

Manifesto

*for the eradication
of racial discrimination*



Halifax Declaration

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Manifesto for the Eradication of Racial Discrimination, “Halifax Declaration”

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Cover and back cover: Sankofa bird carved from a local species of wood called
Osele by artisans from the carving village of Aburi, in the eastern region of
Ghana, West Africa, under the direction of Wilson and Emelia Aboagye.

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Foreword

The *Manifesto for the Eradication of Racial Discrimination*, “Halifax Declaration” draws on the spirit of the Sankofa bird, an ancient myth deeply rooted in the cultures of West Africa, and Ghana in particular.

The Sankofa bird expresses wisdom as profound as it is vital: we must remember and examine the past, in order to build the future. The bird soars and flies across the entire African continent, reaching far beyond. The bird has become universally welcomed under the sky, in particular in places all over the planet where the African diaspora has taken root.

Etymology is a fascinating science, for it tells the story not only of words, but also of the peoples who forged them. The term “Sankofa” comes from an Akan language, part of the Kwa family of languages. “San” means to turn around, “ko” means to go, and “fa” means to seize, or to take. Hence the idea of turning around to better grasp.

The Sankofa bird, its head turned back, carefully surveys the path it has travelled. All the while, the bird moves confidently forward, holding a precious egg in his beak.

The egg it holds remains fragile. It symbolizes a promise, a wealth of possibilities, especially that of being reborn from the trials of the past.

We must draw lessons from history, with focal points as reference and landmarks that help us set our sights in the right direction.

And that is why the myth of the Sankofa bird resonates with such force and relevance within contemporary movements for truth, justice and reconciliation. It is often evoked to help frame discussions in Africa and across African diasporas to better assess, for example, the devastating experience of colonial conquests, the dehumanization, the massive and destructuring impact of dispossession inflicted on African nations by European Empires, the transatlantic slave trade involving tens of millions of men, women and children, their resistance and struggles to regain their freedom, dignity and humanity, the long march to overcome the insidious and recurrent racism that, to this day, remains so distressing for people of African descent.

The term “Afrodescendant” denotes individuals and communities whose ancestors predominantly hailed from sub-Saharan Africa, forming a global diaspora.

Approximately 200 million people of African descent reside in the Americas, with millions more living in diverse regions outside Africa.

“Afrodescendant” often replaces “Black”, as it transcends mere skin pigmentation. It acknowledges a rich history and heritage, rooted in a multitude of African origins. These roots, like rhizomes, stretch far and wide, intertwining with numerous cultural fusions, thereby enriching and sustaining vibrant living cultures.

In the *Manifesto for the Eradication of Racial Discrimination*, “Halifax Declaration”, designations such as Canadians of “African descent”, “Afrodescendants”, “Blacks” or “from Black communities” are used interchangeably.

By declaring the International Decade for People of African Descent, the United Nations urgently calls on the world to recognize and address the grave injustices and development challenges stemming from one of history's most egregious atrocities. Such barbarity was fuelled by the European ideology of white racial supremacy over all others, used to rationalize centuries of exploitation, the repercussions of which continue to be dramatically felt around the globe.

Canada is not exempt, as the statistics and evidence show. Communities of African descent, alongside Indigenous communities, are among the most impoverished, excluded, and marginalized groups in the country. They not only endure racial profiling but also face distressingly high rates of police violence and discrimination in accessing justice. These communities experience multifaceted, aggravated, and intersecting forms of discrimination.

This manifesto acknowledges these harsh realities, urging an end to their denial. To eradicate racism, it emphasizes the necessity to comprehend its roots, to give due consideration to the communities whose present and future such discrimination hinders, and above all to respect and leverage their initiatives and proposals for addressing the untenable conditions they endure.

—Michaëlle Jean

PREAMBLE

Recognition. Justice. Development.

Strongly endorsed by Black communities, organizations and institutions across Canada, the *Manifesto for the Eradication of Racial Discrimination* emanates from a series of National Black Canadians Summits held as part of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024) proclaimed by the United Nations.

Also known as the “Halifax Declaration”, this Manifesto is based on the Decade’s three flagship objectives—Recognition, Justice, Development.

“We, Canadians of African descent, spanning all generations and regions of the country, convened here at the National Black Canadians Summit in Halifax in 2022, embrace as our own the three pillar objectives of the UN International Decade for People of African Descent: Recognition! Justice! Development!

These interconnected demands we vow to assert vigorously, propagate broadly, and defend relentlessly. They are crucial to the liberation of all oppressed peoples and are integral to the social vision we champion—a vision rooted in universal humanism, prevailing over exploitation, discrimination, hatred, and exclusion. We understand that the absence of recognition inevitably leads to a deficit of justice, severely impeding development and, consequently, progress—the possibility of shared prosperity in a context of peace, social harmony, respect, equity, and diversity.

None of the calls in the Halifax Declaration of the National Black Canadians Summit are meant to benefit only ourselves. Ours is a righteous struggle for the common good. We seek equal rights for all, without exceptions or exclusions.

We want to believe in the possibilities of a better world, where the earth is restored in all its splendour, honoured and protected as the most sacred heritage, along with every living species it nurtures.

We want to believe that history can be healed, that we can reimagine the failed encounters between civilizations, celebrate the rich tapestry of our diverse cultures with a view to resuming and renewing through dialogue the discoveries that the powers that be, obsessed with conquest and predation, prevented.

We want to believe in collective responsibility, in a unified determination to think and act differently, grounded in the full, profound understanding that we all share the same humanity.

We want to believe in dreams yet to be fulfilled, in a new reality born of all our energies pulled together.

The journey is long, with trials and obstacles, but the movement is unstoppable.

We will not back down.”

— Halifax, July 31, 2022

FIRST PILLAR

1. Recognition

- 1.1. We, Canadians of African descent, stand in full recognition of, and in solidarity with, the Indigenous peoples who have lived on this vast continent for millennia. We reject the Doctrine of Discovery, which implies that these lands were “empty” and “ownerless.” It is a pretence that allowed predatory European explorers and colonizers who landed on these coasts and territories—which they named the Americas and called the New World—to conquer, seize and dispossess these lands outright from all the Indigenous Nations who in fact, as we recognize, never ceded them.

“ In 2021, 1.5 million people in Canada reported being Black. The Black population now accounts for 4.3% of Canada’s total population and 16.1% of the racialized population.¹

- 1.2. We believe it is imperative to work in solidarity with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. Just as the Indigenous nations of the Americas were despoiled by European empires, so too were our ancestors in Africa. The populations of the African Nations were mercilessly deprived of their land, language, culture, their rights, and basic humanity. We, who have endured the same cruel experiences and are still dealing with the repercussions and trauma, call for full acknowledgement of the fact that people of African origin have also lived on this continent since colonization began.
- 1.3. We urge recognition of the fact that in Canada, as elsewhere in the Americas, Indigenous peoples and those deported from Africa have for centuries been subjected to the worst violence, enslavement, exploitation, degradation, and had their lives and culture massacred.
- 1.4. We urge recognition of the fact that colonization was an abhorrent crime against humanity from the outset, and that such acknowledgement, seeking to decolonize our institutions, systems and laws, is both beneficial and necessary.

¹ Statistics Canada. (2023) *Black History Month 2023...by the numbers*. https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/dai/smr08/2023/smr08_270.

- 1.5. We urge recognition of the fact that we do not emerge unscathed from centuries of domination and utter dehumanization dictated by the ideology of the supremacy of the white race. The lingering effects of this racism continue to fuel hatred, prejudice, and exclusion. As a result, we still endure its devastating repercussions and injustices, coupled with the denial of our history, existence, condition, and contribution to global development.
- 1.6. We assert that without this recognition, we will continue to face exploitation, squalor, destitution, displacement and erasure. Without this recognition, our land titles will persistently be denied, and our heritage sites, along with numerous neighbourhoods, will face destruction, evidenced by the destruction of Africville in Halifax, Nova Scotia; Hogan's Alley in Vancouver, British Columbia; and Little Burgundy in Montreal, Quebec. Without this recognition, we will perpetually face impoverishment and be threatened by the relentless gentrification of numerous cities, a consequence of prohibitive housing costs. Without this recognition, we will continually be afflicted by unsanitary conditions, environmental racism, and, due to a lack of access to resources, a forced exodus from the rural communities where we have resided for generations.
- 1.7. We call for the urgent recognition of the need for a national and international strategy to raise awareness and strive towards the eradication of racism, supported by data collected across all areas, all sectors of activity and life. This will enable a better understanding of the conditions faced by people of African descent in Canada and elsewhere. We advocate for the creation and long-term funding of specific research grants and programs to achieve this goal. All research and data collection must be conducted through an ethical process, and determined in collaboration with Black communities. Nothing about us should be done without us, without our participation.

- 1.8. We call for broad recognition, commemoration and celebration of our numerous contributions, which never ceased to be consistently remarkable in the economic, social, political, cultural, and spiritual realms, as well as in the advancement of ideas, knowledge, and skills across all human endeavours.
- 1.9. We, Canadians of African descent, demand to be recognized as a distinct population, in its plurality and rich diversity. A people cannot exist without the full acknowledgement of their presence and multifaceted realities. Our history must be taught, communicated, understood and appreciated in just and fair ways. For too long, our history was defined by the very forces that confiscated our lives, subjected us to contemptuous, even degrading stereotypes and misrepresentations.
- 1.10. In particular, we request that careful consideration be given to the legitimate demands of African Nova Scotians for the formal recognition of Nova Scotia as a site where lucrative activities related to the transatlantic slave trade occurred. This trade involved the capture and sale of African women, men, and children as slaves. Accordingly, we advocate for the enactment of special legislation that recognizes Nova Scotia as the birthplace of the African presence in Canada.
- 1.11. We call for a comprehensive examination and review of the impacts of the colonial legacy, including the erasure of our presence, our history, our realities, and our contributions, in the curricula of Canada's educational institutions, encompassing elementary to high school, as well as college and university levels. Equal attention should be paid in cultural spaces, such as museums and their programming. This attention should extend to mass and specialized media, including newsrooms and editorial offices, and also be reflected in the design and management of social media platforms.
- 1.12. We also advocate for the promotion of greater diversity and inclusion in teaching professions, within every educational and research sector, and throughout all forms of media and broadcasting, encompassing local and national, public and private entities.

- 1.13. We urge managers and decision-makers of social media networks to ethically acknowledge and embrace their responsibility to counteract hate speech and the spread and entrenchment of racist prejudice. It is imperative that they ensure greater diversity of ideas and perspectives by genuinely including professionals of African descent in their teams. This inclusion should span all levels, encompassing decision-making, technical, and production roles, as well as in the selection of content and individuals invited to contribute across all areas and subjects covered, without distinction.
- 1.14. For greater recognition, we advocate for genuine support and substantial investment in the development of media groups and production companies founded or managed by individuals from Black communities, including young people. This would enable our realities, content, and perspectives to be represented. It would also ensure that our experiences, expertise, and skills, along with our creative and cultural accomplishments, are appreciated from the outset.
- 1.15. We insist on a respectful, sensitive, and inclusive approach, along with fair and equitable remuneration, credits, and benefits, for those whose stories are shared or reinterpreted in film, TV, radio, and theatre productions, including curated exhibitions. It is far too common for narratives about our communities to be exploited unscrupulously in productions, with film shoots frequently using the works, archives, and authors of Black communities without proper acknowledgement or compensation.
- 1.16. We call upon museums, libraries, academic and cultural institutions, and other collections to fully recognize the heritage and historical value of our artifacts, objects, archival materials, photographs, films, recordings, and videos. We also request that ethical policies consistent with the interests of Black communities and the common good be implemented to protect, preserve, return, and secure copyright when properly claimed.

- 1.17. We call for recognition of the dearth of galleries, art centres, and publishing houses in Black communities. Hence the importance of tangible support for the long-term sustainability of existing cultural enterprises, as well as the creation and development of many others, including some national in scope. We also advocate for greater access to creative spaces and grants for our artists, who often face significant challenges. Many struggle to gain access to workshop spaces, resources, and opportunities essential for their craft. It is crucial to provide them with opportunities to produce and exhibit their work in influential places and institutions. Such access will enable them to wield real influence and earn a sustainable income from their professional endeavours.
- 1.18. We call for recognition of the need for cultural institutions to fully integrate professionals from Black communities into key decision-making, management, executive, representative and influential positions, as these communities abound with considerable skills in the field of arts and culture.
- 1.19. We call for recognition of Black communities' contributions across all sectors of Canadian society, and for the Parliament of Canada to adopt a Charter of Cultural Rights that celebrates the wealth of these contributions, heritage, talents, expertise, creations, artistic productions, scientific and academic works, inspired by the rich diversity of experiences, knowledge, languages, geographic origins, multi-ethnicity, and multiculturalism of Canadians of African descent.
- 1.20. We ask, for enhanced appreciation and recognition of our origins, that the Government of Canada endorse the UNESCO General History of Africa, its educational content, including curricula, syllabi, textbooks, films, radio programs, and illustrated books.
- 1.21. We request that the Canadian Chancellery of Honours engage in an awareness campaign and take consistent action to solicit more nominations from Black communities for recognition of their merit, excellence and impact.

“ The common factor that allowed freed men and women to dare envision a new life was hope. We live in a time where hope is a currency that we have to rekindle each and every day, for the journey ahead is long. There have been achievements across the globe.

People in all our diversities, young, old, Black, brown, white, Indigenous, LGBTQ+, poor people, those with disabilities, women and girls, those who are still enslaved and trafficked today, all are demanding the same thing: justice, which is overdue.

– Dr Natalia Kanem,
United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive
Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

SECOND PILLAR

2. Justice

2.1. Racial Discrimination: A Matter of Justice

- 2.1.1. The history of Indigenous and Black peoples in the Americas and around the world is marked by violence. For centuries, slavery, dehumanization, degradation, loss of land, and the immoral, rampant exploitation of these conquered peoples have underpinned the economy and prosperity of European colonial, racist, and segregated empires.

- 2.1.2. Indigenous and Black people have been contained, demeaned, sanctioned, controlled, brutalized, criminalized, and decimated. We urgently demand justice, for there can be no true liberation from these shackles if we continue to be subjected to racial profiling, malevolent police surveillance, unjust incarceration, impoverishment, and exclusion.
- 2.1.3. Inspired by the mythical West African symbol of the Sankofa bird, we must forge ahead to secure the future while diligently and courageously examining the past. Justice necessitates fearless truth-telling. We must be willing to confront past injustices and abuses, demonstrating an exemplary commitment to healing and reparations, regardless of their magnitude.
- 2.1.4. We, Canadians of African descent of all generations, insist on the urgency of remedying all persistent and pervasive injustices. We urge all levels of government—federal, provincial, and municipal—as well as the private and institutional sectors, to work in concert with Black communities to eradicate racial discrimination.
- 2.1.5. We acknowledge the announcement of *Canada's Black Justice Strategy* by the federal government in response to systemic racism and discrimination against people from Black communities, which contributes to their over-representation in the criminal justice system, both as offenders and as victims of crime. We seek a full guarantee that Black individuals will receive equal treatment and protection under Canadian law. We insist that this strategy be developed in collaboration and consultation with Black communities across Canada. It must draw on our expertise to effectively reflect the full diversity of our experiences, backgrounds, and realities. This includes acknowledging the various factors related to all aspects of our condition and needs, especially the barriers we encounter in the criminal justice system.

- 2.1.6. We seek reparations, in the interest of recognition and justice, to address the immeasurable harm and suffering stemming from the darkest legacy of colonization—the enslavement of Indigenous peoples and people of African descent, their inferiorization and dehumanization in pre-Confederation Canada—a history bearing witness to grave and profound repercussions spanning generations.
- 2.1.7. We call all levels of government—federal, provincial, and municipal—to acknowledge that the stigma of racism against us is still rampant within society. It is crucial for governments to recognize that within their jurisdictions and administrations, discriminatory behaviours, practices, omissions, and decisions inflict significant harm on our lives. Thus, denying the systemic impact of racism only exacerbates the gravity of the problem and further perpetuates injustice.
- 2.1.8. We see daily, and the facts confirm it, the noxious effects of racism, prejudice, categorization, and social stigmatization within public institutions, businesses, and circles of power in the way they operate. Black communities are witnessing and experiencing the systemic torments of racial discrimination. Certain attitudes inherited from colonialism and the ideology of white supremacy remain blatantly obvious. No one comes out unscathed. We steadfastly maintain that addressing these issues is everyone’s responsibility, and it is crucial that governments (federal, provincial, and municipal) as well as all players and decision-makers in the private and institutional sectors demonstrate their willingness and ability to act in an exemplary fashion.

- 2.1.9. We request to be heard, because we speak from experience when we say that criminal justice and institutions in Canada continue to fail us. We call for decisive action to be taken by inclusively involving communities, associations, the expertise and experiences of civil society, including young people. Fostering synergy enables the optimal exploration and development of timely, responsible solutions to effectively address and combat racism, marginalization, hate speech, and exclusion in all its forms. We demand accountability regarding the treatment of people of African descent in essential services, in the justice, health, and education systems, as well as in the workplace. This includes unions, human resources departments, and all levels of public service—federal, provincial, and municipal.
- 2.1.10. We call on all levels of government to work inclusively with our communities, especially—and we insist—in addressing the over-representation of Indigenous peoples and Black individuals in the prison system. We recommend opting for community placements, alternative sentencing measures, and enhancing prevention and social intervention efforts deployed by our associations and organizations. Instead of repression and criminalization, we believe in significant investment in programs addressing the socio-economic causes of the marginalization of racialized and disenfranchised communities. We recommend prioritizing community development, safety, sanitation, revitalization of neighbourhoods and communities, creating decent housing and ensuring access to property ownership, as well as well-paid jobs, constructing sports facilities, educational institutions, and cultural centres, and establishing well-resourced support and advisory spaces for young businesses. We also demand access to physical and mental healthcare, high-quality education and training across all fields and professions, without distinction or discrimination. We say all this is a matter of justice.

Black individuals continue to be overrepresented in federal custody. In 2021-22, Black persons represented 9.2% of the overall incarcerated population, despite representing about 3.5% of the Canadian population.²

- 2.1.11. We insist on holding police forces accountable for engaging in racial profiling. Any form of harm, including humiliation, harassment, and the excessive or fatal use of force, must not be tolerated under any circumstances. Police officers who commit such acts must be prosecuted and face appropriate punishment. Additionally, police oversight bodies, police governance bodies, and complaint bodies have a responsibility to carry out independent investigations and impose strong sanctions as effective deterrents.
- 2.1.12. We request, knowing full well the current deficiencies, that police, probation officers and correctional officers receive thorough training to develop a comprehensive understanding of the evidence-based experiences of Black communities. This training should enable them to interpret these experiences accurately and act in an equitable, responsible, and exemplary manner.

According to data from the 2020 General Social Survey on Social Identity, 58% of Black people aged 15 years or older reported that they had experienced discrimination in the five years before the COVID-19 pandemic.³

² Office of the Correctional Investigator. (2022) *Annual Report 2021-2022*. <https://oci-bec.gc.ca/en/content/office-correctional-investigator-annual-report-2021-2022#fn32-rf>

³ Statistics Canada. (2023) *Black History Month 2023...by the numbers*. https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/dai/smr08/2023/smr08_270

Almost 50% of Black people reported experiencing discrimination because of their race or colour and 27% due to their ethnicity or culture.⁴

- 2.1.13. We are fully aware of the added value of our presence and contributions to nation-building in Canada, in all provinces, including the northern territories, alongside the Indigenous and Inuit populations. But history has shown that the immigration of people of African descent was not always welcome. Author Robyn Maynard describes Canadian immigration policies in the first half of the 20th century as “based on white supremacy” and characterized by “hostile anti-Blackness.” Racist exclusion remained deeply entrenched, to the extent that by 1961, 95 percent of Canada’s settler population consisted of whites of European heritage. We demand an end to discriminatory practices in the immigration and deportation systems and denounce the rise in racism against asylum seekers, Black migrants and immigrants.

In 2020, police services in Canada reported 663 incidents motivated by hatred against the Black population, the highest number recorded dating back to 2009. This represented 42% of all hate crimes targeting race or ethnicity, and 26% of all hate crimes in 2020.⁵

⁴ Statistics Canada. (2023) *Black History Month 2023...by the numbers*. https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/dai/smr08/2023/smr08_270

⁵ Statistics Canada. (2022). *Police Reported Hate-Crime in Canada, 2020*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00005-eng.htm>

2.2. *Justice and Education*

- 2.2.1. Access to lifelong learning is a fundamental right that should be guaranteed to all citizens, enabling individuals to broaden their knowledge, enhance their skills, and receive recognition for their intellectual and professional accomplishments. Unfortunately, racism and discrimination are pervasive in our schools and academic institutions.
- 2.2.2. As Canadians of African descent, we firmly demand the integration of Black community history and studies of Black experiences and contributions into all school curricula. It is crucial to educate children, youth, and the general public about the significant contributions of people of African descent to Canada and the world. Classroom teaching should adopt an Afrocentric approach, acknowledging that the history of Black peoples, similar to Indigenous peoples, has been marginalized by colonialism and needs to be restored in a fair and respectful manner.
- 2.2.3. We advocate for dedicated focus and significant investments in programs aimed at dismantling racism, rejecting discrimination, and eradicating the notion of white supremacy. These programs should also address the detrimental effects of exclusion, violence, and diminished self-esteem resulting from hate speech and harmful behaviours.
- 2.2.4. We also request that schools invest in inclusive and experiential learning opportunities beyond the classroom, engaging elders, community members, experts, and associations from Black communities.

- 2.2.5. We humbly request, with a keen understanding of the existing shortcomings within the education system and its institutions, for enlightened forms of support that foster academic success. We ask that all teachers and school counsellors receive comprehensive sensitivity training as part of compulsory and ongoing education programs. Equipped with this training, they will be empowered to make meaningful and even transformative interventions to address the sense of alienation that hinders students and contributes to high dropout rates and academic failure.
- 2.2.6. We ask all governments to make significant investments in education, training for young people and support for families, so that higher education is affordable and accessible to all who wish to pursue it. We also advocate for school, sports, artistic, cultural, creative, and recreational infrastructure, all of which serve as places for enrichment, stimulation, and motivation, to be fully accessible to young people from all social classes and backgrounds.
- 2.2.7. We call on all governments—federal, provincial, and municipal—to consolidate conditions, facilities, infrastructure, activities, and services that can contribute to the educational success of the most disadvantaged young people, especially from Black communities, thereby promoting and facilitating their access to post-secondary education in all disciplines, including science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and the arts. We believe that university professional programs should receive increased governmental support to enhance commitments towards research and scholarships in the sciences for young people from Black communities. Admission processes must be fair and equitable, based on qualifications. Advanced support systems must be in place to ensure their success.
- 2.2.8. We advocate for the establishment of targeted programs aimed at relieving student debt, thereby enabling young individuals from Black communities to access homeownership and savings opportunities.

- 2.2.9. We ask universities, colleges, and professional institutions to review their admissions policies to include more applications from Black communities.
- 2.2.10. We urge increased support for research and data collection conducted by Black scholars and organizations. Specifically, we call upon the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to actively recruit researchers of African descent, provide financial resources, and establish partnerships that recognize and validate the expertise and the work tirelessly carried out by Black communities.
- 2.2.11. We urge schools to review and revise their disciplinary policies, with a focus on reducing or eliminating the use of suspension and other punitive measures that disproportionately target and discriminate against Black students, resulting in their exclusion from education. We strongly advocate for the implementation of restorative justice policies that are developed in collaboration with Black communities and families, grounded in an anti-racist perspective.

2.3. *Justice and Healthcare*

- 2.3.1. Our many experiences and testimonies, including from appalled healthcare professionals, reveal that the legacy of slavery and racism continues to dehumanize, degrade, and undermine Black lives through the healthcare system, even in Canada.
- 2.3.2. It behooves us and our steadfast allies to assert the fundamental rights of dignity, respect, and bodily autonomy for people of African descent and Indigenous populations, both of whom have been mistreated by colonial ideologies and practices. This includes the right to access care for all aspects of health—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual—at every stage of our lives.

In Canada, the first medical school was established in 1824, before the abolition of the slave trade. Racism in medicine, science, and healthcare has left a legacy that is as widespread as it is far-reaching.

Science, even in the 20th century, often supported racism (racial biology) and long considered Africans as “inferior beings,” “less than human,” and “closer to animals.” This extended to displaying Black bodies, dead or alive, in museums and fairs, and conducting medical and scientific experiments on enslaved individuals. Later, and even recently, the forced sterilization of Black women persisted, and so too did the race-based medical beliefs and practices suggesting that Blacks had blunted nerve endings and therefore felt pain much less acutely than whites, thus requiring less anesthesia during painful surgery!

- 2.3.3. It is crucial to recognize that racism has physiological impacts on our health: it generates significant and dangerous anxiety, hinders healing from injuries and surgeries, causes disparities due to differences in drug metabolism, and contributes to chronic diseases. Racism kills.
- 2.3.4. As Canadians of African descent, we seek the eradication of racism everywhere, and especially within the healthcare system. The testimonies and evidence surrounding these issues are deeply alarming. Therefore, we demand an end to the practice of race-based medicine and advocate for comprehensive, financially supported investigations into the experiences of Black people regarding their access to, and treatment within, primary and specialty care.

- 2.3.5. We propose that medical education nationwide incorporate specialized university courses focused on Black health within the standard four-year medical program, and urge the Government of Canada to collaborate with the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada and the Medical Council of Canada in revamping and enhancing medical curricula to integrate a comprehensive understanding of racism, thereby cultivating more empathetic and well-informed physicians.
- 2.3.6. We urge the federal government to collaborate with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada to ensure physicians are cognizant of racism's impact on patients and to incorporate specific training on racism, as well as the health of Indigenous peoples, people of African descent, and racialized individuals, into their ongoing professional development.
- 2.3.7. We call on the federal government to require that all medical schools in Canada eliminate discriminatory systemic barriers that have prevented Black students from entering the field of medicine, as presented by evidence and testimonies, and to introduce special initiatives to help retain these students.
- 2.3.8. We demand the full guarantee of freedom of choice in terms of procreation and the number of children that Black women desire. Additionally, there must be the provision of access to quality care and healthy food. In a country as wealthy as Canada, it is unacceptable for any parent or child to experience material or extreme poverty.
- 2.3.9. We call for appropriate services, including thorough HIV and AIDS testing, to combat the rising number of cases among women attributed to a scarcity of health resources in Black communities.

- 2.3.10. We request that appropriate support be provided for Black individuals, including the elderly, those living with disabilities and mental health concerns. This includes accessible infrastructure, disability-accommodating employment, inclusive education for people with varying abilities, and adequate social assistance to cover expenses such as medication, transportation, home care, and other essentials. By doing so, we can ensure that underprivileged members of Black communities, who may be unable to work or receive limited pensions, can live with dignity.
- 2.3.11. We demand that all levels of government provide adequate funding for healthcare in all areas, encompassing long-term care homes, rural health clinics, hospitals, and psychiatric facilities. It is important to note that individuals in the most precarious and low-paying jobs in this sector are predominantly from Black communities. Furthermore, we demand a fair living wage for these workers.
- 2.3.12. We advocate for enhanced diversity and inclusion in the recruitment and promotion processes for administrative roles, leadership positions, and healthcare policy functions. This becomes particularly crucial in light of the strikingly evident lack of representation of individuals of African descent, especially those with anti-racism expertise and knowledge, within the healthcare system.
- 2.3.13. It is incomprehensible to us that numerous immigrant physicians of African descent, possessing years of experience and a commendable track record in their home countries or elsewhere, are precluded from practising in Canada. Conversely, physicians arriving from certain European countries do not face these same restrictions.

- 2.3.14. We strongly condemn the discriminatory behaviour exhibited by some physicians, nurses, and other healthcare providers who discriminate based on ethnicity, race, and country of origin. It is distressing that, owing to the lack of native language support, patients are occasionally treated without their consent, and inadequate post-procedure care often leaves them to navigate their recovery alone. Such experiences have fostered a lack of trust and hesitancy within the Black community in accessing healthcare services. Therefore, it is imperative that continuous and concerted efforts be made to ensure the provision of adequate, well-targeted, and respectful healthcare services for all. Additionally, dedicated efforts must be made to guarantee appropriate and respectful healthcare services for every individual.
- 2.3.15. We propose the establishment of an advocacy organization dedicated to patients of African descent in each province and territory.

In 2021, Black female workers were mostly concentrated in the healthcare and social assistance industry, as 33.8% of them had a job in this industry —11.3 percentage points more than the rest of the employed female population (22.5%). Among immigrant women, this gap was even wider, as 37.9% of Black immigrant women worked in the healthcare and social assistance industry, compared with 21.6% of other immigrant women.⁶

⁶ Statistics Canada. (2022) Black History Month 2022...by the numbers. https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/dai/smr08/2022/smr08_259

2.4. *Justice and Housing*

- 2.4.1. Housing is a fundamental right. Yet, the question of access to decent, affordable housing arises across all generations within Black communities. For young people, families, those with disabilities, and the elderly in our communities, housing is as essential as getting a job. The environment and quality of life, the health and safety of neighbourhoods, access to property and services, good education, economic viability, mobility, and well-being are all important to them and essential for their social inclusion and emancipation. Concerted efforts are needed to eliminate the barriers that have existed for too long to safe, affordable housing adapted to the deep and vital aspirations of Black communities.
- 2.4.2. It is imperative that investments be made to compensate the Black communities for forced relocations experienced in the past and that continue today, in addition to addressing their ongoing housing needs to improve, rather than worsen, their living conditions.
- 2.4.3. As Canadians of African descent, we seek recognition, respect, consideration, and justice in highlighting the history of our presence and settlement across the country. We ask for acknowledgement of all these places where, throughout history, Black families have lived; where certain historical figures have endured suffering; and where others, including many unnamed individuals, have been laid to rest. We urge the preservation of these elements of our collective heritage, these places we have built, as a common good.

Historical buildings were left to decay and collapse due to a lack of value and appreciation, safeguarding, and recognition as historic monuments. A recent example is the Negro Community Centre in Montreal's Little Burgundy district, where generations of young people from one of Canada's oldest Black communities honed their musical skills, including renowned jazz musicians and composers Oscar Peterson and Oliver Jones. Several of the oldest neighbourhoods in these Black communities have been demolished by construction companies with permits issued by federal, provincial, and municipal governments.

- 2.4.4. We are asking that aid—financial, logistical, or otherwise—be provided to retrace this part of our collective history in Canada, that it be valued and reconstituted in active partnership with Black communities.
- 2.4.5. We think it is high time Canada fulfilled its responsibilities to address deteriorating social housing, with priority given to Indigenous peoples and those from Black communities—among the most historically marginalized in this country.

- 2.4.6. We ask that, as reparation for the appalling destruction of Black communities, places of memory, worship, and settlement, all levels of government—federal, provincial, and municipal—allocate investment funds to design and build affordable, quality housing projects, tailored to the needs of Black communities and suited to the diverse family structures within these communities. We ask that these projects contribute to the revitalization of our collective heritage and a precious social fabric. We believe it is essential to invest in the development of housing cooperatives, non-profit community land trusts, and in establishing and creating a self-governing national network, spearheaded by Black communities, focused on housing issues. This includes preserving historic and memorial sites, collecting data and assessing needs, and informing and advising decision-making bodies.
- 2.4.7. We call for investigations to be conducted and the establishment of protection mechanisms against abusive projects involving evictions of all kinds, which disproportionately affect many families from Black communities. These tenants deserve legal assistance and avenues for recourse in the event of disputes with landlords, considering the historical background and current realities of evictions and relocations. We demand policies that protect individuals experiencing racial discrimination as they seek fair access to housing.
- 2.4.8. For the same reasons, we demand that Black communities and families be able, as is their most fundamental right, to live in neighbourhoods and places where integration is actively pursued. We see this as a key element in our country's responsible, inclusive, and economically viable human development.
- 2.4.9. We denounce the racist strategies of impoverishment through the generations of the Black and Indigenous communities, who have been forced to live in the worst areas of pollution, contamination, and waste—amid systemic disregard for their well-being, and for the sanitary conditions of these locales and their inhabitants.
- 2.4.10. We demand that companies that have harmed, or continue to harm, the environment be held accountable and required to repair the damage they have caused to living spaces and affected communities.

- 2.4.11. We call for a moratorium on evictions, and repressive measures on homeless people taking refuge in parks, or squatting in abandoned spaces. All levels of government must commit to ending homelessness that disproportionately affects Canada's Indigenous and Black communities. Emergency solutions, such as shelters, must be truly temporary. Large numbers of people in Black communities are confined to neglected areas, unable to access comfortable, affordable housing that meets the multi-generational makeup of their families.

In 2021, just under one third, representing 25.9% or 400,240 individuals of the Black population, lived in unsuitable housing, meaning that their dwellings had too few bedrooms for the size and composition of their households according to the requirements of the National Occupancy Standard. In comparison, the number of the total Canadian population living in unsuitable housing was 9.7% in 2021.⁷

- 2.4.12. We call on governments to take action and invest in community safety, involving neighbourhood residents in the development of improvement and stabilization plans, as well as in the fight against disproportionate criminalization and victimization. This means putting an end to indiscriminate law enforcement, harassment, disproportionate surveillance, and racial profiling—that target and stigmatize communities where Black families live.

⁷ Statistics Canada. (2023) *Black History Month 2023...by the numbers*. https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/dai/smr08/2023/smr08_270.

- 2.4.13. We invite governments to learn from their mistakes, from past urban and real estate development initiatives that have penalized and relocated Black communities. We encourage them to recognize and support initiatives and projects based on the perspectives of Black communities, their aspirations, and visions for revitalizing the places and neighbourhoods where their roots lie, where their heritage—including historical, intellectual, spiritual, cultural, political, and economic references—is inscribed. This collaboration must take into account the diversity of identities and socio-economic realities within Black communities, and the precious ties between elders and their descendants. We must prevent the impact of gentrification on communities that have lived in urban neighbourhoods for generations and are being forced to leave.
- 2.4.14. We call for coherent and responsible investment by governments in innovative, inclusive plans devised through co-creation and co-development approaches, to rethink urban living with citizens—without exception or exclusion, regardless of their immigration status—and to actively engage, for once, in an exemplary manner with Black communities that, historically, have been so poorly treated.
- 2.4.15. We advocate for a focused approach to climate change adaptation and the integration of clean, ecological energy systems in the construction of social housing. Additionally, we advocate for the establishment of vegetable gardens, community kitchens, leisure and sports centres, artistic spaces, and training facilities, along with the fostering of new business development that supports social and creative entrepreneurship.
- 2.4.16. We encourage the creation of themed hiking trails and organized public transport to highlight shared spaces designed for greater conviviality, and the discovery of historical and heritage sites.

- 2.4.17. After being sidelined for so long, we must emphasize that people are not lacking in imagination; all that is required is to get them involved and provide them with the resources to ensure that projects are implemented. Consequently, the results are even more prodigious, authentic, and viable.
- 2.4.18. As part of the reparations process, we call on the Government of Canada to transfer Crown lands of historical and cultural significance to Black communities, to be used for exemplary community development and housing projects. This action must be undertaken in a spirit of solidarity while fully recognizing the rights and respecting the treaties with Indigenous peoples.
- 2.4.19. We advocate for the implementation of public policies that hold real estate stakeholders (developers, managers, agents, brokers, financial institutions, and construction companies) accountable to tenants and owners. This accountability, particularly in partnership with Black communities, should ensure the execution of projects aimed at sustainable human and economic development, and combating exclusion to foster social cohesion.
- 2.4.20. We urge the agencies responsible for funding and managing provincial and municipal housing to implement anti-racist policies and collect accurate and detailed data on waiting lists and tenants. This data should be utilized to comprehend the state of social housing for individuals from Black communities and to assess their access to affordable housing.
- 2.4.21. We advocate for strategies to rectify and abolish inequitable and frequently exploitative banking regulations that have prevented and still prevent Black community landowners in obtaining the financing necessary to develop their properties for their own benefit and that of future generations.

- 2.4.22. We advocate for the creation of transitional housing for several groups: low-income, at-risk, and vulnerable youth; women, whether or not accompanied by children, seeking refuge from violence; and individuals re-entering community and societal life following involvement in the criminal justice system.
- 2.4.23. We advocate for specialized homeownership education initiatives, alongside community worker assistance for our seniors and other vulnerable groups within the Black population facing the risk of foreclosure due to unpaid taxes or encountering other administrative obstacles.

In 2018, the core housing need for the Black population was higher (15.1%) than that of the total Canadian population (9.0%). As a result, approximately 200,000 (197,500) Black individuals were in core housing need. When the housing of a household falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability, or suitability standards and the household would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (meeting all three housing standards), the household is said to be in core housing need.⁸

⁸ Statistics Canada. (2023) *Black History Month 2023...by the numbers*. https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/dai/smr08/2023/smr08_270.

2.5. *Women's Rights and Justice for All Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities*

- 2.5.1. Women, men, and 2SLGBTQI+ individuals—including two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and additional sexual orientations and gender identities—exist at the intersection of multiple systems of discrimination based on gender, race, and sexual orientation. Particularly, young Black queer and transgender individuals experience multiple forms of oppression and violence from the outset and are subject to high rates of violence, homelessness, criminalization, and stigmatization.
- 2.5.2. Policies addressing racism should incorporate a gender-responsive approach, acknowledging the distinct exclusions and challenges encountered by individuals of African descent. Historically, systems of domination have mutually nourished and reinforced each other. Consequently, racial discrimination not only intensifies other forms of oppression but is also compounded by discrimination against women, 2SLGBTQI+ individuals, and those who are differently abled or nonconforming.
- 2.5.3. We declare that all forms of discrimination associated with sexism, misogyny, gender, race, and sexual orientation are intertwined and necessitate a unified approach to eradicate them. Women, Black transgender and gender non-conforming people have the right to live in dignity and respect. Women, as well as men and 2SLGBTQI+ people of African descent, live at the intersection of various forms of discrimination based on gender, race, and sexual orientation. For Black queer and transgender people, especially the youngest, the forms of oppression and violence they face are multifaceted from the outset. They experience high rates of violence, homelessness, criminalization, and stigmatization. Anti-racism efforts must adopt an intersectional, gender-based approach, acknowledging the extent of specific forms of exclusion and challenges.

- 2.5.4. We, Canadians of African descent, of all sexual orientations and gender identities, demand action to stop the harassment, attacks, violence, discrimination and hate crimes against women and people of the 2SLGBTQI+ communities, especially against Black people of these communities who are further stigmatized.
- 2.5.5. We call for social, criminal, justice, education, economic, health, and housing policies that are evaluated from the perspective of parity and access for people of all gender identities and sexual orientations. These policies and public services must be sensitive to the harmful dynamics at the intersection of anti-Black racism, homophobia and transphobia and explicitly address violence based on misogyny, gender identity, sexual orientation and racial hatred.
- 2.5.6. We demand that the Canadian government invest more in programs for women, queer and trans people who are victims of violence not only here, but also elsewhere in the world, and that Canada consequently offer asylum to 2SLGBTQI+ people fleeing countries where they are legally persecuted. Often destitute, they need financial assistance. Often rejected, including by their families, deprived of their documents and traumatized, we call on the Canadian government to remove additional barriers to name changes for transgender or gender nonconforming people who wish to do so. They need legal advice and counselling services from community organizations that have the expertise and that also deserve recognition and support.
- 2.5.7. We call on the Canadian government to demonstrate increased responsiveness to the situation of the many Black migrant women who are responsible for domestic work and childcare. We demand that they be offered pathways to citizenship and an end to the exploitation of these workers.

- 2.5.8. We demand that governments demonstrate increased responsiveness to disadvantaged single-parent women, particularly those with disabilities. Many of them come from Black communities. We are aware of their needs, and we ask that the welfare system include free early childcare services for these mothers, to facilitate their integration into the job market and enable them to break out of their isolation.

2.6. *Justice for Seniors*

- 2.6.1. Respect and dignity for elders are values deeply rooted in the diverse cultures of Afro-descendants, our diaspora, our families and our communities. We salute our elders who paved the way for our emancipation and whose struggle continues to inspire us today.
- 2.6.2. We acknowledge the enormous sacrifices and efforts of those who have gone before us. We are acutely aware of the inhuman circumstances and the many trials they faced amidst the racism, the humiliations, the contempt, hostility, and hatred they endured. These experiences have profoundly marked our lives, passed down from one generation to the next, echoing through centuries. The history we have inherited is one of a constant quest for freedom, dignity, and equality. Time and again, we have found the strength to stand up, rebuild, start anew, and be reborn in dignity.
- 2.6.3. Even today, our elders continue to suffer exploitation. Many find themselves in poverty after being dispossessed of their property titles, land, and possessions. Afro-descendant seniors live in greater material precariousness, have even more limited access to primary care providers, and suffer greater housing and food insecurity.

- 2.6.4. We, Canadians of African descent, demand that governments—federal, provincial, and municipal—take action against the social exclusion of our seniors. That they receive adequate pensions. That policies guaranteeing them a life of dignity be implemented. And that adequate financial support be provided to Black community organizations dedicated to our seniors. Our seniors need better access to healthcare, and long-term care and home-care facilities that understand their specific needs and cultural traits.
- 2.6.5. We ask that the skills required in health and medical care for Afro-descended seniors be taken into account.
- 2.6.6. We emphasize that when care teams include professionals knowledgeable about the cultural references, habits, life experiences, and needs of these seniors, this brings comfort and has an undeniable positive impact on their mental health and well-being. We therefore call for greater inclusion of professionals from Black communities in the healthcare system responsible for administering these care plans, ensuring less turnover and greater stability within these teams.

2.7. *Justice, Sports and Athletics*

- 2.7.1. For too long, young people in Black communities had no other way of building themselves up than through sport, often combat sports, team sports, and athletics. These athletes, however talented, were powerless, always at the mercy of white managers making decisions about their participation, involvement, earnings, and advancement. The highly institutionalized racist practices targeting these young people of African descent thus had disproportionate consequences that deserve to be questioned even today.
- 2.7.2. We, Canadians of African descent, demand that amateur and professional sports organizations adopt a more progressive and inclusive vision, and develop a standard sector-wide anti-racism program that holds line managers, directors, and board members accountable.

- 2.7.3. We call for consistent efforts in the recruitment and retention of professional coaches from Black communities, as well as across all management and staff positions.
- 2.7.4. We call for a similar increase in the number of Black professionals within management and governance teams in both amateur and professional sports organizations, and for strategic efforts in this regard, including mentoring programs.
- 2.7.5. We urge governments to fund mentoring programs that cover the cost of academic aptitude tests. This initiative will ensure young elite athletes, who are often recruited from schools and compelled to forsake their studies, are prepared for a seamless transition to alternative professional pursuits following the conclusion of their athletic careers.
- 2.7.6. We advocate for enhanced funding for Black-led amateur and professional sports organizations and incentives for Black-owned sports franchises—vital to community engagement, growth, and development.
- 2.7.7. We propose the creation of an alternative solution for Black individuals encountering injustice in the sports sector, as disciplinary committees or institutions that aim to hold organizations accountable are too often administered by the same people they are supposed to judge and hold accountable.

“ The Black population in Canada is projected to more than double, reaching over 3 million people by 2040. Black Canadians born and rooted here, and from all around the globe, have for generations enriched the fabric of this country.

The Black Canadian population is younger than the average; we are the future, standing on the shoulders of our ancestors.

— El Jones

Poet, journalist, professor and activist
living in Halifax, Nova Scotia

THIRD PILLAR

3. Development

3.1. Development: Justice Be Done

- 3.1.1. From the forced labour of enslaved Africans in colonial times, to domestic workers and day labourers, to migrant farmers, Black communities have been consciously exploited in Canada. They have made countless contributions while receiving little in return. Black youth from small rural communities who leave home to seek work and educational opportunities in the cities, leave behind their elders, parents, and grandparents, who have diligently toiled all their lives, but who, at the end of the line, often end up with little or no retirement plans, no economic prospects, and no basic security. The Black diaspora also includes professionals and intellectuals of the highest calibre. All of them, from every stratum of society, have contributed to the building of this country. Often, their contributions remain unrecognized, with only a few rare exceptions.

- 3.1.2. Development for human beings begins with the recognition of their humanity, their value, their qualities, their dignity, their integrity, and their achievements.
- 3.1.3. The fundamental right of every human being is to have the means to live freely, autonomously, safely, and securely, and to be able to enjoy the fruits of years of toil—quite the opposite of the Black experience over the centuries.
- 3.1.4. We continue to encounter significant challenges in fully accessing the means to carry through economic projects or entrepreneurial initiatives, owing to numerous undeniably systemic obstacles and barriers that arise from racial discrimination.
- 3.1.5. We welcome the establishment of the *Black-led Philanthropic Endowment Fund* by the Canadian government, intended to provide long-term funding and resources to Black-led organizations, and we call for even greater and more sustainable investments in Black communities.
- 3.1.6. We call for a collective awareness of the considerable deficit for Canada generated by the exclusion of Black and racialized people. This exclusion prevents so many possibilities and opportunities, curtails productive, creative, and innovative energies and synergies, blocks prospects for growth, job creation, business, and income, and stifles so many ideas, breakthroughs, niches, and development initiatives. It is high time we reversed the trend, for the common good, for the advancement of society as a whole, and for the human, economic, responsible, and sustainable development of the country.
- 3.1.7. We call on all industries, organizations, institutions, and fields, including the public service, to recognize this deficit and act accordingly—to remove barriers, to open opportunities, to foster wide inclusivity, and to offer equal and fair wages and opportunities for advancement to Black Canadians.

- 3.1.8. We call on all sectors, public and private, organizations, institutions, and businesses to strive for their leadership and boards to reflect the diversity of the broader society, stakeholders, clients, and communities.
- 3.1.9. We, Canadians of African descent, demand that financial institutions acknowledge the longstanding discrimination in financing, mortgages, and financial lending that has intentionally and unjustly disadvantaged Black people, preventing them from achieving economic prosperity from one generation to the next.
- 3.1.10. We call for financial reparations through targeted equitable investments and programs that facilitate pathways to homeownership and business for Black people.
- 3.1.11. We also call for a decolonized approach, sensitive to working-class women and men from Black communities who face disproportionate barriers to loans, grants, and other support, and especially those doubly discriminated against because of disability or sexual orientation and gender identity.
- 3.1.12. In the interest of reparations and redress to injustices, we ask that governments—federal, provincial, and municipal—contribute to the financing of infrastructure projects led by Black entrepreneurs and developers, and at the same time support the building of their capacity to execute these projects.
- 3.1.13. We demand that justice be done and call for the Canadian government and corporations to invest in international development by acknowledging the debt owed to people and workers of African descent around the world. There can be no ethical economic development on the backs of people living in overexploited “developing” countries.

- 3.1.14. We urge all levels of government to devise and implement a comprehensive plan for the recognition of foreign qualifications. This plan would help immigrants and newcomers in utilizing their education, skills, and experience acquired in other countries, allowing them to contribute to the labour market in sectors in which they are already trained.
- 3.1.15. We call on the federal and provincial governments and Canadian companies to invest in African and Caribbean countries. Canada's foundation lies in the wealth acquired by the French and British colonial empires through the transatlantic slave trade that ensnared tens of millions of African men, women, and children, with centuries of exploitation of Black labour, the appropriation of resources from colonized African countries, and the complete dispossession of Indigenous peoples and their territories here. Canada must commit to dismantling these chains of global inequality with the rest of the world.
- 3.1.16. We urge Canada to spearhead the redistribution of wealth and resources, championing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals for all those impoverished by colonization, both here and globally.

3.2. *Development, Political and Democratic Engagement*

- 3.2.1. Without Black political engagement at all levels, from local to national, people of African descent will continue to be disempowered in Canada. Democratic engagement extends beyond mere voting; it includes active participation in the formulation and implementation of public policies that advance the common good and uphold the values of justice, equality, and inclusion, fundamental to this nation. Given our firsthand experiences with discrimination and the challenges we confront, few are better equipped than we are to highlight the pervasive and unacceptable realities that continue to impede progress throughout Canada.

- 3.2.2. As Canadians of African descent, we urge the Government of Canada to enact legislation establishing a dedicated department within the federal government to be called African Canadian Affairs. This department would be led by a minister responsible for conducting research and formulating policies and programs aimed at addressing the unique challenges faced by people of African descent in Canada.
- 3.2.3. We strongly urge all levels of government—federal, provincial, and municipal—and policymakers to actively involve youth of African descent as equal partners in the process of developing youth-led policies that cater to the specific needs of young individuals from Black communities in Canada.
- 3.2.4. We ask that government-funded institutions and research institutes develop a set of indicators that measure the impact of public policies on people of African descent.
- 3.2.5. We urge government-funded and research institutions to prioritize data collection on the status of Black Canadians. This should include indicators like economic opportunities, employment, health, education, and the impact of racism, with regular updates to a comprehensive database. Additionally, we emphasize the need to develop ethno mapping to show the distribution of people of African descent across Canada.
- 3.2.6. We urge governments and institutions to facilitate broader access to research examining the effects of systemic racism on the well-being and quality of life of the individuals of African descent in Canada. This effort is crucial for addressing the existing disparities within our societal structures and society in general.

- 3.2.7. We call for the creation of deliberate and enduring public education programs for Canadians of African descent spanning all generations and ages. These programs should foster skills in public policy analysis and processes, encompassing policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation, across various governmental levels, alongside training in political leadership.
- 3.2.8. Additionally, we call for funding to facilitate access for Canadians of African descent to mentoring and resources that support entry into public office.

*Origin of the Manifesto
for the Eradication of Racial Discrimination*

“HALIFAX DECLARATION”

We, Canadians of African descent spanning generations and hailing from across the nation, convened in large numbers at the 2022 National Black Canadians Summit in Halifax to build upon the analyses and actions of the previous summits held in Toronto (2017), Ottawa (2019), and a series of virtual summits during 2020–2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We remain dedicated and actively mobilized for the upcoming 2024 summit in Montreal, which will conclude the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024) proclaimed by the United Nations.

The Michaëlle Jean Foundation, which has made the National Black Canadians Summit a flagship program of its priority activities throughout these years, extends its gratitude to the thousands of individuals and civil society organizations that have contributed in numerous ways, sharing their valuable expertise grounded in rigorously collected data. Political, academic, and cultural institutions from all sectors across Canada, both public and private, have been listening and have offered their support as valued allies.

The *Manifesto for the Eradication of Racial Discrimination*, “Halifax Declaration” is an outcome of the presentations, dialogues, and calls for action heard at each session of the Summit, and further validated through a national survey. This effort was supported by the Network for the Advancement of Black Communities and the Black Opportunity Fund.

In particular, we applaud the Nova Scotia Legislature’s unanimous and unconditional resolution in support of the National Black Canadians Summit—and the equally exemplary and invaluable support of the City of Halifax in hosting it. We also acknowledge the United Nations Population Fund, led by Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem, who attended the Halifax Summit with her delegation to convey the outcomes of Canada’s grassroots mobilization to the international community.

The Michaëlle Jean Foundation would also like to recognize the active participation of young people, the eloquent display of their leadership, their commitment, and their courage. Their vibrant, insightful, powerful, and poignant testimonies resonate. Their voices, experiences, perspectives, and reflections are encapsulated in the Halifax Declaration, encompassing the diversity of positions taken, expectations expressed, and calls for recognition, justice, and reparation in support of shared, responsible, and equitable human and economic development. Young people are undeniably integral to both the solution and the change.

This is not a fleeting moment. It will persist as it represents a powerful and indispensable movement on the journey for the eradication of systemic racial discrimination in Canada and around the world. How gratifying it is to witness the significant response it has garnered, highlighting the need for open and inclusive dialogue, a genuine examination of our past, and a collective commitment to progress. In creating a better future and fostering greater humanity, we must confront the truth about our history, acknowledge the progress made, identify areas for change, and work together with unwavering determination and confidence to build a stronger and more inclusive world.

This moment is unprecedented. Our energy is unmatched. Through the doors that were opened for us in generations past, our presence continues to grow in every field.

From science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to the arts, from sports to business, in boardrooms and classrooms, from government to the grassroots—Black leaders are rising. Our demands cannot be ignored. From coast to coast, we are organizing and mobilizing, we are unapologetic and unafraid, we have a voice and a vision.

Our demands for recognition, justice, development ring out in unity, determined and strong. Our moment is now. The future of Canada is also Black.

The International Decade for People of African Descent

The International Decade aims to celebrate the important contributions of people of African descent worldwide, advance social justice and inclusion policies, eradicate racism and intolerance, promote human rights, and assist in creating better, more prosperous communities, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals spearheaded by the United Nations.

The International Decade for People of African Descent, to be observed from 2015 to 2024, provides a solid framework for the United Nations, Member States, civil society and all other relevant actors to join together with people of African descent and take effective measures for the implementation of the program of activities in the spirit of recognition, justice . . . and development.

Reference:

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/decade-people-african-descent/background>

Canada Marks the Decade of People of African Descent

On January 30, 2018, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced Canada's official recognition of the International Decade for People of African Descent.

"This decade spanning from 2015 to 2024 allows us to highlight and celebrate the important contributions that people of African descent have made to Canadian society. But perhaps more importantly, it outlines a framework for recognition, justice and development for our citizens. Acknowledging this decade is a recognition that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected, and whose history, culture and contributions to society must be respected."

Reference:

<https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/videos/2018/01/30/pm-trudeau-announces-canadas-recognition-international-decade-people-african>

None of the calls in the Halifax Declaration of the National Black Canadians Summit are meant to benefit only ourselves. Ours is a righteous struggle for the common good. We seek equal rights for all, without exceptions or exclusions.

We want to believe that history can be healed, that we can reimagine the failed encounters between civilizations, celebrate the rich tapestry of our diverse cultures with a view to resuming and renewing through dialogue the discoveries that the powers that be, obsessed with conquest and predation, prevented.

We want to believe in collective responsibility, in a unified determination to think and act differently, grounded in the full, profound understanding that we all share the same humanity.

We want to believe in dreams yet to be fulfilled, in a new reality born of all our energies pulled together.



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