U N I T E D N A T I O N S  N A T I O N S U N I E S

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE VICTIMS OF SLAVERY AND THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE**

**25 March 2016**

Each year on this day, the United Nations honours the memory of millions of Africans forcibly removed from their families and homelands over hundreds of years.

The International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade also shines a spotlight on prevailing racism and prejudice today.

It is imperative that we work together for equal opportunity, justice and sustainable development for people of African descent. That is why the United Nations Remember Slavery Programme is reaching out to young and old alike to create awareness, promote understanding and change attitudes.

The theme of this year’s observance is “Remember Slavery: Celebrating the Heritage and Culture of the African Diaspora and its Roots”.

The dynamic culture and traditions of Africa continue to enrich life in the countries that were once involved in the Transatlantic slave trade.

Africa’s influence and legacy are plain to see in the vibrant music, bold art, rich foods and inspiring literature that infuse modern culture. Less recognized, perhaps, are the contributions that the people of the African diaspora have made to medicine, science, government and general leadership in society.

Tested to the limits of their spirit and endurance, slaves from Africa left their descendants a wide range of invaluable assets, including fortitude, courage, strength, tolerance, patience and compassion. On this Day, let us renew our resolve to fight racism and celebrate the heritage of Africa that enhances societies around the world today.