



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Remarks by H. E. Ambassador Raymond Wolfe,
Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations
at the Ana Tzarev Gallery Event
Tuesday, 17 November 2009

Thank you Amir for the very warm words of introduction.

Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen

I am very pleased to participate in this our first major fundraising event for the initiative to erect a Permanent Memorial to honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, at the United Nations Headquarters here in New York.

It is appropriate that the theme for the current exhibit is "Grace of Africa" which is important in the context of our initiative. I take this opportunity to welcome you all to what we hope will be a delightful evening as you absorb the cultural depictions in the paintings and other art work exhibited for your viewing pleasure.

In particular, I would like to formally welcome on board the newly appointed Ambassador who is Permanent Observer for the African Union to the United Nations, H.E. Tete Antonio. I cannot overstate my sincere appreciation to the Member States of CARICOM and the African Union who remain resolute in their commitment to the initiative. So I welcome you and other colleague Ambassadors present.

Much has already been said about the horrific tragedy of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, so I won't re-hash a discussion on that this evening. Importantly though, we recognize the need to ensure that future generations do not endure the trauma and suffering of slavery. Hence, we intend to continue to advocate for heightened awareness globally. I therefore encourage all of you to spread the word about this initiative, which we hope will be realized within the next two years.

For those of you who were not present at the inaugural meeting of the Advisory board which we concluded just before this event, I would just like to add a few (very few) words on the work of the Committee so far. During the course of 2009, our focus has been on establishing the administrative framework for the Committee and resource mobilization primarily among Member States at the United Nations. This event is a



step in the direction of the latter and we intend to host other creative activities in support of the initiative over the next two years.

As some of you may already be aware, we established a Trust Fund for the permanent memorial earlier this year, which will be administered by the UNOP, and to which donations are welcomed. We are pleased with the appointment of noted businessman and philanthropist, Mr Russell Simmons as Goodwill Ambassador to assist with the dual objective of raising international awareness and resource mobilisation. As co-host for this evening's activities, we anticipate that he will also say a few words.

Importantly, we intend to host a high level "Grand Gala" benefit event in February 2010, in keeping with the celebration of "Black history month" and a number of other creative means of raising funds will continue to be held during 2010.

As fate would have it, yesterday was coincidentally recognized by the UN system as international day for tolerance. We felt that in that context, it was fitting that the General Assembly adopted this year's resolution on that anniversary when we sought to re-focus attention on the lingering consequences of the transatlantic slave trade which continue to impact the descendants of the victims today. I am pleased to report to you that 147 countries co-sponsored the resolution, which was adopted by consensus.

Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I encourage you to consider participating in this noble and worthwhile cause by purchasing any of these fine art pieces in support of the initiative.

I thank you for your attention.