



The Halifax Declaration of Principles and Priorities

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
August 5th - 10th, 2001



The *Halifax Declaration of Principles and Priorities* was adopted on August 10th, 2001 by more than 200 local, national, and International participants at an international Symposium in Halifax, Nova Scotia, “the cradle of Canada’s indigenous Black Community”, under the theme *Racism and the Black World Response*. This International Symposium, convened under the auspices of the **James Robinson Johnston Chair in Black Canadian Studies** at Dalhousie University, commemorated the *United Nations 3rd Decade Against Racism*, and served as a prelude to the *UN 3rd World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR)*, scheduled for Durban, South Africa, in August 2001.

The Halifax Declaration is complemented by two Nova Scotian crafted documents, a *Principled Statement of Position Against Racism*, and a *Declaration of Good Health and Long Life*. This *Halifax Declaration* is meant to:

1. Expose and focus global attention on the **material reality** of **Racism** as experienced in Canadian society, and as particularized through *group stigmatization and collective marginalization*.
2. Contribute to the *3rd World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance* by amplifying the voices of the Victims-Survivors of Racism so as to influence and concretely address public policy in this Western Hemisphere.
3. Capture and present the points of consensus emerging from the Symposium deliberations and reflect the commonality and solidarity shared globally by African Descended Peoples.

Shifting paradigms to address Black comfort level, the Symposium was grounded on Spirituality, Black Cultural Identity, and Community, which enhanced the three inter-connected core themes: *Building Global Solidarity*, *Building the Case for Reparations*, and *Building Global Strategies*.

This Symposium constitutes but another point on the continuum of African Diasporic initiatives wherein African Descended peoples have proactively come together to address the impact of Racism on our individual and collective lives. The Symposium deliberations, discussions, perspectives, and experiences resonate with and reflect concerns and issues that also have preoccupied those earlier WCAR related gatherings at Santiago de Chile, Vienna, Geneva, and Toronto.

Such emerging themes as *population displacement* and concomitant *land loss* in Nova Scotia, Colombia, The Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa...pinpoint the commonality of our experience and drive home the necessity for us to deploy concerted efforts aimed at **international strategizing among African Descended Peoples**. The globalization of *anti-Black Racism* confirms the urgency why **we must focus on our Youth** as a top priority, educating and equipping them to recognize and deal with Racism effectively. The other pressing priority for us is to end the globalized marginalization of Mother Africa and our History by **recovering, reclaiming and rehabilitating the History of African Peoples**.

As Members of the global African Descended Community, **we Participants unanimously agree that Slavery and the Slave Trade should be declared crimes against Humanity**; and, because of the on-going legacy of Racism and Racial Discrimination inherited by the global Community of African Descended Peoples, **the issue of Reparations** must be addressed in a concerted global fashion, with scrupulous rigour, so as to correct those wrongs which continue to impede the full participation of our Peoples within our territorial and global communities.

As Members of the global African Descended Community:

- **We Participants embrace the spirit and principles** of the *Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action for African Descended Peoples*.
- **We support** such Black Community-Affirming initiatives as the *Africa Initiative Plan* adopted by the Organization of African Unity.
- **We acknowledge** that, since as African Peoples we have suffered and continue to suffer group injury, we therefore are in need of collective Healing, and must set about creating the necessary **sanctuaries of recovery**, wherein we can Heal and forgive ourselves as well as the perpetrators of the physical and cultural assaults against us.
- **We are acutely aware** of the inter-dependency of Humanity and **we resolve to build Partnerships and Coalitions** with all like-minded peoples who share our common goals.

THEREFORE:

We call upon African Descended Peoples world-wide to adopt March 21st, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, as a rallying point around which rotating Communities of African Descent, can convene yearly African Diasporic meetings for us to assess, monitor, and implement “Black Community-Affirming Strategies” to eliminate Racism and Racial Discrimination.

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