An International Day of Remembrance

In 2007, the UN General Assembly marked the bicentennial of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, and created an annual observance devoted to remembering slavery and its victims. Over a period of more than 400 years, it is estimated that between 15 and 20 million Africans were uprooted from their homes and sold as slaves, a tragedy of immense scope and human suffering.

Honouring the Heroes, Resisters and Survivors

The International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade is observed every year on 25 March. This year’s theme is “Honouring the Heroes, Resisters and Survivors”. Activities are carried out throughout the year, to recognize those who fought against slavery in the past as well as those who fought and continue to fight against the lingering consequences of bigotry, racism and prejudice that have plagued our societies.

Why should we talk about the Transatlantic Slave Trade today?

Raising awareness about the transatlantic slave trade is also an occasion to cast a light on the impact it has had on present-day society. Many people of colour today, including youth, are still profoundly affected by the hidden remnants of slavery, manifested through bias, hatred, prejudice and intolerance. Knowing about the history of slavery, and the brave individuals who rose up against it, can provide a valuable perspective and be a source of pride and motivation in overcoming current day challenges.

Remembering Slavery – A Permanent Memorial at UN Headquarters

An important initiative underway is to erect a permanent memorial at United Nations Headquarters to remind the world about the millions of Africans who were violently removed from their homelands and forced into slavery. It is not meant to be merely a silent monument, but one that speaks to the legacy of the past while also making people reflect about prejudice and racial discrimination in today’s world. The countries of Africa and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), under the leadership of Jamaica, have taken the initiative in working on the permanent memorial with voluntary financial contributions from Governments, individuals, organizations and the private sector. For an easy way to give, go to www.unslaverymemorial.org/concert.
Third World Band • Jamaica
The ten-time Grammy nominated group is one of the most famous reggae groups in the world. With 23 albums to their name, Third World Band has performed in scores of countries on every continent. The group has worked with top artists such as Bob Marley and the Wailers, Stevie Wonder and the Jackson Five.

Mbaye Dieye Faye and Sing Sing Rhythm • Senegal
Well known for being Youssou N'Dour's bandleader, Mbaye Dieye Faye is an internationally famous singer and musician in his own right and is arguably one of the best percussionists in his country. Mbaye Dieye Faye and his group play a genre of music indigenous to Senegal called Mbalax, combining an exciting blend of traditional group percussion and synchronized dancing.

Chen Lo and the Lo Frequency Band • USA
Chen Lo and the Lo Frequency is a contemporary hip-hop band that fuses live instrumentation with electronic hip hop elements. They recently toured 10 different countries, performing and conducting workshops sponsored by the US State Department.

Rachelle Jeanty • Haiti, Canada
An accomplished singer, recording artist and backing vocalist for major Francophone acts, she toured the world for two years with superstar Celine Dion. Nominated two years in a row as Best Soul/R&B Francophone artist and Francophone Revelation of the Year at the SOBRA Awards, she is Winner of the Rythme FM radio contest.

April Sutton • USA
An award-winning Television Broadcast Pioneer in Hollywood, became the youngest Inductee to the Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 1993 for outstanding television reports on Black Entertainment Television (BET) Network. Ms. Sutton has received many honors for her television work in Hollywood as the Producer and Host of the “April in Hollywood”.

Honouring the HEROES, RESISTERS and SURVIVORS