

**Closing session review  
and  
Symposium Recommendations**

**The 6<sup>th</sup> International Youth Symposium  
Organized by UNESCO and the Bob and Rita Marley Foundations  
4 February, 2010  
Kingston, Jamaica**

## **Session Review**

Present were Dr Bofo, RMF, Jamaica delegation leader, 2 Kingston & St Andrew reps, 6 Unesco delegates from overseas

The session was chaired by Dr Eleanor Wint

### **The session was asked to respond to the following questions**

- What have you gained personally from the conference?
- How important it is to have a conference of this sort?
- How to move forward from this position – recommendations?

What have you gained personally from the conference?

Speaker 1- You can study so much about a place but when you come here you get a better sense; for e.g, youth speaking of their problems first hand. This will stick in my brain forever. These are the people who are writing history books.

Speaker 2 (a) For me the culture in T&T is diverse and there is racial tension at present. So young people live for today. We do not think about Africa and history. I am a Trini and I now have a greater appreciation to know who you are, you need to know about yourself. (b) When having discussions in the conference, when people were relating their experiences-I was thinking what can I say to you. This is their reality. Society looks down on them and when I see how talented they are, they just need opportunities.

Speaker 3-For me this was an eye opener. I didn't see the negative impact from Kartel music until I came here. I need to be a role model for my little brother and watch the music I listen to. We need to have a high self-esteem. I have room for improvement. I have choices in life. I am the one that determines my path.

Speaker 4-How crime affects me and everyone in general. I learn about peoples' experiences. About Africa that I didn't know. It was an eye opener to do more research so I can defend myself in discussions. Also I learn about self-esteem.

Speaker 5- I learn the choices we make as young people. We tend to take quick decisions. We learn that we must think before we act.

We love to talk about music (in reference to Dr. Donna Hope's lecture that dance hall is the most influential music to young people, followed by reggae). Different countries have different perspectives of music and let others know about Jamaica and music. We can dispel some stereotypes because we learnt about the reasons and causes affecting young people. Self-Esteem

is very important, to think high about yourself. The history of Marcus Garvey, money and crime discussion.

Speaker 6-This is a whole new experience for me. I didn't know a lot about Africa. My own culture. The things they teach one in the books. I have new knowledge about Christopher Columbus (he did not discover the Americas). As Ziggy said in his presentation, a spark can start a big fire. If one person starts, others join to help. At home they tell us people can't walk the streets in Jamaica; but it's different when you come here. Some of the things that we complain about, when we look at the kids here, it is a real struggle. There is much I didn't know about Africa. Speaking to the kids after yesterday, they know better how to deal with anger. I feel more comfortable to go into the classroom. I brought 25 of them yesterday. All will share with others. Sen. Bartley spoke about going to foreign, we expect to see foreign. What you take for a joke is serious to others. The racial clip yesterday at the Liberty Hall. It showed us the history of slavery. I take a page from each day's activity and learn from it. It begins with me, it begins with us.

Speaker 7- I have learnt a wealth of knowledge about history and culture. It is sad that the majority of young people still do not know their history so they are make wrong choices. I gained the appetite to know my heritage, to know Africa. Yesterday Joel, the tour guide at Liberty Hall spoke about the side mirror on the car. You need to know your past to know your future as progressive young people.

Speaker 8-I believe it is an awakening, people from different socio-economic status come together to discuss one issue. That's the high point. This problem is affecting us over the past 10 years. I see young people trying to find solutions to crime, so it is important to me, black African consciousness and the upholding of truth, this was a first time exposure. I can remember when I went to Trelawny, I was being interviewed for a job, a big man was interviewing me. An issue came up about Africa, so I started to say great things about Africa. He asked if I would like to go to Africa to jump up bare foot etc, etc, the argument got bitter and I never got the job. We as black people know nothing about the past. The Garvey Museum yesterday. The idea of bleaching etc. This fire doesn't die this minute. The exposure of youth to Kingston as many have never gone further than Collysmith Dr. I have a saying, exposure is a hell of a thing. I hope to maintain links. Sharing, strengthening, keeping the dialogue going.

Speaker 9-There was this young lady in the group, and when her friends saw the tour guide do the bleaching action her friend said to her "you dat." When she went home she was crying and threw away the large bag of bleaching cream. She said if I am bleaching, I'm not black and I am not proud of myself.

## How Important It is to have a Conference of this sort

- Guidance for the youth: because of the high rate of crime RMF & BMF want to show youth alternatives to that way of life.
- Hope & pray that this would extend to more youth in the inner city. It's now planted in their lives through the youth development program. Even if it touches just one. It touch more than one.
- Wake up call: It makes you aware. You know you have a national hero. So it causes us to do more research and learn more.
- Youth are the future. It is an investment in the future. Engaging youth in issues. Engage in the future, their safety. The livelihoods of the future. Still have elders guiding the youth but youth sit at the table.
- It was very important because we see a difference between when we started and when we left. It's good inviting outside delegates. We were nominated, we can take the message and bring back to our country with media interviews, school meetings, with government endorsement. My message going down the road already in Grenada.
- A lot of information not taught in schools. All this interaction with outsiders giving me knowledge.
- Governments from different countries should be a part of this. The academic curriculum needs this

## Recommendations

### Media

- Why u neva diyah??: This must be communicated to the media houses only 102fm and Hype TV came for 1day. Media must take Africa Unite Youth Symposium more seriously.

### Broadening of conference

- Meeting discussed possibility of having smaller meetings in different countries. Cost was a critical factor . Also discussed possibility of 5 youth from different parishes in Jamaica. Alternative sessions included; having young people write an essay, competitively it should lead to a prize. Also that Bob Marley came from poverty should be more emphasized. Look where he is now. Conference should also recognize gender difference in problems. Spilt conferences between boys and girls.

- Are there youth programs in schools? E.g UNESCO community clubs. Students could work on projects. They would feel empowered and build esteem productively. Use this as a structure for future conferences.
- Have art competitions through schools. Bring winners together on weekends and have a prize. Send invitations to schools to be involved so you will have positive discussions and entertainment.

### **Web based contact**

- Setup a website to expose outcomes of the conference. Channel information for everyone to see. Site can be linked to [www.africa-unite.org](http://www.africa-unite.org) and UNESCO. Also setup Skype conferencing.

### **Partnership**

- For future conferences establish partnerships with local youth organizations e.g National Center for Youth Development and Kingston and St. Andrew Action Forum. Makes mobilization easier. Also needs to include other organizations, institutions, private sector.

Dr. Boafo then spoke about UNESCO's plans for International Youth Forum which is held every odd year in October. Consequently there are a number of preparatory conferences being held in preparation. He suggested that all participants should read the report of the CARICOM Youth Summit held end of January 2010.

### **FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To maintain contact with UNESCO so as to ensure representation from this conference on the UNESCO Youth Forum.
2. Orlando Hamilton (Jamaica) to be Africa Unite Regional Coordinator with responsibility to maintain contact with participants of 2008 and 2010. He will be assisted by Andrea French (St.Kitts).
3. Joel Tyril (St.Vincent) is to design a website which he will send to Dr. Wint so that when activated, it will be linked to the Africa Unite website.
4. All delegates who circulated their contact details must contact Orlando with a report of their activities by the Feb. 15, 2010.