



Call for Papers and Participation

Returning to Source: The Future of Reparations and Restorative Justice for Afrikan Enslavement

An International Colloquium

**Musée da Silva
Porto-Novo
Republic of Benin**

19–21 September 2018

ORGANIZED BY THE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF SCHOLARS AND ACTIVISTS FOR AFRIKAN REPARATIONS (INOSAAR)
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE ASSOCIATION POUR UNE RÉPARATION GLOBALE DE L'ESCLAVAGE (APRGE, BENIN) AND
SPONSORED BY THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL (AHRC, UK)

The struggle for reparations for the trafficking, enslavement and colonization of Afrikan people, with their attendant legacy of racial oppression, has a long and varied history but has never received any serious attention and commitment from the former enslaving and colonial powers in Europe and America. However, we are now witnessing a renaissance in calls for reparative justice and restitution, rising alongside the emergence of public memories of the trans-Atlantic trafficking and enslavement of captive Afrikans. This renaissance is distinguished by its transnationalism and trans-regionalism. It draws from the struggle of Pan-Africanists who sought the unity of the Afrikan continent and its people, and whose fight for reparations was consolidated in landmark events such as the Abuja Proclamation of 1993 and the Durban Declaration of 2001, which recognized 'the right to seek just and adequate reparation or satisfaction for any damage suffered' as a result of human rights violations.

In more recent times, this right has been reiterated at both regional and international levels. In 2014, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)'s Reparations Commission (CRC) called on European nations to respond to their 10-point plan demanding reparative justice for the victims of genocide, slavery, the trans-Atlantic trafficking in enslaved Afrikans and subsequent racial apartheid. In 2015, the United Nations proclaimed an International Decade for People of African Descent (IDPAD, 2015–24) that restated the importance of reparations. And in 2017, the University of the West Indies inaugurated the world's first Centre for Reparation Research to facilitate the CRC's 10-point plan. Alongside these state-led developments, grassroots activists from the Afrikan Heritage Community have been leading the search for

organizations and institutions through which to express the knowledge they have been co-producing in their struggle to effect and secure holistic reparatory justice. It was in response to this quest that the Afrikan Reparations Transnational Community of Practice (ARTCoP) emerged in the UK in 2014.

Organized under aegis of the IDPAD and sponsored by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC, UK), this colloquium marks the final event in a series of workshops and conferences that have contributed to the building of the *International Network of Scholars and Activists for Afrikan Reparations* (INOSAAR). This initiative began in November 2015 following a conference on reparations at the University of Edinburgh, which was followed by a pre-colloquium held at the Musée da Silva (Porto Novo, Republic of Benin), organized by the *Association pour une réparation globale de l'esclavage* (APRGE) under the sponsorship of M. Karim da Silva in June 2017. In collaboration with the *Pan-Afrikan Coalition for Reparations in Europe* (PARCOE), the INOSAAR was officially launched in Brixton, London in October 2017, resulting in the consolidation of 'INOSAAR Principles of Participation' and the founding of INOSAAR's auxiliary youth branch, known as *RepAfrika*. In March 2018, we held a follow-up conference at Birmingham City University that focused on the practicalities of internationalizing the struggle for reparations, and in April 2018, we sent a delegation to the UNESCO world heritage site of Gorée Island in Senegal to join the *Mouvement International pour les Réparations* (MIR, Martinique) and build further links with Caribbean and West Afrikan activist organizations and youth groups.

At each step along the way, we have sought to broaden our collective understanding of the ideological discourse around reparative justice, while remaining rooted in the work of grassroots activism and scholarly pursuit. We have consulted with organizations with a vested interest in this struggle with a view to establishing an INOSAAR which, in the long term, can act as a platform for supporting the work of reparationists worldwide, while developing a strategic approach to reparative action grounded in the importance of cultural, spiritual and historical repair.

For the culmination of this specific project, and with a view to its continuation and sustainability, we are calling upon the international community to participate in a two-day colloquium in Porto-Novo (Republic of Benin), followed by a visit to the UNESCO world heritage site, la 'Porte de Non-Retour' in Ouidah.¹ In a direct reversal of the heinous trans-oceanic triangles, this event marks a return to Afrika and specifically to Benin as a site of rupture and a site of reconnection. We are drawing together activists, scholars, practitioners, spiritual leaders, artists and dignitaries across multiple historical trajectories, with a view to enriching our diverse perspectives and approaches to historical repair and restorative justice, while finding unification and solidarity in our diversity.

We are inviting you to contribute to all aspects of reparations, restitution and reconnection so that together we can create a more holistic, unifying perspective of restorative justice. Our objectives are twofold: first, in terms of cognitive justice, to advance work on the harmonization of definitions and perspectives on reparations by drawing together the different strands and participants within the project so far; and second, to launch a reparative vision of where we are going and what futures we are aiming for. To that end, we are inviting scholars, activists, cultural partisans and advocates of historical justice from across international communities to propose contributions to this event in considering the following:

¹ The UNESCO 'Slave Route Project' was launched in Ouidah in 1994.

- What actions are necessary to enable us to map a path to specific reparative goals?
- What transformations need to take place in order to demonstrate concretely that reparative change has taken place?
- How can reparations address environmental degradation and contribute to the re-establishment of the ecological integrity of the homeland of Afrikan peoples?
- What is the role of the natural, medical, social and human sciences in the debate round reparations?
- What are the similarities and differences in the roles that Afrikan Heritage Communities of the Diaspora and on the continent of Afrika should play in the movement for reparations?
- What are the responses on the continent to the use of the IDPAD to assert the right of Afrikan descendants in the Diaspora within the continent of Afrika?
- What value does pan-Afrikanism hold in the creation of solidarity within the movement for reparations?
- What is the relevance of decolonization to reparations?
- In what ways are the UN sustainable development goals relevant to issues of Afrikan reparations?
- In what ways can reparations result in reshaping and repairing socio-cultural, politico-economic and legal or juridical systems?
- How can reparations foster restitution of spiritual and psychological repair among those wounded by the centuries-old legacies of enslavement, colonisation, racism and injustice?
- What key lessons can be learnt from those who have rematriated/repatriated back to Afrika in terms of cultural and spiritual repair?
- What is needed to achieve a culturally-engaged, Afrikan-centred unifying agenda for reparations?

Please send a title, abstract (max. 250 words) and short biography (max. 200 words) for a 15-minute presentation to inosaar@ed.ac.uk by **Wednesday 18 July 2018**. For more information on our previous events, please visit our website: <http://inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk>. For all other information, please contact either Dr Nicola Frith (University of Edinburgh: Nicola.Frith@ed.ac.uk) or Professor Joyce Hope Scott (Wheelock College: jscott@wheelock.edu or hopescot@bu.edu).

Invitees (TBC)

Sir BECKLES, Hilary, Chairman of the *CARICOM Reparations Commission* and Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies (Mona Campus, Kingston, Jamaica)

Her Excellency, Dr BENNETT Erieka, Founder and Ambassador of the African Union's Diaspora African Forum (Ghana)

M. BIO POIGOU, Léon, retired professor (Benin)

The Honorable Urbain Karim DA SILVA, Founder and Director of the Musée da Silva (Porto-Novo, Republic of Benin)

M. DOSSOU-DOSSA Bernard, societal and civil researcher and Director of *Que Choisir Bénin* and the *Association pour une réparation globale de l'esclavage* (APRGE)

M. GBENAMETO Justin, former magistrate and prosecutor (Benin)

Mme. GOUNOU Colette, former museum curator (Benin)
His Highness, Kpoto-Zounme HAKPON III, King of Porto-Novo
Dr JAGNE Siga Fatima, Commissioner of Social and Women's Affairs, ECOWAS (Gambia)
Mr KAFUI YAO Dade (Ghana) EDIKANFO Pan-African Youth and Student Internationalist Link
(EDIKANFO-PAYSIL) and INOSAAR-RepAfrika
Dr KAMARA Jemadari, Professor and Director of the *Centre for African, Caribbean and
Community Development*, University of Massachusetts (Boston, USA)
Roi KOKPON, representative of the Université de Houdégbé (Benin)
Mr MAWUSE YAO Agorkor, *Global Ewe Community of Practice for Pan-African Reparatory
Justice* (GECOPPARJ) and the *VAZOBA Afrika and Friends Networking Open Forum*
(Ghana)
Ms MODESTIN Yvette, Founder and Director of *Encuentro Diaspora Afro* and diaspora
coordinator for the *Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean Women*
(Boston, USA)
Dr SÈNE Ousmane, Director of the West African Research Centre (WARC) (Dakar, Senegal)
Ms. STANFORD-XOSEI Esther, *Pan-African Reparations Coalition in Europe* (PARCOE) (UK)
Mr ZEGUEN MOUSSA Toure, *Mouvement Social Panafricain pour le Développement Intégral -
UBUNTU* (Benin)