



Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action
AFRICANS AND AFRICAN DESCENDANTS
April 28 - April 29, 2001

Special Thanks

Conference Organizers

Rev. Victor Ihueghian, Austria,
Association for Human Right and
Democracy in Africa

Chinedu Ene, United Kingdom,
Petadisi Community Organization

Conference Co-Chairs

Amani Olubanjo Buntu, Norway
African Youth in Norway

Sithabile Mathe, Norway
African Youth in Norway

Information Coordinator

Amani Olubanjo Buntu, Norway,
African Youth in Norway

Drafting Committee

Annie Davies, Nigeria
Development Information Network

Vernellia Randall, (Drafting Coordinator), USA
The University of Dayton,

Marian Douglas, Macedonia,

Cikiah Thomas, Canada
African Canadian Legal Clinic,

Bahati Milderred Jawara, USA
Citizens For Environmental Justice,

Eleonora Wiedenroth, Germany
Initiative of Black People in Germany

Mutombo Kanyana, Switzerland
Groupe de Réflexion et d'Action Contre le
Racisme, Anti-noir (Forum suisse contre le
Racisme),

**Special Recognition to
The University of Dayton
Dayton, OH, USA
For the Translations and the Printing**

PREAMBLE:

Africans and African descendants share a common historical and cultural heritage. The richness of African history has been distorted, and the African cultural identity ridiculed by many. As people of Africa we want to revive the presentation of African history and promote pride in our African identity, as well as celebrating the diversity of our peoples. Africans and African descendants also share the common history of slave trade, slavery, and colonization, and a common experience of anti-black racism. We recognise that people of African descent live on all world continents, although they have been renamed, suppressed and marginalised. All over the world, Africans continue to be subjected to racism, discrimination and intolerance. It is the complexity of these common roots and experiences that bind us together as a community; and as a community we are committed to:

¹ having the world recognize and provide reparation for the BLACK HOLOCAUSTS (SLAVERY AND COLONIZATION);

²eliminating anti-black racism every where it occurs, in any part of the World; and

³restoring our motherland, Africa, to its full glory.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE BLACK HOLOCAUSTS (SLAVERY AND COLONIZATION)

WHEREAS, African Slave Trade and Slavery exploited the motherland of Africa; Forced the brutal displacement or removal of over one hundred million of its people (the largest forced migration in history); Directly caused the death of millions Africans; Destroyed African civilizations which were among the most advanced societies of the world; Impoverished African economies which had prospered up to that time; and launched a period of African under-development and marginalization which continues to this day - five hundred years later;

WHEREAS, Africa was dismembered and divided among European powers, which created Western monopolies for the continued exploitation of vital African natural resource riches for Western industries; and

WHEREAS, African Slavery was imposed by and for the benefit of major European and American states to satisfy their appetites for free labour; and the exploitation of Africans and African descendants by these States continued unabated for over three hundred years; and

WHEREAS, After the Slave Trade, Africa was subjected to another form of enslavement, namely, Colonization in which the exploitation of Africa's rich natural resource heritage continued unabated by the European powers; and,

ELIMINATING ANTI-BLACK RACISM

WHEREAS, Africans and African descendants are commonly victims of anti-Black racism and of multiple forms of overt and covert discrimination. The most pernicious are institutional, systemic, structural and cultural discrimination. The impact of institutional, structural and cultural racism is felt in every aspect of life: housing, employment, education, health, civil and criminal justice, economic development. Many of these policies and practices are perpetrated by the states themselves; and,

WHEREAS, Anti-Black racism (both past and present) is fundamentally rooted in white supremacist ideology and the economic profits of the colonial and neo-colonial oppressors; and

WHEREAS, Anti-black racism cannot be eradicated without the elimination of social ghettoization and demonization of Africans and African descendants; and

WHEREAS, Many Africans and African descendants suffer from multi-oppressions structured around class, gender, disability, immigrant status and sexuality. These forms of oppression must be eliminated; and,

WHEREAS, African and African descendant women play, and have always played, a fundamental role in the development and maintenance of our families, peoples, communities and nations, even though historically they have faced the worst conditions, the greatest marginalization and systematic exclusion. Women and men, and children and youth of both genders are equal and must be treated so; and,

WHEREAS, Racism is a major health determinant. Historical and current discrimination, as well as colonial and neo-colonial policies against Africans and African descendants have resulted in Africans and African descendants having significantly lower health status, less or no access to health care and poorer quality health care;

WHEREAS, AIDS represents a human genocide, disproportionately victimizing African people, both on the continent and in the Diaspora and,

WHEREAS, Media and new technologies (including the internet) play a significant role in the maintenance of structural and cultural anti-black racism; and,

WHEREAS, Environmental racism refers to any government, military, industry or other institution's action, or failure to act, which has a disproportionate negative environmental impact on Africans and African descendants, on Indigenous peoples, Latino, Asian, migrant or other ethnic groups or the places where they live. Environmental racism, although not new, is a recent example of the historical double standard as to what is acceptable in certain communities, villages or cities and not in others. The mobility of corporations has made it possible for them to seek the greatest profit, the least government and environmental regulations and the best tax incentives, anywhere in the world. Natural resource extraction techniques, chemical uses and disposal of wastes unacceptable in white communities are routinely employed in African descendants communities; and,

WHEREAS, Africans and African descendants are victims of grave discriminatory treatment in the legal and judicial processes as well as police procedures (specifically police brutality). This includes the framing up of accusations against Africans and African descendants, the duration of prison sentences, the inhuman state of prisons and, where it exists, the death penalty which particularly affects Africans and African descendants; and,

WHEREAS, To ensure the future of all Africans, special attention must be given to protecting and empowering African indigenous peoples, language groups and cultures both inside and outside the African continent; and,

RESTORING AFRICA, THE MOTHERLAND

WHEREAS, The development of Africa has been greatly impeded by the global imbalances in power created by slavery, colonialism, and other forms of exploitation and is maintained and extended today by neo-colonial policies and practices including the pillage of the human and material resources of Africa and the draining of its financial resources by foreign debt services; and,

Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action

AFRICANS AND AFRICAN DESCENDANTS

April 28 - April 29, 2001

Page 3 of 6

WHEREAS, Current day slavery has just taken other forms and the right to life and freedom of African people is being regularly violated with complete indifference in Western countries and by African dictators who are very often supported and protected by Western countries; and,

WHEREAS, The world major powers are plundering the African continent through a "debt" which has already been paid off three times over and to which the African states assign more than 50% of their national budgets; and,

WHEREAS, To ensure total control over the enslaved Africans and African descendants, the Western slaveholding states resorted to systematic violence, brain-washing, falsifying and negating African history and values while enhancing Western history and values in a policy of cultural imperialism; and,

Whereas, Africans and African descendants have significantly contributed to world history, their achievements need to be re-assessed within the context of the significant positive contributions made by Africa culture, Africans and African descendants; and,

WHEREAS, In a world where people are valued and devalued according to a given level of economic development, it is essential that the economic development of Africa be promoted as a means of fighting anti-black racism; and

NOW, THEREFORE,

AFRICANS AND AFRICAN DESCENDANTS from across the world, gathered in Vienna, Austria, in unity and solidarity born of the common African root, recognition of sharing a common history - that of the African Slave Trade, Slavery, and Colonialization - and a continuing common experience of anti-Black racism, which root, history and experience bind us as a unique community; and

RESPECTFUL OF THE MEMORY OF OUR ANCESTORS and the ultimate sacrifice which they paid, and mindful that this memory must never be forgotten; and

AS A COMMUNITY, COMMITTED to the elimination anti-Black racism wherever it occurs in the World; and

COGNIZANT OF THE ENORMITY of the depredations of the Black Holocausts (Slavery and Colonialization) and the significance of these historical epochs for the world; and,

IN FRATERNITY WITH ALL PEOPLES imbued with a sense of genuine respect for the rights of people of all races, ethnicities and creeds; and,

IN ABHORRENCE OF ALL FORMS OF AFRICAN SLAVERY AND THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE (trans-Atlantic, trans-Saharan and trans-Indian Ocean) and the Colonization of Africa;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Assembly:

BLACK HOLOCAUSTS (SLAVERY AND COLONIZATION)

CONDEMNNS AFRICAN SLAVERY in all its manifestations (trans-Atlantic, trans-Saharan and trans-Indian Ocean) and calls on the United Nations and the governments of the World to do likewise;

DECLARES AFRICAN SLAVERY AND COLONIZATION and the attendant unprecedented genocide and systematic violations of human rights and the rights of Africans and African descendant People, as Crimes Against Humanity;

CALLS, SPECIFICALLY, ON former European countries and American slave-holding States and all those who benefitted from the slave trade and colonization of Africa to unconditionally and separately adopt a Declaration of recognition of the Black Holocausts (Slave Trade / Slavery and Colonization) as Crimes Against Humanity;

CALLS, SPECIFICALLY, ON former European and American slave-holding States and all those who benefitted from the slave trade and colonization of Africans to unconditionally and separately adopt a Declaration which asks for forgiveness for the exactions committed during the Slave Trade / Slavery and Colonization and for their lasting effects on the Africans and African Descendants, in psychological spheres as well as on economical, social, political and cultural ones;

CALLS ON THE UNITED NATIONS AND GOVERNMENTS of the World to make it an offence, punishable by law, for anyone to deny the existence of the Black Holocausts (African Slave Trade / Slavery and Colonization);

CALLS ON FORMER EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN SLAVE-HOLDING STATES and all those who benefitted from the slave trade and colonization of Africans to acknowledge the principle of reparations for the cultural, demographic, economic, political, social and moral wrongs of the Slave Trade / Slavery and Colonization and that the Africans and African descendants victims of the Slave Trade / Slavery and Colonization reserve the right to determine the form and manner of reparations; and,

DEMAND THAT THE Governments of the World condemn the trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean slave trade which, like the trans-Atlantic slave trade, brought serious damages to Africa . Unlike the trans-Atlantic slave trade, vestiges of the trans-Saharan slave trade continues this day unabated (specifically in Mauritania and Sudan); and, call on the governments of Mauritania and Sudan to recognize this problem and to eradicate it completely.

CALL on the German and Italian Government to ask for forgiveness for the exactions and genocide committed during the World War by the Nazis and Fascist against Africans and African descendants; recognizing that African and African descendant victims of Nazism have the same right to compensatory measures as Jews or Romas; and,

CALLS ON STATES, SURVIVING CORPORATE INTERESTS, CHURCHES AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES involved in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the resulting slavery and colonization to acknowledge their wrongdoings and accept the principle of restitution and that the Africans and African descendants victims of the Slave Trade / Slavery and Colonization reserve the right to determine the form and manner of reparations; and,

ELIMINATING ANTI-BLACK RACISM

DEMANDS THAT GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS recognize anti-Black racism as a form of racism which has its own specificity in the same way as anti-Semitism and to be differentiated from all other forms of racism, discrimination and intolerance; and,

CALLS ON GOVERNMENTS AND OTHERS TO condemn any political, economic or social structure that has the effect of promoting, encouraging, or facilitating anti-Black racism; and,

DEMAND THAT States eliminate racial disparities in education, housing, economic development, health and health care, environment, civil and criminal justice; and,

DEMAND THAT States adopt effective mechanisms for monitoring and eliminating all forms of overt and covert racial discrimination, placing particular emphasis on institutional and structural anti-Black racism in education, housing, economic development, health and health care, environment, civil and criminal justice; and,

CALL ON States, and United Nations organizations (such as World Health Organization) to routinely and systematically collect race, gender and socio-economic class data related to education, housing, economic development, health and health care, environment, civil and criminal justice; and,

DEMAND THAT STATES stop the criminalization of blackness immediately.

REQUEST THAT a representative of the Africans and African Descendants Caucus be allowed to address the World Conference against Racism, Racial discrimination Xenophobia and Related Forms of Intolerance in South Africa; and,

DEMAND THAT ALL ORGANIZATIONS (multilateral, financial, development and human rights) formulate diagnostic indicators of the impact of their policies and programs on African and African descendant communities; and,

DEMAND THAT States, and the international community, develop effective anti-discrimination laws which provide an adequate institutional framework for redress that is specific to eliminating institutional and structural anti-Black discrimination (both overt and covert); and,

URGE states to institute educational steps to combat racism including challenging racist language and eradication of words and terms with a racist content especially when used by authorities; and adopting a prohibition against racist documents particularly books for children which convey a depreciative image of Africans and African Descendants; and,

CALL on civil society groups to help develop advocacy strategies that link environmental issues (including environmental racism) to human rights; and Governments adopt and enforce legislation and policies that protect society from environmental racism; and,

CALL on the United Nations to support a world institute dedicated to research, fact finding and resource networking for Africans, African descendants and related issues. The research should serve to bridge the gap between the past, by presenting African history according to credible African resources, the present, by monitoring the overall life conditions of Africans and African descendants worldwide and the future, by implementing its' research in informal and formal education to change attitudes, perceptions and promote understanding; and,

REQUEST the media of the world and providers of Internet services to implement initiatives for increasing public awareness of anti-racist and tolerant behavior towards Africans and promote a positive and valorizing image of Africans; and,

URGE States and organizations to give special attention to adolescents and young people of African descent in terms of empowerment, training, mentoring and possibilities to exercise responsibilities; Attention must be given to activities promoting a healthy and balanced African identity for children and youth; Youth participation must be secured on national and international levels of political decision making; and,

URGE the international community to take practical steps to understand the political nature of the AIDS epidemic and to improve prevention strategies, testing material, access to medicines and care for those infected with AIDS; and,

CALLS ON AFRICANS AND AFRICAN DESCENDANTS to recognize that the struggle against anti-black racism is inevitably linked with the struggle against poverty, racism against others, imperialism, globalization and war. Africans and African descendants express solidarity with other peoples who are similarly oppressed and exploited; and,

RESTORING AFRICA, THE MOTHERLAND

CALL ON AFRICANS AND AFRICAN DESCENDANTS TO END conflicts based on ethnic divisions which is tearing the African continent apart through ethnic genocide, ethnic cleansing and ethnic culture war; the struggle against racism must go hand in hand with struggle against negative ethnicity in Africa; and, and

CALL ON AFRICAN NATIONS to take legal action and give priority to the equitable redistribution of stolen, possessed and occupied land on the continent; and call on the international community to support such actions; and,

CALL on African governments to adopt policies to grant all Africans and African descendants the possibility to return home and settle without limitations or discrimination; and,

DEMAND that European, American and other governments repatriate funds stolen from African countries/people and stored in European and American banks to the African countries of their origin; and,

URGE the debt-holding countries to take practical steps toward the cancellation of the "debt" of African States; and,

DEMAND THAT THE MANY ARTEFACTS AND ANTIQUITIES of African civilization which have been stolen or taken out of the country without permission be returned or that the countries from which these antiquities were taken be compensated; and,

DEMAND THAT THE TRAFFICKING OF AFRICAN AND AFRICAN DESCENDANT women, children and youth for sex, and for forced labour and various forms of enslavement be stopped in both locations receiving victims of trafficking, and in locations of origin. International, local/national, and other media are urged to continue and increase their much-needed work of reporting on these crimes; and,

CALL ON AFRICANS AND AFRICAN DESCENDANTS to urgently free themselves from slave and colonial mentality and attitudes. The rich African cultural heritage at our disposal serve as the first step in a real liberation and renaissance of Africa and its people all over the World.