect society from environmental racism.

46. Medias of the World must implement initiatives for increasing public awareness of anti-racist and tolerant behavior towards Blacks and promote a positive and valorizing image of Blacks.

47. Africans and African Descendants have to urgently free themselves from slave and colonial mentality and

attitudes. Wearing of slave or colonial names, for example, doesn't promote a positive and valorizing image of African or African descendants personality. The rich African cultural heritage at their disposal should serve as the first step in a real liberation and renaissance of Africa and its people all over the World.

Vienna, 29th April, 2001

Participants to the meeting :

(Individuals and their NGO's)

Please send comments to African_Caucus@yahoo.com