



**PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ON BEHALF OF
THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)**



AT THE

**THIRD COMMITTEE GENERAL DISCUSSION ON
AGENDA ITEM 71:
'ELIMINATION OF RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA
AND RELATED INTOLERANCE'**

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FINAL TEXT

Chair,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the fourteen Member States of CARICOM.

CARICOM aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Cuba on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We thank the Secretary-General for the reports on this agenda item, and especially the report on the "Implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent" which focuses on reparatory justice for People of African descent and the need to address the ongoing impact of enslavement and colonialism.

Chair,

400 years of chattel enslavement breached a normative and existential principle of humanity which requires respect for the inherent dignity and personhood of all human beings. This period in global history caused the immense suffering of millions of African men, women and children who were forcibly removed from their ancestral homeland.

Indeed, every phase of transatlantic chattel slavery was characterized by atrocious and horrific treatment of the enslaved, and constituted wrongful acts that breach all civilized laws of

humanity. As transatlantic chattel slavery was supported throughout its duration by a well-organized and systemic trade in slaves, so too must the lingering injustice and immorality of these atrocities be met with an equally systemic response.

In the case of the countries that make up the Caribbean Community, it has been 189 years since the abolition of the slave trade in 1834 and 185 years since the abolition of slavery in 1838. To put this into perspective, the 400 years of enslavement of our forefathers is more than twice the length of time since they and their descendants have been emancipated.

As we approach 200 years since emancipation, it is disheartening to acknowledge that there is yet to be any full atonement for the wrongs committed. For our peoples, the length of time that has passed has not diminished the impact nor the memory of slavery. In fact, delayed atonement prevents us from closing an ugly chapter from which we need to heal and move on.

Psychological and generational trauma is the inevitable consequence of these atrocities, compounded by the manifestations of slavery in our daily lives in the form of structural underdevelopment and persistent poverty, among other deficiencies. The damage caused by chattel slavery is so deeply entrenched and pervasive that it cannot be made good by restitution or monetary compensation alone. Satisfaction must be given by the perpetrators and their descendants in the form of an acknowledgement of the barbaric acts, an expression of remorse,

or a formal apology. So long as there is no recognition of the wrongs committed and reparations made, the pages of that ugly chapter will remain open.

For this reason, CARICOM is calling on those who have taken some preliminary, if tentative, steps in this regard, to accelerate the pace at which they approach this open door. For those who have not yet made any steps, we urge you to seize the moment.

Chair,

As the end of the International Decade for People of African Descent fast approaches, and while the United Nations looks ahead to 2030 and the future beyond, it is CARICOM's fervent view that our shared commitment to achieve progress, prosperity and sustainability for all cannot be fulfilled until we definitively close the chapter on slavery and its legacies in our global history.

At this juncture, it is critical that we continue to build momentum towards more concrete action by promoting innovative thinking in the discourse on the dispensation of reparatory justice, taking into consideration the existing and emerging challenges of developing countries like those of our region. It is in this vein that CARICOM convened a panel discussion on the **“Pragmatic Advancements towards achieving Reparatory Justice”**, on the margins of the Second Session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent in May 2023.

Of the experiences and ideas shared during this engagement – including government, institutional and individual perspectives – there was a resounding recognition that reparatory justice as a necessary path to complete healing, restoration of dignity, and progress for people of African descent is not linear. In the broader context of the Permanent Forum, it was made clear that insufficient progress has been made to address racial injustices worldwide.

Indeed, increased political and personal will are required to move purposefully and confidently forward, in good faith, towards a common future. CARICOM therefore joins the call for an extension of the International Decade for People of African Descent to allow the space for further dialogue, rebuilding trust, and creating a foundation for sustainable action.

Chair,

The “Ark of Return”, located in the UN Plaza, is a constant, solemn reminder of our duty as Member States to **“acknowledge the tragedy; consider the legacy; lest we forget”**.

Indeed, history is replete with reports of the vicious and barbaric treatment of those who were enslaved in the Caribbean and the Americas. The blatant disregard for the humanity and dignity of Africans and their descendants – trampling over their identity, destruction of their culture, language, religion and families, loss of personal autonomy – shows humanity at its worst. Yet, ours is also a

history of formidable courage and resilience, as the enslaved emerged not just as survivors, but as victors, having seized the yokes of their destinies with bravery and aplomb, believing, as the Right Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey said, that, we could:

“... live today as to realize that [we] are masters of [y]our own destiny, masters of [y]our fate.”

It is with this in mind and in heart that we continue to pursue reparations and claim the destiny of prosperity our ancestors' great suffering and sacrifice earned for us.

Thank you.