



Mr. President,

On behalf of the delegation of India, I am, indeed, honoured to address the UN General Assembly on the 'Follow-up to the commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade'.

Two year ago, when the resolution on the commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade was adopted by consensus by the General Assembly, India was proud to co-sponsor it.

We are again happy to co-sponsor the follow up resolution that has been tabled by the CARICOM today.

In this connection, I would also like to welcome the Secretary General's report on the program of educational outreach on the transatlantic slave trade and slavery.

Mr. President,

Slavery has been one of the greatest scars on the history of nations. For a man to enslave another is truly a crime of the highest degree.

It is, therefore, imperative that we commemorate the great struggles and battles that have been fought to get rid of this scourge.

Mr. President,

A Greek historian had noted of ancient India, "[it] is remarkable in India that all Indians are free, and no Indian ...is a slave". However this changed after we were colonized and India was forced to endure a form of indentured servitude for nearly two hundred years. The agony of slavery and the degradation that it leads to is, therefore, well understood by us.

Mr. President,

The transatlantic slave trade ravaged African and Caribbean nations to satisfy the rapacious economic greed and exploitation of the colonizers. The effects of its violence and human suffering are still visible today.

Lest we forget, it is important that the international community must take at least the first step in the right direction by paying homage to the victims of slavery and slave trade and acknowledging the tragedy.

We are humbled to be part of the initiative to erect a memorial in honor of the various victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. The permanent memorial

will be a small commemoration for the millions of victims who suffered silently with no hope of freedom before they disappeared into the night.

This memorial will not only serve as a hallmark for us to pay our respect but will also be a reminder for the international community to raise awareness about relevant issues that surround the great evil of slavery of which the transatlantic slave trade was one of the most abhorrent manifestation.

We welcome the establishment of the Committee led by the Caribbean and African countries to oversee the permanent memorial project. In this context, we feel it will be befitting if UNESCO undertakes the task of launching the international design project for the permanent memorial.

We also recognise the importance of education of current and future generations about the history, causes and impact of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

We support the initiatives undertaken by the United Nations and recognise that the appointment of the Goodwill Ambassador is a step forward in spreading awareness about this important issue.

Mr. President,

We welcome the initiatives undertaken by States in reaffirming their commitment to implement paragraphs 101 and 102 of the Durban Declaration of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance aimed at countering the legacy of slavery and contributing to the restoration of the dignity of the victims of slavery and the slave trade.

Slavery and slave trade are symptomatic of evils that are still manifested in the form of racism and xenophobia. Our work at the United Nations will not be complete unless we can abolish all forms of slavery, including its present manifestations. This requires that we work together with a spirit of international cooperation to rid our world of these modern forms of slavery.

Thank you Mr. President.

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