



Ethio-Africa Diaspora Union Millennium Council
Jamaica Afro-Centric Commission
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“Leaders are people who raise the standard by which they judge themselves and by which they are willing to be judged. A love of high quality I n I must remember is essential in a leader”
– His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I.

August 17, 2007

MEDIA STATEMENT

The New Ethio-African Millennium 2000

Ethiopia - known for its ancient history and rich heritage - is the only country in the world that has preserved the ancient Ethiopian Orthodox faith-based Julian calendar, which is seven years behind the Gregorian calendar that is commonly used by the rest of the world. The Ethiopian calendar retains the old Egyptian system, whereby the year was divided into 12 months of thirty days each plus one additional month of five days (six days in leap years). Ethiopian dates, therefore, fall 7-8 years behind Western dates and have done so since early Christian times. This discrepancy results from differences between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

Both the United Nations and the African Union have recognised the Ethiopian millennium as a unique African occasion, dubbing it an "African Millennium." The theme of the official Ethiopian Millennium celebrations is “On the move to a prosperous Ethiopia by establishing a politically strong and economically dynamic society.” September 11, recently made into a day of tragedy for some, is also the start of the new Ethiopian Year 2000 and the new Ethio-African Millennium 2000, a time for all Africans and Afro-centric individuals to assess where we are coming from, where we are now and where we need to go, as Africans at home and abroad.

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.”

The global Rastafari community intends, as always, to join with Ethiopians/Africans, at home and abroad, to celebrate the new millennium and to set in motion an agenda for the greater unity, not only of the Rastafari community, but of the entire African family, on the continent and in the diaspora, under one centralized United States of Africa and, in that way, contribute to the unity and peace of all peoples of the world.

THE MILLENNIUM COUNCIL

On the anniversary of the 120th birthday of His Excellency the Right Honourable Marcus Mosiah Garvey (August 17) and the close of a millennium and the dawning of the New Ethio-African Millennium 2000, Thirteen Mansions/Organizations of the Rastafari community, representing a core majority, have come together to form a Millennium Council, called the ETHIO-AFRICA DIASPORA UNION MILLENNIUM COUNCIL (EADUMC). The Millennium Council, initially comprised of representatives from these thirteen Mansions, has formulated an Agenda, based on identified plans emanating out of decades of reasonings and gatherings, particularly the Global Rastafari Reasoning held at the University of the West Indies, Mona in 2003, and is mandated to organize and centralize :

- appropriate activities and events that support and educate the public on Ethiopia's celebration of the 2000 Millennium.
- a one year Millennium program to facilitate the aims and objectives of the RASTAFARI MILLENNIUM AGENDA.

a strategic plan to evolve the Millennium Council into a centralized, broad-based, all-inclusive and multi-dimensional Council that will represent the global Rastafari community on issues related to their culture and heritage, for the co-ordinated and unified agitation, protection and advancement of the Rastafari and African agenda, most notably REPATRIATION, REPARATION, FORMALIZATION OF THE ANCIENT COUNCIL, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT.

The Millennium Council's celebrations will commence on August 17 (Marcus Garvey's birthday) at Liberty Hall with the Launch of the Council and Millennium Agenda from 3 – 7 p.m. This will be followed by an All-Island Rally from August 29 to September 9, culminating in a Millennium Event to coincide with the Ethiopian Millennium Concert in Addis Ababa. The Council also has plans to send a delegation to represent and participate in the millennium celebrations in Ethiopia.

Additional objectives are to :

1. Identify and action community and cultural funding for Millennium Agenda.
2. Inform Government of Jamaica policy vis-à-vis the Rastafari community and Afrocentric issues and to inform and include Rastafari in international Trade/Cultural missions.
3. Establish Rastafari Headquarters in business districts islandwide and internationally.
4. Develop an Information technology driven communication entity that creates formal linkages to regional, international and continental individuals and organizations that are a part of and/or support the global Rastafari community.
5. Formalize with WIPO and UNESCO an ongoing forum to initiate and develop a Rastafari Indigenous/Intellectual property platform.
6. Facilitate the development of a Digital Rastafari Publishing House, for the publishing of Rastafari music and writings.
7. Establish a curriculum for the scientific and research-driven study of the Rastafari culture as a socio-economic, political and spiritual, faith-based, development model.
8. Upgrade the development of the Haile Selassie High School in St. Andrew, Jamaica
9. Reclaim and establish Rastafari Heritage Sites including Pinnacle.

THE RASTAFARI MILLENNIUM AGENDA

Top on the Rastafari Agenda has always been REPATRIATION to our Spiritual home – AFRICA. Coupled with this has been the issue of REPARATION, for which there is clear international precedent and which, in collaboration with other Afro-Centric individuals and organizations, we shall continue to agitate for, so that those displaced Africans in the West who want to return home, as well as those who desire to remain in the West, may do so viably.

Formalization of the Ancient Council

As with any other indigenous people, the fundamental tenets of the faith are preserved and regulated by the Ancient Council, comprising Elders of the faith. The Council aims to ensure that Rastafari moves forward into the new millennium guided by those fundamental principles and that due respect and care is maintained for our patriarchs and matriarchs who have contributed to the legacy of Rastafari over the past many years.

Intellectual Property And Economic Empowerment

Over the past years, successive governments, anthropologists, music producers, film-makers, artists, tourism operators, businessmen, academic researchers and many other individuals and organizations, have dealt informally with various individuals and groups amongst the Rastafari peoples, for cultural and financial gain, with none such accruing to the members of the faith as a collective. Rastafari symbols, artifacts, music, art and religious marks have been appropriated by many, with no acknowledgement or benefit for the Rastafari. This has resulted in losses to the Rastafari, as well as to much confusion, and has influenced the decision by the Rastafari leadership to take active steps to manage and control all aspects of their legacy and heritage.

The Millennium Council has no intention of obstructing appropriate or constructive engagement by any party. All proposals on governance, commerce, heritage and other related activities that will empower the Rastafari movement, will be provided with active encouragement and co-operation, as always.

However, it should be made clear to all members of the public, and in particular those that utilise or intend to utilise the Rastafari culture in the future, that the Millennium Council's purpose is to act as a collective and pro-active defender of the cultural sovereignty and intellectual property of the Rastafari, for the benefit of all Rastafari globally.

NON-RASTAFARI INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS THAT CONTINUE TO EXPLOIT RASTAFARI CULTURE, SYMBOLS, ARTIFACTS, MUSIC, ART AND RELIGIOUS MARKS AND FAIL TO RECOGNISE THE AUTHORITY OF THE RASTAFARI COMMUNITY TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE SAME AND TO BENEFIT FINANCIALLY FROM SAME, WILL BE REGARDED AS HOSTILE TO THE RASTAFARI COMMUNITY AND WILL BE TREATED ACCORDINGLY.

The **EADMUC** comprises the following Mansions/Organizations at present (but is open to and inviting the participation of and collaboration with all other Rastafari and Afrocentric organizations) :

Nyahbinghi Ancient Council/Theocracy Reign First Order of The Nyahbinghi
 12 Tribes of Israel
 School Of Vision
 Royal Ethiopian Judah Coptic Church
 Haile Selassie Theocracy Government
 Ethiopian Orthodox Church (Maxfield Avenue)
 Rastafari Centralization Organization (RCO)
 David House
 International Peacemakers
 Dreaded Nyahbinghi
 Camp David
 Ethiopian World Federation (EWF)
 Leonard Howell Foundation

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Links to Ethiopian Millennium websites :

- (1) www.ethiopia2000.com
- (2) www.ethiopianmillennium.com
- (3) www.ethiopianmillennium2000.com