

The Shashemene Declaration

THE MAKING OF AFRICA WILL NOT WAIT

'We stand today on the stage of world affairs, before the audience of world opinion. We have come together to assert our role in the direction of world affairs and to discharge our duty on [this] great continent ... Africa is today at mid-course in transition from the Africa of yesterday to the Africa of tomorrow. Even as we stand here, we move from the past into the future. The task on which we have embarked, the making of Africa will not wait. We must act, to shape and mold the future and leave our imprint on events as they slip past into history' (HIM Haile Selassie I, May 24, 1963).

1. We, the representatives of Rastafari communities and organizations from Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, Brazil, Seychelles, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the Caribbean,
2. Gathered in Shashemene, Ethiopia for the inaugural All Africa Rastafari Gathering on November 1-7, 2017,
3. Determined to advance the goals of cultural sovereignty, economic freedom and cultural industry in a creative economy;
4. Reflecting the principles of international morality and practical application of the Rastafari Creed in all future actions and programs;
5. Recognizing the necessity of the Rastafari Nation, to realize its potential for development through intra-Africa trade;
6. Acknowledging the diversity of Rastafari and the role of Rastafari in the African Renaissance, creating Africa's present and her sustainable future;
7. Establishing a network of Rastafari skilled and professional persons, traders, intellectuals and consultants, collectively forging a new path to self-reliance and economic empowerment.

We reaffirm our commitment to:

- Continuity of the Gathering as an annual event, with Ethiopia determined the best venue for the second All Africa Rastafari Gathering in November 2018.
- Pursuit of strengthened Rastafari representation in the relevant African Union structures and processes
- Creation and maintenance of a data base of Rastafari skilled and professional persons, traders, intellectuals, and consultants
- Support for the repatriated Rastafari community in Shashemene Ethiopia and elsewhere in the continent in the quest for legal status and citizenship in Africa
- Advocacy for the right of Rastafari communities to enjoy, along with the wider community, the right to a clean and healthy environment
- Responsible and effective use of social media in functioning the Rastafari intra-Africa trade network

We are convinced that:

Unity within the Rastafari Nation is an essential element of African unity.

Freedom of movement for Africans in Africa is an urgent requirement for boosting intra-Africa trade.

Youth empowerment is a critical ingredient of sustainable development.

African-centered education must be more agriculturally inclined and reflect the importance of Rastafari in shaping the direction of a self-reliant Rastafari Nation and a self-determined Africa.

Holistic health and wellness are of paramount importance, and related products and services must be made accessible to the Rastafari Nation in a way that prioritizes the principles of Rastafari lividity.

Access the services of the Haile Selassie I Foundation for Law and Society to defend the rights of the Rastafari Nation and develop legislature to support the interests of Rastafari.

We are determined to:

Safeguard the Rastafari way of life for members of the community who are incarcerated.

Protect and promote the rights of women, children, elders and other vulnerable groups.

Press for membership of the African Diaspora as the 6th Region of the African Union.

Support Rastafari organization and centralization initiatives with regard to repatriation of from African Diaspora throughout the African continent.

Adopt ways and means of self-financing the work involved in the annual organization of the All Africa Rastafari Gathering, exploring the cooperative credit union as a means of financing business enterprises.

Establish a range of financing measures including an Afrikan Reparations Fund to engage in the self-repair aspect of reparations.

Stand in solidarity with the Rastafari community of Shashemene and other repatriated Rastafari individual communities in Africa in the quest for legal status and citizenship in Africa.

We urge the African Union, regional and international financial institutions, other relevant regional and international institutions as well as non-government organizations, with full respect for their autonomy, and all sectors of civil society, in cooperation with governments, to fully commit themselves and contribute to the implementation of this declaration.

We hereby adopt this declaration and commit ourselves as Rastafari representatives to ensure that the examples of Haile Selassie I and Empress Menen, infused with the universal principle of Ubuntu, be reflected in all our policies, plans, programs and trading arrangements.

‘So long as the spirit of Africa prevails and stirs within us, so long as we continue to think and work and act within the African context which we have created, imbued by the African atmosphere, which surrounds and pervades us, we are confident that the goals we seek shall be attained. We have created this spirit; it is our child’ (Haile Selassie I on Unity and Brotherhood).

Dated this 7th day of November, 2017