

8TH PAN-AFRICAN CONGRESS CALLS FOR COUNCIL ON AFRICAN NATIONAL AFFAIRS.

Consultations are underway towards the establishment of a Council for African National Affairs (CANAA).

This follows the 8th Pan African Congress that took place in South Africa at the beginning of the year with a call on Africans to advance a cultural movement to give Africans pride in their being and create the conditions for promoting African culture and languages as the foundation for African emancipation and development.

The Congress was held in Johannesburg from January 14-16, 2014 under the theme “Mobilizing Global Africans, for Renaissance and Unity” and brought together one hundred and twenty participants representing institutions and organizations of Africans from around the world.

Participants came from Latin America, the Caribbean, USA, Europe, Asia, the Arab World and the African continent.

The Congress reviewed status reports of Africans in various parts of the world, namely, Afro-descendants in the Caribbean, Latin America, USA, Canada and Europe. Others were Afro-descendants in India, i.e. the Siddis, Africans in the Arab World as well as the situation of the majority of Africans living on the continent.

Other issues discussed were African trade unions and Pan-Africanism, Women and the Pan-African Challenge as well as Youth and Pan-Africanism. Networking Entrepreneurs was also considered.

African Identity

Congress noted that the African identity refers to people and not geography in the first instance. “This implies that the unity we seek as Pan Africans is a unity of African peoples and not a geographical unity of the African continent”.

The Congress recognized the need for unity of Africans as essential basis for consistent progress towards emancipation and development of the African people. The unity of Africans was foreseen as a factor that will unite most of the continent and other Africans in the diaspora and at the same time require that Africans co-exist democratically with various non-African minorities who live with us as citizens.

Recommendations

The 8th PAC congress made a variety of recommendations based on the different status reports and deliberations. On Afro-Descendants in Europe, recommendations included the diaspora right of return, a unitary African citizenship and passport as well as global African solidarity against the white supremacist state and institutional racism they face.

On the issue of Afro-Descendants in USA and Canada, the 8th PAC, among other recommendations, urged the US Government to change race discriminatory (Criminal) Laws; and address income inequalities in the US.

The Congress encouraged African Canadians to work together to break down barriers between them based on socio-economic status, while urging the Canadian Government to put in place, Anti-Racist Policies in employment practices.

The PAC committed itself to help address crisis affecting people of African descent in the Caribbean that require political solutions as well as give support to Afro-descendant activist groups in the Caribbean.

On the issue of Women and the Pan-African Challenge, Congress acknowledged the lack of recognition of women's role in Pan-African history and noted that this must be corrected in the documentation of Pan-Africanism while promoting effective implementation of African instruments that focus on encouraging women's participation in the economy and society.

The congress commended some governments in South and Central America for upholding Affirmative Action Policies.

On the other hand the meeting condemned the government of the Dominican Republic for its racist repressive policies against dark-skinned citizens in general, and dark-skinned Dominicans whose ancestry is traced to Haiti, in particular, and for its racially-based persecution of Haitian nationals.

With regards to Africans in the Arab World the PAC decided to include on its agenda advocacy and issues pertaining to African-descendants in the Arab States. In furtherance of this the PAC should initiate a movement aimed at abolishing and eradicating the on-going slavery of Africans in the Arab World.

On African Trade Unions and Pan-Africanism the Congress urged the Global African Trade Unions to pay particular attention to organizing and the participation of youth, women and informal economy workers in trade unionism. Congress further affirmed that *'The Global African Trade Unions should organize and promote the rights and interests of African migrant workers in Africa and other parts of the world; and that the trade unions and Pan-Africanist intellectuals, cultural workers and artists should discover each other and strengthen their links of collaboration towards fulfillment of the Pan-African Agenda.*

The Congress took particular note of the deprived conditions of Afro-Descendants in India, known as Siddis and recommended the establishment of an Education Foundation as well as a Law Forum for the Siddis of India.

Networking Entrepreneurs:

The need to work towards the development of African entrepreneurship and business was permanently placed on the agenda of PAC, with a commitment to support research on this area. Furthermore, the Congress highlighted the need for advocacy campaigns to encourage respective member regions and governments to establish trade and investment policies that enhance businesses owned by persons of African descent.

Youth and Pan-Africanism:

The Congress acknowledged the importance of the Global African youth and the need to ensure the realization of more youth representation at African Union (AU) sittings, as well as their inclusion in all Pan African programmes and activities. To this end, the Congress called for the development of a core curriculum on Pan Africanism and youth mentorship programmes for African youth.

Reparations

On the issue of reparations the meeting expressed support for the establishment and soon to be established National Reparations Commission in all countries where people of African descent exist, with a view to create a Global Reparations Commission that will work to advance the claim for global reparative justice.

Congress further called for enhanced “people-to-people relations between Africans across borders” and the development of PAC Chapters in all African countries.



The 8th PAC which ended with a final recommendation for the establishment of a Council for African National Affairs (CANAA) was convened by a Preparatory Committee chaired

by Professor Kwesi Kwaa Prah, Director of the Centre for the Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS).

For more information on the 8th Pan-African Congress please go to www.8thpac.com