

## Summary and Recommendations

### Workshop Defining New Approaches for Teaching the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery

5-7 November, 2010

We, participants to the Workshop on “Defining New Approaches for Teaching the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Slavery. Teaching African History and African Diaspora”, that was held in Toronto, Canada, from 5 to 7 of November 2010,

*Reaffirming* the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind,

*Deeply concerned that among the multiple forms of human trafficking that has been a real scourge for humanity, the deportation and enslavement of Africans was one of the greatest tragedies in the history of humanity.*

*Noting* that one of the consequences of this, which was marked by pain and violence, is the negation of the humanness of people of African descent, the denial of their history and the invisibility of their contribution to the building of contemporary societies.

*Recalling* that there is an historical urgency to break the silence surrounding this situation by engaging reforms in the curricula to enhance accessibility of all students to a more accurate understanding of the past and how it has shaped our present life. Also it is important to take into account the development of educational materials and teachers training in this subject.

*Recalling* also the recommendations formulated by the Inter American Conference held in Santiago Chile in 2000 and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action of 2001 as well as the outcome of the Durban Review Conference in 2009,

*Welcoming* national constitutional and legislative enactments adopted to recognize the slave trade and slavery as a Crime against Humanity such as the

**French Taubira Law<sup>1</sup>, the Senegalese Law<sup>2</sup> of February 2010, and also changes in favor of peoples of African descent in some Latin American countries, in particular the Salvador Declaration following the second encounter of Ibero-American ministers of culture for the adoption of an Agenda for People of African Descent in the Americas, held in Salvador de Bahia in Brazil from 26 to 28 May 2010,**

***Reaffirming* our attachment to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals,**

***Acknowledging* the outcome of scientific meetings which were held on the subject in the framework of the UNESCO Slave Route Project and which called upon UNESCO's Member States to incorporate the teaching on the slave trade and slavery, as well as the history of Africa and of Afro-descendants in school curricula,**

***Welcoming* the United Nations resolution proclaiming 2011 as International Year for People of African Descent<sup>3</sup>.**

**In light of the above stated, we recommend the following:**

- 1. The urgent need to develop educational strategies and actions to teach the history of slavery in different societies, and in particular the enslavement of Africans. By doing so, it is important to avoid reducing the history of Africans to the tragedy of slavery, and hence the necessity of teaching the history of Africa prior to the slave trade and colonization periods as well as demonstrating the contributions of Africans to the general progress of humanity. This history should include the contributions of Africans and their descendants in diaspora to the economic, political, social and cultural achievements of the societies of the modern world. Such recognition should consider the pain and suffering that was involved in forced labor, as well as the resistance and resilience of people who were thus oppressed. This knowledge should be introduced via elementary, secondary and higher educational programs.**
- 2. The necessity of creating international, continental and regional networks of scholars, researchers, teachers, community activists, as well as all members of civil society interested in the theme, to facilitate exchange and**

<sup>1</sup> Law n°2001-434 of May 21, 2001

<sup>2</sup> Law n° 09/2010 of 23 March 2010

<sup>3</sup> A/RES/64/169 of 18 December 2009

share research findings and also experiences in the teaching of African and African-descendent history as proposed in this document. This will enhance and enrich the use of creative methods and teaching techniques relating to the subject, the evaluation of the themes as implemented in different countries, and the free access to materials and success stories, with the intention of translation into different languages.

3. The development of worldwide curriculum analysis aimed at evaluating how African history, slavery, slave trade, African enslavement and the crucial contributions of African descendents are taught.
4. The development of new teaching approaches to respond to the new demand, taking stock of the experiences already gained in teaching and undertaking the training of teachers in African history, slave history, slave trade and enslavement.
5. The promotion of research about the social, cultural and psychological impacts of slavery in all societies as well as the diverse forms of racism ensuing from the legacy of slavery. The diverse historical, political, economic, social and cultural contexts of the population and the complex intergroup relations that resulted from the enslavement of Africans and people of African descent should also be taken into account.
6. We encourage governments and particularly the ministers of education and culture and other government bodies and national authorities to adopt urgent means to include in their elementary, secondary, vocational, and higher education curricula the history of the slave trade, slavery and the trans Atlantic trade of enslaved Africans, including its political, economic, social and cultural consequences, and also to promote diverse strategies and forms of dissemination of this knowledge, such as museums and other pertinent spaces.

Done in Toronto on November 7, 2010