

CARIBBEAN RASTAFARI ORGANISATION (CRO)

MISSION: To organize and centralize the Caribbean Rastafari community through sustainable trade and developmental programmes and activities in pursuit of our ultimate goal of Reparations and Repatriation

Proposal for the establishment of a CARICOM Working Group on Rastafari Populations and an AU Permanent Forum on Rastafari Issues

This proposal has been prepared for review by the:

- (i) AU Ministerial Meeting on the Diaspora in South Africa, 16-18, November
- (ii) African Union Diaspora Summit in South Africa in 2008 and
- (iii) 17th meeting of the CARICOM Council for Human and Social Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

‘Coming from a history of oppression, victimization, criminalization, brutality and denial of basic human rights, Rastafari has, through Rastafari music, culture and constant agitation over the past seventy years, come to be internationally seen and recognised as the primary preservers, protectors and protagonists of Afrocentric culture and identity in the western hemisphere, to the extent where today, it can truly be said that “the stone that the builder refused has become the head cornerstone.” ’ (Ethio-Africa Diaspora Union Millennium Council). The imperative of international morality, the principles of equal rights, justice, equity, reciprocity and collective security therefore form the spiritual bedrock of thinking behind this proposal and are no less important than the economic value of Diaspora inputs to African development in the 21st Century.

This proposal has been influenced by the legacy of standard bearing Rastafari Mansions such as the Theocracy Reign of the Ancient Nyahbinghi Order, the Ethiopia Africa Black International Congress and the Twelve Tribes of Israel, all of which consistently and persistently prioritised the demand for Repatriation. Building on this foundation and in light of increased capacity for networking between the Rastafari communities on the African continent and those in the African Diaspora, current initiatives signal readiness for the levels of representation being proposed. Following a review of the draft proposal, in addition to individual responses, significant contributions were received from the Ethio-Africa Diaspora Union Millennium Council (Jamaica), the Ambassade Culturelle de la Diaspora Pan Africaine Et Du Peuple de Jah (Benin), Alianza Rastafari de Panama and from the Secretariat of the Caribbean Pan-African Network (CPAN).

Encouraged by the identification of the African Diaspora as the 6th Region of the African Union; as well as by the presence of Rastafari communities throughout the CARICOM, other Diasporic Regions and the African continent; the expressed commitments by the AU and ARICOM to action, reflect a convergence of positions and interests that are in harmony with this proposal. The Caribbean Rastafari Organisation therefore urges **ALL** CARICOM and AU Member States to give full support to the proposal which brings a wealth of Rastafari resources to the institutionalized relationship between the governments and people of the region and the continent.

Heartened by the recent UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the proposed mechanisms are fashioned by the UN structures and mechanisms for the Indigenous Peoples of the world. Rastafari share the Indigenous Peoples' identity by assertion of sustainable African centred approaches to life, livelihood and development manifested in the overarching preservation and protection of ancient traditional "livity", rights, heritage, cultural and intellectual property. These perspectives are evident in varied forms such as the emergence of Rastafari Villages in South Africa and Panama; the *Discover Rastafari* exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC opening on November 2nd 2007, and the current lobby for the declaration of Pinnacle, in Jamaica, (the site of the first Rastafari commune), as a National Monument and UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Rastafari has also been at the forefront of the Reparations Movement and with regard to Reparations for the Ma'afa created by the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, a point of reference is the 2001 UN Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Other Intolerance. Article 158, Section IV of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action discusses Provision of Effective Remedies, Recourse, Redress and Other Measures at the National, Regional and International Levels and presents a long list of these which ends with the, "**Facilitation of welcomed return and resettlement of the descendants of enslaved Africans.**"

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

The strategic objective of this proposal is the advancement of Rastafari interests in CARICOM and AU processes by secured Rastafari representation via a range of options, some of which are presented below. The formal administrative and advisory structures are proposed to give life and timely support to CARICOM and AU initiatives and objectives as expressed in the Statement and Plan of Action of the South Africa - African Union - Caribbean - Diaspora Conference in Jamaica (March 16-18, 2005) and the Outcomes of the AU-Diaspora Caribbean Consultative Conference in Barbados in 2007. In particular the proposal seeks the support and facilitation of Rastafari involvement in the action resulting from the recommendations of these meetings. It also recognises the convergence of interests and posits current Rastafari initiatives and networks as entry points for engagement.

PROPOSED SPHERES OF ENGAGEMENT AND REPRESENTATION

The following spheres of engagement range from the ideal of high level representation in the process of decision making for outcomes that are in the mutual interests of the Rastafari Nation, CARICOM and the AU to minimal, Observer Status wherever possible.

CARICOM Working Group on Rastafari Populations - The WGRP will be established as a working group of the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) according to Chapter IX, Subsidiary Committees and Other Bodies, Rule 24 of the Rules of Procedure for the COHSOD. Like the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations, the WGRP will be open to Rastafari organisations in the Caribbean Region and will:

- provide advice on consultation regarding all issues pertaining to the Rastafari community in the Caribbean Region;
- address the specific issues of Repatriation and the AU "Bill of Citizenship" that establishes rights, entitlements and duties of Africans at home and abroad;
- work in tandem with the African Commission on Human Rights and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) Working Group of Indigenous Populations/ Communities in Africa, and inform the operations of the proposed;

The AU Permanent Forum on Rastafari Issues (PFRI) will be an advisory group to the ECOSOCC, comprising mainly Rastafari experts dealing solely with Rastafari development issues in liaison with the CARICOM WGRP and the Rastafari communities in the Africa and the Diaspora. The work of the Forum will also be informed by the mandate of the Commission's Civil Society and Diaspora Organisation Unit.

Sectoral Representation on the (i) AU CSO Provisional Working Group; the Economic, Social and Cultural Council's (ECOSOCC) (ii) Social Affairs and Health Committee and (iii) Cross- Cutting Programs Committee.

Observer Status (i) as a non-governmental organisation (NGO) on the CARICOM COHSOD and (ii) on the AU as an NGO of the Diaspora as defined by the AU Executive Council, and which can equally be represented as an Inter-African non-governmental organisation.

RATIONALE

According to the Statement and Plan of Action of the South Africa - African Union - Caribbean - Diaspora Conference in Jamaica (March 16-18, 2005), **"The Conference gained a new appreciation of the creative way in which the Rastafarian movement had sustained the vision of the Founders of the OAU, and promoted an African-Caribbean identity and Afro-centric values that strengthened the impulse for African Liberation on both sides of the Atlantic, while serving as a positive force for Africa globally"; and "The Rastafari and other movements have served as cultural forces of integration in both the Caribbean and Africa. Their status as agents of sustaining and promoting an African-Caribbean identity and an Afro-centric value system should be recognized as a positive force of integration".**

Similarly, the Outcomes of the AU Caribbean Regional Diaspora Consultative Conference in Barbados in 2007 recognised that, **"the Rastafari Movement as historically integrative of the African Agenda and whose cultural philosophy, actions and assets, particularly its indigenous rights, form the cornerstone of African Union and should be uniquely supported"**

The CRO position paper distributed at the AU meeting of Caribbean Pan-African organisations in Barbados in 2004 stated that **"The Rastafarians are a peculiar people who, as a Nation are now prepared to negotiate the terms (of repatriation) with the African Union, the CARICOM, the Commonwealth of Nations, the United Nations and other appropriate institutions", and strongly proposed "an institutionalized Caribbean and Rastafari representation within the African Union".**

The CRO/CPAN Repatriation Committee Paper entitled "Preparation for Integration into the African Union" and distributed at the Jamaica meeting proposed a resolution for the AU Permanent Forum on Rastafari Issues as follows: **"We would like ardent support in adopting a resolution for the creation of a Permanent Rastafari Forum within the African Union, using the Indigenous Peoples Forum at the United Nations as a model. . . We stand ready to avail ourselves for the establishment of a Working Group on Rastafari Populations and to assist with drafting its Terms of Reference."**

That readiness is reasserted in this proposal, and so is the necessity of the Rastafari position based on the following points of reference.

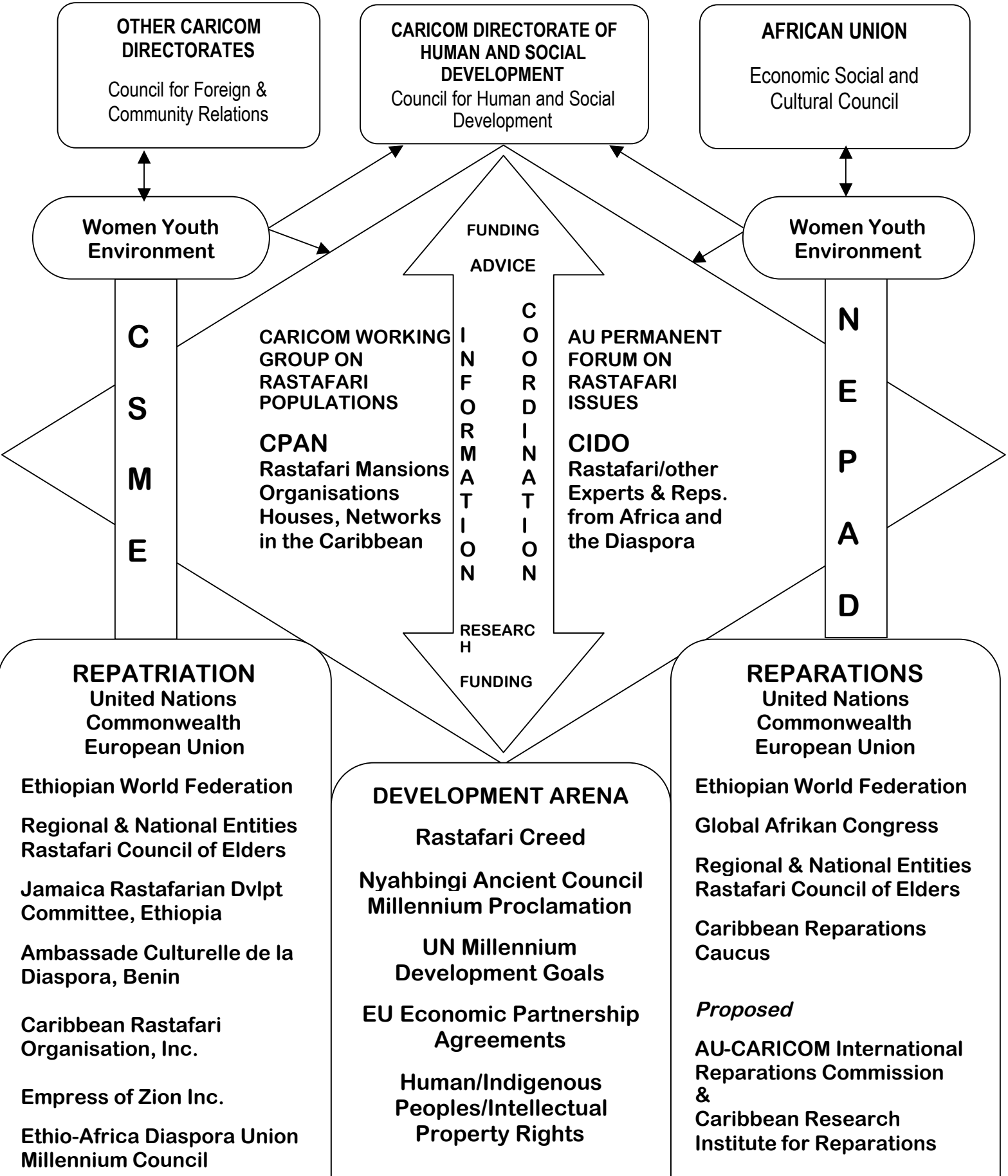
- At the UN SIDS Conference in 1994 the Rastafari delegation determined and secured agreement that the Indigenous Peoples' space was the most appropriate one from which to raise Rastafari issues, concerns and solutions.

- The Resolution of the Charter of Civil Society for the Caribbean Community executed by the Conference of Heads of Government at the Eighth Inter-Sessional Meeting in Antigua in 1997, states their determination "**to pursue the principles declared in the charter in response to the challenges of the Twenty-First Century.**"
- The Liliendaal Statement of Principles produced by the CARICOM Civil Society Forward Together Conference in 2002 recognised the importance of programmes aimed at promoting respect for the rights and aspirations of the Community's peoples, and emphasized the need for more constructive participation of Civil Society representatives in appropriate decision making Organs of the Community.
- Grave concern about the limited scope, resources and impact of the Task Force established to carry forward the main recommendations of the Forward Together Conference as well as the limited provision for Civil Society Diaspora representation in the African Union structures.
- The commitment expressed by the Caribbean Pan-African Network (CPAN) to facilitate Rastafari representation and representation by women whenever possible.
- The assertiveness required to have Rastafari interests articulated and addressed decisively, practically and holistically in the development agendas of CARICOM, the African Union and the Pan-African arena.
- The challenges associated with the logistics of Repatriation and the granting of African citizenship to Africans who were forcibly removed from the continent and enslaved.
- The increasing commitments of AU and CARICOM governments to pursue Reparations.

Rastafari in the African and African Diaspora Development Agenda

The following chart identifies the relevant institutional structures related to the functioning of the proposed Working Group and Forum. It treats Women; Youth and the Environment as cross-cutting impacting and being impacted by economic arrangements, with the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), singled out. Of critical importance are the networking Rastafari communities offering alternative approaches to development in the context of neo-liberal economic and trade regimes that have debilitating rather than wealth creating impacts on poor Africans both at home and in the Caribbean Region. These points of reference and representation are indicators of readiness to shape and fulfill the Rastafari Nation's destiny in the New African Millennium and its role in the African Renaissance.

Rastafari at the Matrix of African and African Diaspora Development



OTHER CARICOM DIRECTORATES

Council for Foreign & Community Relations

CARICOM DIRECTORATE OF HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Council for Human and Social Development

AFRICAN UNION

Economic Social and Cultural Council

Women Youth Environment

Women Youth Environment

FUNDING
ADVICE

RESEARCH
FUNDING

C
S
M
E

N
E
P
A
D

CARICOM WORKING GROUP ON RASTAFARI POPULATIONS

CPAN
Rastafari Mansions
Organisations
Houses, Networks
in the Caribbean

AU PERMANENT FORUM ON RASTAFARI ISSUES

CIDO
Rastafari/other
Experts & Reps.
from Africa and
the Diaspora

REPATRIATION

United Nations
Commonwealth
European Union

- Ethiopian World Federation
- Regional & National Entities
- Rastafari Council of Elders
- Jamaica Rastafarian Dvlpt Committee, Ethiopia
- Ambassade Culturelle de la Diaspora, Benin
- Caribbean Rastafari Organisation, Inc.
- Empress of Zion Inc.
- Ethio-Africa Diaspora Union
- Millennium Council

DEVELOPMENT ARENA

- Rastafari Creed
- Nyahbingi Ancient Council Millennium Proclamation
- UN Millennium Development Goals
- EU Economic Partnership Agreements
- Human/Indigenous Peoples/Intellectual Property Rights

REPARATIONS

United Nations
Commonwealth
European Union

- Ethiopian World Federation
- Global Afrikan Congress
- Regional & National Entities
- Rastafari Council of Elders
- Caribbean Reparations Caucus
- Proposed*
- AU-CARICOM International Reparations Commission & Caribbean Research Institute for Reparations

SUPPORT REQUESTED ON THE BASIS OF NEW AND EXISTING STATE POLICIES

CARICOM MEMBER STATES are requested to advance the Rastafari lobby for a Working Group on Rastafari Populations by tabling this proposal as an agenda item for consideration at the relevant meetings of CARICOM on behalf of the Rastafarians in the Caribbean Region. The proposal will be submitted to the following Member States on the basis of statements made, actions taken and relevant policies and infrastructure developed, some of which are included immediately below.

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA - In January 2005 the Caribbean Rastafari Organisation was registered as a non-profit organisation incorporated in Antigua and Barbuda. On 3rd February 2007, His Excellency, Bruce Goodwin (aka Ras Haile) Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to Cuba and to the African Union, presented his letters of credence to the African Union. Chairperson of the AU Commission, Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, remarked that the presentation was a "**gesture pregnant with meaning and highly significant.**" On Friday 31 August 2007, Antigua and Barbuda officially established diplomatic relations with Libya as a first step towards bilateral cooperation.

BARBADOS - Office of the Prime Minister via the Government of Barbados (GOB) Commission for Pan-African Affairs (PANCOM), established in 1998 "**with a specific mandate to foster cultural and economic linkages with Africa and the wider Diaspora.**" Encouraged by the work of Ras Nathaniel in the United States of America and the preliminary research on the Repatriation Census Workshops, with the requirement of support from the AU, the CRO has agreed to collaborate with the Trans-Atlantic Centre for Trade (TACT) set up by the PANCOM in 2005, to conduct a series of educational workshops on the African Union 6th Region Diaspora Initiative, Repatriation Census and Diaspora Resource Skills Database in the Caribbean Region.

JAMAICA - It is well documented that throughout the 19th Century, many Jamaican nationals repatriated not only to Liberia but to other African countries. In the English-speaking Caribbean, Jamaica has led, driven and supported the demand for Reparations and Repatriation from government, opposition and non-government platforms. In terms of Rastafari mobilizing, numerous documents from the Rastafari archives point to a relentless quest for Repatriation and Reparations. In 1994 the Jamaican Government waived visa requirements for all South African passport holders. Holders of Jamaican passports may enter South Africa for a period of up to 90 days without the necessity of visas. Former President Nelson Mandela visited Jamaica in 1998 and received an honorary doctorate from the University of the West Indies. The visit to Jamaica by President Thabo Mbeki in 2003, spurred the AU consultative processes of 2005 which recognised Jamaica's support of South Africa in the struggle against apartheid.

In July 1983, Jamaica hosted the Ras Tafari International Theocracy Assembly which produced the 22 point Summary Resolution based on the theme drawn from the Rastafari Creed that, “The Hungry Be Fed, the Naked Clothed, the Sick Nourished, the Aged Protected and the Infants Cared For.” The twenty-two points reflected the Economic, Educational, Medical, Spiritual, Social and Administrative needs and aspirations of the international Rastafari community with **“meaningful priority given to the discussion on DAWTAS & YOUTH, MEDIA & COMMUNICATION, HUMAN RIGHTS & COLLECTIVE SECURITY...”** Exactly twenty years later, in 2003, and also at the University of the West Indies, the Rastafari Global Reasoning gave impetus to more frequent “All Mansions” gatherings culminating in the formation of the Ethio-Africa Diaspora Union Millennium Council in 2007, with the thrust toward a representative international Rastafari organisation.

St. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES (SVG) - Office of the Prime Minister - PM Ralph Gonsalves' has a track record of anti-imperialist activism, Pan-Africanism, Regional Integration and progressive positions on Haiti. During his visit to Ethiopia in 2005, with four Rastafari Brethren included among the SVG delegation, both countries signed an agreement for the reciprocal removal of visa requirements. SVG pledged readiness to work with the Government of Ethiopia for the achievement of various areas of cooperation and offered scholarships to Ethiopian students to study at post-secondary institutions in the Caribbean. During the visit of SVG's Deputy Prime Minister, Sir Louis Straker, to Shashamane for the New Millennium celebrations on September 12th, one of the requests from the Rastafari representatives gathered there was for the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to table for CARICOM consideration, the matter of a repatriation airlift from the Caribbean to the continent. (Operation Rastafari?).

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (T & T) - Office of the Prime Minister. The Hon. Prime Minister, Patrick Manning at the 8th Annual Meeting of the African Union, made the following acknowledgements: **"One of the fastest growing movements in the Caribbean is the Rastafarian movements whose members regard Ethiopia as their spiritual home...History has it that the people of the African diaspora never relinquished the desire to return and relate to their ancestral homeland...In recent times T & T has been increasing its bilateral relations with several African countries. There is a treasure trove of opportunities for higher levels of integration and collaboration between Africa and the Caribbean. The time has come to revisit, reaffirm and strengthen the bonds of south-south co-operation, and for the realization of a new dispensation in the relationship between Africa and its diasporic nations. I have come on such a mission. I have come in the interest of a new dispensation...Given our countries technological achievements in the energy sector, the government of Trinidad and Tobago has taken the decision to make our expertise in the sector available free of charge to...Chad, Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Republic of Congo and Angola...**

We see this as Trinidad and Tobago's contribution to Africa's achievement of the United Nation's Millennium Goals."

AU MEMBER STATES are requested to advance the Rastafari lobby for a Permanent Forum on Rastafari Issues by adding this proposal to the agendas of relevant meetings of the AU on behalf of the Rastafari Nation in Africa and the Diaspora. The basis of this request is laid in the following sampling of historical and contemporaneous political will.

ETHIOPIA is the spiritual home of the Rastafari community globally and of significance to this proposal are the Rastafarians who have settled in Shashamane and elsewhere in Ethiopia. During the 1961 Mission to Africa in 1961, His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I advised that Ethiopia would always be open to people of African descent living in the Caribbean who wanted to return home and hoped that the Caribbean would send the right people. He specifically wanted to establish student exchanges. The 1966 visit of His Majesty to Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Haiti, remains a signal moment in the history and memory of African people in the Caribbean Region. According to the Joint Communique produced from the visit to Ethiopia by Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves in 2005, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi expressed the desire to **"expand bilateral relations of the two countries, especially in the field of culture, education, trade in goods and services, relations with the African diaspora and people of African descent in the Caribbean in general and that of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in particular."** Prime Minister Meles also expressed his intention to explore measures to facilitate **"special and favourable treatment with regard to the economic rights of Caribbean born Rastafarians residing in Ethiopia... [and] expressed gratitude for the solidarity and support given to Ethiopia by the Caribbean countries in general, the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the Rastafarian community in particular."**

BENIN is expressly committed to enabling repatriation from the African Diaspora. Headed by Pere and Mere JAH, La Sainte Famille JAH, Rastafarians who repatriated from Guadeloupe in 1997, have established the Ambassade Culturelle de la Diaspora Pan Africaine Et Du Peuple de Jah and have legally registered a non-governmental organisation under the name "Fondation Nouvelle Creation" (New Creation Foundation). These structures form a Repatriation special committee of the EWF Inc of which they are members. In September 2003, by decree, the Beninese government granted the land on which they established the "Grassroots - Garden of Brotherhood School" and Children's Centre for awakening, animation and stimulation in 2005. The curriculum includes Agriculture, Handicraft, Pan-African and Environmental Studies. A Soya Processing Unit and a Weaving and Garment Design Unit are planned with a focus on training single mothers.

In March 2005, the cultural Embassy of the Pan African Diaspora and JAH People was invited by the AU to the launching of the ECOSSOC and Mere JAH attended as representative. In June 2007, as an invited guest of the Benin delegation, Mere JAH participated in the AU Grand Debate on the United States of Africa held in Ghana. In 1999 following a presentation by the CRO representative on The Rastafari Quest for Repatriation at a Pan-African Conference held in Ouidah, government and civil society representatives from Benin wanted to know how many people want to return and how much land would be needed for their resettlement. That same year the Head of State called for the Leaders' Conference on Reconciliation and Development with President Rawlings of Ghana, an International audience: guests from the Diaspora, USA senators and European representatives. To follow up the resolutions, a governmental agency was established.

GHANA - Founding Father President Kwame Nkrumah envisioned a United States of Africa and pan-African citizenship for all peoples of Africa. The evidence of the black star in Ghana's flag is evidence of the strong influence of Marcus Garvey on Ghana's road to independence. The 1961 Mission to Africa was warmly welcomed by Osagyefo, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah who indicated that Ghana has sufficient space to accommodate returning Africans and lauded the many Jamaicans who had already returned. The Committee appointed by the President to discuss repatriation inquired about the numbers wanting to return and the types of skills they would bring. Similar sentiments were echoed by President Jerry Rawlins during an Emancipation Day visit to Trinidad and Tobago in 1997, following which Ghana began to observe August 1st as Emancipation Day. Ghana's Immigration Act of 2000 made provision for the right of return and "right to abode" for Africans in the Diaspora, subject to the approval of the President. Ghana has a significant Rastafari community and there are several other initiatives that are making land available to Africans in the Diaspora who want to return. To cite the official brochure marking Ghana's 50th Anniversary of Independence, **'The Ghana Government intends to use the year 2007, the 50th Anniversary of the country's independence, to celebrate African excellence and to inaugurate "The Joseph Project"'. Ghana will use the year to bring together, more closely, people in Ghana and brothers and sisters in the Diaspora and establish herself as the true gateway to the Homeland for Africans in the Diaspora.'**

NIGERIA - Nigeria's Governor General, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwi welcomed the 1961 Mission to Africa, commenting that he was inspired by the philosophies of Marcus Garvey and that Nigeria owed a debt of gratitude to "West Indians" who had settled in Nigeria and had helped to establish that country's independence. Anticipating challenges that could arise from social and material inequities between Africans at home and those in the Diaspora, Nigeria concluded that Africans in the west were bound to come home and that Nigeria could absorb all those who wanted to come. In 1990, the first Reparations Conference held on the African continent took place in Lagos under the auspices of the late Chief Moshood Abiola.

Then President General Ibrahim Babangida called on Western nations for Reparations for the slave trade linking the enslavement of 30 million Africans to the "marginalization" of African development. In 1993 the OAU's Group of Eminent Persons on Reparations, held the First Pan-African conference on Reparations in Abuja, where Lord Anthony Gifford, Q.C. established the legal claim for Reparations. Jamaica's Ambassador to Nigeria, Dudley Thompson served as Rapporteur. Ten years later at the Commonwealth People's Forum in Abuja, the CRO facilitated a workshop entitled Placing Reparations on the Commonwealth Agenda and received an enthusiastic response from the Nigerian participants who insisted that Restitution was a politically important concept in the Reparations-Repatriation discourse.

SOUTH AFRICA - South Africa is reputedly the country with the largest population of Rastafarians in the world. During the 1920s an Anguillian man named Robert Athlyi Rogers wrote "The Holy Piby" which gave the Rastafari Nation its Creed. The book, dubbed The Blackman's Bible, was smuggled into South Africa and introduced to the diamond mine workers in Kimberly, by none other than the first ANC Secretary General Solomon (Sol) Tshekisho Plaatje. The Caribbean Region with Jamaica at the forefront joined the morally minded people of the world in championing the cause of the ANC against the apartheid regime and is today, mindful of South Africa's interventions regarding Haiti. During the 2003 Summit of the AU, President Mbeki took the floor twice to make the case for a reciprocal relationship with the historic Diaspora. At the Jamaica South Africa-AU-Diaspora Caribbean Conference in 2005, the CRO position paper entitled, "Preparation for Integration into the African Union: The South African Option", supported the 1998 CARICOM positions for the abolition of visa requirements between CARICOM countries and South Africa; the exploration of scheduled flight stopovers between South Africa and North America and; greater scope for the provision of skilled services by Caribbean nationals to South Africa.

By this proposal, the Caribbean Rastafari Organisation is strengthening its call for collaboration between South Africa and the other identified Member States of the AU and CARICOM to "**place the case of the Rastafarians firmly on the Agenda of the African Union.**"

LIMITATIONS

This proposal does not adequately address essential areas of trade, investments, poverty and sustainable living in the context of deeper and critical analysis of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), particularly with respect to the most vulnerable groups in CARICOM and in Africa.

There is also inadequate access to information about various opportunities that can be exploited by the Rastafari Nation. However, the Rastafari community has made sterling inputs to the development of cultural industries, sustainable tourism and agriculture and these are being flagged as areas of interest and expertise.

Another limitation is the absence of a budget and recommendations for financing of the proposed structures. The CRO would welcome the opportunity to discuss with relevant CARICOM and AU agencies and prospective funding partners, the creative use of Information and Communications technologies in following up the recommendations contained within the Barbados Outcomes document.

The global location and resonance of the culture could become the basis of mutually beneficial partnership with telecommunications companies operating in Caribbean and African markets, in support of Rastafari networking globally.

CONCLUSION

CARICOM's Secretary General, Dr. Edwin Carrington at the Opening of the African Diaspora Caribbean Consultative Conference (2007), assured the gathering, **"...of the continuing commitment of the CARICOM Secretariat to this process; a commitment demonstrated by my office; The Office of the Secretary-General, spearheading the Diaspora initiatives with support of the relevant Directorates...to the consequent evolution of sustainable approaches to CARICOM/AU collaboration, including the identification of joint institutional structures and complementary resources to service this crucial initiative."**

In his address at the Caribbean Regional Diaspora Consultative Conference of the African Union in Barbados on 27 August 2007, Dr. Zola Skweyiva, Honourable Minister of Social Development of the Republic of South Africa made a number of points critical to engendering the commitment of the governments identified above. He echoed the sentiments of the Rastafari Nation thus: **"Good work is already being done, both on the continent and by the Diaspora, to address the many problems that afflict Africans. What is needed is for us to build on these foundations, pool our skills and resources, enhance existing cooperation and improve our communication channels so that we work with purposeful unity towards the same goal."**

As the Ivine inspiration for this journey of Pan-African development manifested in the faith of the Rastafari Movement, His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I has the last word: **"Africa's victory, although proclaimed, is not yet total and areas of resistance still remain. We name as our first great task the final liberating of those Africans still dominated by foreign exploitation and control... We must make one final supreme effort, when so much has been won that the thrilling sense of achievement has brought us near satiation."**

Our liberty is meaningless unless all Africans are free...Our efforts as free men must be to establish new relationships, devoid of any resentment and hostility, restored to our belief and faith in ourselves as individuals, dealing on a basis of equality with other equally free peoples...There are issues on which we stand united and questions on which there is unanimity of opinion. Let us seize on these areas of agreement and exploit them to the fullest. Let us take action now, action which, while taking account of present realities, nonetheless constitutes clear and unmistakable progress along the course plotted out for us by destiny. ”

18th October 2007