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**Follow-up to the commemoration of the two-hundredth
anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade**

Programme of educational outreach on the transatlantic slave trade and slavery

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/114, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on continued action to implement the programme of educational outreach on the transatlantic slave trade and slavery, as well as steps to enhance world public awareness of the commemorative activities and the permanent memorial initiative.

Working in close collaboration with States members of the Caribbean Community and the African Union, the Department of Public Information organized a series of activities during the last week of March 2012 to mark the fifth annual observance of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. A concert was also organized in the General Assembly Hall, which took place on 15 May 2012. The theme of the 2012 commemoration, "Honouring the heroes, resisters and survivors", recognizes those who fought against slavery in the past as well as those who fought and continue to fight against the continuing consequences of racism and prejudice.

The Department of Public Information utilized its network of global information centres to disseminate the message of the observance internationally and to promote partnership activities with civil society organizations committed to building awareness of the dangers of racism and racial discrimination, as well as the continuing legacy of slavery and the slave trade.

* A/67/150.



I. Introduction

1. On 17 December 2007, the General Assembly, in its resolution 62/122, designated 25 March the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.
2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to collaborate with and build on the work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), including its Slave Route Project, to establish a programme of educational outreach to inculcate future generations with the causes, consequences and lessons of the slave trade and to communicate the dangers of racism and prejudice.
3. In its follow-up resolutions, including resolution 66/114, the General Assembly further requested the Secretary-General to report on continued action to implement the outreach programme and steps to enhance world public awareness of the commemorative activities and the permanent memorial initiative.
4. The present report is submitted pursuant to those requests.

II. Background

5. The transatlantic slave trade was the largest forced migration in history. The extensive exodus of Africans to many areas of the world over a 400-year period was unprecedented in the annals of recorded human history. The legacy of that migration is evident today in the large populations of people of African descent living throughout the Americas. Public awareness is scant regarding the slave trade and the lasting consequences it has had on societies throughout the world. It is important to acknowledge the contributions that enslaved people and their descendants have made to the societies that forced them into bondage.
6. In the activities organized for the 2012 observance, there was a keen recognition that raising awareness about the transatlantic slave trade can be an occasion to illustrate the impact it has had on present-day society. Many people today are still profoundly affected by the consequences of slavery, manifested through bias, hatred, prejudice and intolerance. Knowing about the history, and the individuals who rose up against slavery, can provide a valuable perspective and be a source of pride and motivation for present and future generations in overcoming current challenges.

III. Heroism, resistance and survival

7. The theme of the 2012 commemoration, “Honouring the heroes, resisters and survivors”, recognizes those who fought against slavery in the past as well as those who continue to fight against the continuing consequences of racism and prejudice.
8. Throughout the present year’s commemoration, the heroes and the anonymous resisters who made sacrifices to bring the transatlantic slave trade to an end were highlighted. Their stories were told, and their images featured, during the General Assembly commemorative meeting, in panel discussions, at student conferences, in study guides, on posters, on exhibition walls and on websites.

9. A visual theme for the 2012 observance featured three faces against the background of the map of the transatlantic slave trade: Zumbi, the last leader of the Quilombo dos Palmares in Brazil; Harriet Tubman, one of the leaders of the Underground Railroad in the United States of America; and a third face representing the countless anonymous resisters and survivors of the transatlantic slave trade.

IV. Remembrance activities

10. Remembrance activities were organized at Headquarters and other United Nations offices around the world. The 2012 commemorative activities at Headquarters commenced with a week-long programme from 23 to 30 March. They continued with a concert in the General Assembly Hall on 15 May and an exhibition at Headquarters, which opened on 27 March and remained on view until 10 June.

Department of Public Information/non-governmental organization panel discussion

11. Organized by the Department of Public Information, the non-governmental organization briefing on the theme “Honouring the heroes, resisters and survivors” opened the commemorative observance on 23 March and was broadcast on the Internet. Presentations were made by Sasha Turner, Assistant Professor of History, Quinnipiac University; Rita Pemberton, Professor of History at the University of the West Indies; and Herb Boyd, an author, journalist and activist. Moderated by the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, the panel discussed the geographical origin of the Africans who were deported during the transatlantic slave trade and noted the relationship between the slave trade and women’s human rights.

12. Panellists recognized the plethora of unsung heroes and heroines who utilized a variety of strategies to challenge the system of enslavement. They also recognized a number of familiar heroes who organized slave resistance, including Nanny of the Jamaican Maroons, Toussaint L’Ouverture, Julian Fedon, General Buddhoe, Samuel “Daddy” Sharpe, Olaudah Equiano and Phyllis Wheatley, a poet and the first African-American woman to publish her writing.

Solemn commemorative meeting of the General Assembly

13. The highlight of the remembrance activities was the solemn commemorative meeting of the General Assembly on 26 March. The Deputy Secretary-General read the following statement of the Secretary-General:

The transatlantic slave trade was a tragedy because of slavery’s fundamental barbarism and immense scope and because of its organized, systematic nature. One set of human beings — the traders, owners and others who participated in and profited from this evil enterprise — elevated themselves above another, assaulting their victims’ very essence.

Statements by the President of the Assembly and representatives of the regional groups and of the host country highlighted the devastating impact of slavery and called for this painful chapter never to be forgotten or repeated.

14. The keynote address was delivered by Rick Kittles, Scientific Director of African Ancestry, an ancestry tracing company based in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Kittles, who is also an Associate Professor in the Department of Medicine and the Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of Illinois, Chicago, described how and why it was important to educate young people of African descent about their history.

15. The dancers and drummers of the National Ballet of Cameroon presented a re-enactment of the voyage of those Africans who were captured in their villages, taken across the ocean, sold as slaves and brought to their new lives in the plantations of the Americas.

Exhibitions and cultural and culinary events

16. Two exhibitions were developed in 2012: a core educational travelling exhibit and a more elaborate exhibit for the annual commemoration at United Nations Headquarters. The Headquarters exhibit included artefacts and images from private collections and historical images from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Yale University Press, the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., and numerous academic sources. The exhibit also included maps from the *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, two slide shows, audio listening stations featuring interviews by United Nations Radio with academics, scholars and descendants of enslaved people in English, French, Kiswahili, Portuguese and Spanish, as well as an installation by Haitian-American artist Alex Locadia. The core travelling exhibit, designed and developed by the Department of Public Information, will be sent to various locations in 2013, in cooperation with the network of United Nations information centres.

17. The exhibit opened in the Visitors Lobby on 27 March with remarks by the Chair of the Permanent Memorial Committee and the Minister for Culture of Cameroon. Following the opening, a celebration of the cultural and culinary specialties of Africa, the Caribbean and the Americas was held in the General Assembly lobby. Chef and culinary consultant Scott Barton discussed the historical similarities between the foods and culinary practices of African countries and the countries to which enslaved Africans were brought. The event also included performances by the National Ballet of Cameroon and steel pan music performed by a musician from Trinidad and Tobago.

Documentary film screening

18. The documentary film entitled *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-enslavement of Black People in America from the Civil War to World War II* was screened on 28 March. Based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning book of the same name by Douglas A. Blackmon, the film challenges the belief that slavery in the United States ended with the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. It chronicles the ways in which African-Americans were coerced into forced labour in the Reconstructionist South following the Civil War and into the twentieth century. Following the screening, the film's producer, Sam Pollard, led a question-and-answer session with the audience, which included representatives of Member States and civil society and students.

Global videoconference for students

19. A global videoconference brought together some 600 students from secondary educational institutions in five locations: the Dominican Republic, the Gambia,

Ghana, the United States and Bermuda. The interactive forum aimed to bring together societies linked by the history of the transatlantic slave trade to share stories about local heroes, resisters and survivors; to raise global awareness of the widespread resistance to slavery; to consider the legacy of slavery and its link to racism and prejudice; and to discuss concrete actions that can be taken to address these problems.

20. The keynote presenter for the conference, Christopher Moore, Curator and research historian for the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, spoke about his efforts to restore the African burial ground in lower Manhattan. Student leaders participated as moderators.

21. A selection of images and materials was made available for download on the Remembrance website and, in advance of the videoconference, two Facebook pages with corresponding study guides — one for students and one for teachers — were created by the Department of Public Information.

22. A survey was distributed at United Nations Headquarters following the student videoconference. A selection of responses given to the request "Please tell us something about the transatlantic slave trade that you didn't know before participating in this year's conference" follows:

- I didn't know that slavery in other places was so similar to slavery in America.
- I did not know personal stories, heroes, and the age that children were in the transatlantic slave trade.
- I didn't know how heavily it impacted other countries, the fact that it still goes on today to a certain degree.
- I was not aware of Transatlantic Slave Trade hero Joseph Cinque who revolted and was able to be liberated and sent back to Africa.
- I did not know that very young children were also taken into slavery as opposed to just strong men and women.
- I didn't know that it affected places other than the United States and Africa.
- I learned that it had a big influence on the development of Caribbean countries.
- I didn't know that we are all connected by a common thread.
- I didn't know that the slave trade had reached places in the Caribbean.
- I didn't know slavery still existed around the world.
- I didn't know that children ages 10-12 were also bought into slavery.
- I didn't know about the African burial grounds in New York and that Wall Street was a slave market.

Radio features

23. A special feature of the commemoration week for 2012 was the broadcast of several radio programmes on the slave trade. They included interviews conducted on the subject in Brazil, Cuba, Ghana and Jamaica with academics, scholars and descendants of enslaved people, as well as the rebroadcast of previous features on

the issue. A dedicated page was created on the United Nations Radio website, which included programmes in English, French, Kiswahili, Portuguese and Spanish.

Remembering the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade Concert

24. On 15 May, a concert was held in the General Assembly Hall, organized by the Department of Public Information in partnership with the Permanent Mission of Jamaica, and with the collaboration of the member States of the Caribbean Community and of the African Union. Entitled “Remembering the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade Concert”, it was intended to raise awareness of the transatlantic slave trade and its continuing consequences and the permanent memorial at the United Nations in honour of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

25. The President of the General Assembly made a statement at the concert, followed by a video message by the Secretary-General and remarks by the Chair of the Permanent Memorial Committee on Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Chair of the Group of African States. Sheila Walker, cultural anthropologist and Executive Director of Afrodiaspora, Inc., provided a historical background accompanied by a video presentation. Performers included Rachelle Jeanty, a Haitian singer/songwriter; Mbaye Dieye Faye and Sing Sing Rhythm of Senegal; Chen Lo and the Lo Frequency, a six-member hip-hop band from the United States; and the reggae group Third World from Jamaica. The concert was broadcast on the Internet (live and archived), and also carried live on television in the New York City area. It was also broadcast on several African partner channels of the Canal France International television network.

Outreach through United Nations information centres in collaboration with civil society organizations and Member States

26. The network of United Nations information centres, services and offices around the world organized educational outreach activities to raise awareness of the International Day in collaboration with local partners, including host Governments, media, civil society, youth associations and academic and cultural institutions.

27. The following summary provides examples of activities undertaken by United Nations information centres during the week of the commemoration:

(a) Prominent posting of the message of the Secretary-General for the International Day of Remembrance on the websites of the United Nations information centres and its timely dissemination to the media and civil society;

(b) Field trip for 160 students and teachers, from six Ghanaian schools, to the Cape Coast Castle UNESCO World Heritage Site organized by the United Nations Information Centre in Accra. As a follow-up to the field trip, students were invited to submit artwork on the theme “The door of no return: reliving the experience of the transatlantic slave trade”;

(c) Conferences organized at a university by the United Nations Information Centre in Antananarivo, and in which five schools participated. Activities included lectures, a film screening, a poetry recital and an exhibition contest;

(d) Screening of the UNESCO film *Slave Routes: A Global Vision* at the Information Centre in Brazzaville. About 300 high school students participated in the discussion that followed the screening;

(e) Field trip to a slave trading post in Bagamoyo, United Republic of Tanzania, for students and teachers organized by the United Nations Information Centre in Dar es Salaam in collaboration with the Youth of the United Nations Association and the Tanzanian Ministry of Tourism and Natural Resources;

(f) Exhibition of photos, posters, books, films, maps and brochures in 10 high schools in Burkina Faso, at the Parliament and at the United Nations Information Centre in Ouagadougou; the audience included students, parliamentarians, national authorities, civil society, media and the public;

(g) Lecture on slavery and human rights given by the Director of the United Nations Information Centre in Pretoria. Attended by representatives of academia and civil society, the event took place at the District Six Museum in Cape Town, an important site in the struggle against apartheid, and a settlement for freed Malay slaves in the Cape Province of South Africa;

(h) The United Nations Information Centre for Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Mexico published on its website the initial segment of the e-book of essays by scholars and other experts from the region on various aspects of African heritage and its influence on the societies and culture. In coordination with educational authorities, schools associated with UNESCO and other partners, the Centre organized several programmes of activities with secondary-school students from public and private institutions that included the presentation of the UNESCO video entitled *Slave Trade Routes* followed by panel discussions and artistic workshops;

(i) A modified version of the United Nations Headquarters exhibit was produced by the United Nations Information Centre in Ankara and held in the city's main metro station, which has an estimated daily traffic of 500,000 people. Exhibit panels were translated into Turkish, and are expected to travel to other cities in Turkey;

(j) An exhibition, seminar, poetry recitation and short drama production for senior students and youth groups at the United Nations Information Centre in Dhaka.

28. The 2012 commemoration served to further institutionalize within the international community the commemoration of the International Day of Remembrance, which is being observed in a growing number of countries.

V. Information outreach and resources

29. For the 2012 commemoration, the Department of Public Information created a visual identity, a commemorative poster, a banner and postcards depicting the theme "Honouring the heroes, resisters and survivors".

30. The Department established a website in the six official languages of the United Nations to facilitate global access to the commemorative activities. The site provides educational resources on the transatlantic slave trade, with links to the message of the Secretary-General, a description of events at Headquarters and around the world, stories about heroes featured on the poster and related documents.

31. As part of its outreach programme, the Department facilitated the live webcast of events organized for the observance. Excerpts were made available through the UNifeed programme to television stations worldwide. The Media Liaison and Accreditation Unit provided services to journalists who reported on the commemorative events. United Nations Radio, United Nations Television, United Nations Webcast and the United Nations News Centre all covered the remembrance events.

32. The remembrance activities were covered by diverse media outlets, including *Antigua Observer*, Xinhua news agency and People's Daily Online, the Cuban Radio Cadena Agramonte, the *Jamaica Observer*, the *Miami Herald*, africanewswire.com, africanspotlight.com, afriquejet.com, allafrica.com, blacktiemagazine.com, caribcreolenews.com, caribbeanlifeneews.com, caribseek.com, correodelorinoco.gob.ve, elespectador.com, indiablooms.com, in-jamaica.com, jamaica.gleaner.com, jamaicans.com, modernghana.com, newKerala.com, newsroomamerica.com and scoop.co.nz. A number of cultural and research institutions also published stories about the activities, such as Afro-Ubuntu in Uruguay, Fundación Drecca in Colombia, AfiaviMag.com in France, the Coalition to Preserve Reggae Music, and University and Community Action for Racial Equity in the United States.

VI. Activities by Member States

33. Member States transmitted information on national educational programmes as requested in paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 66/114. The following summary describes the activities:

(a) The education system of El Salvador included the issue of slavery in its social studies curriculum at the secondary and tertiary levels. The programme covered various aspects, including past slavery in the Americas and the national territory — such as the abolition of slavery in Central America by the Constituent Assembly in 1823, and the Civil War in the United States — as well as protection from modern slavery as defined by international instruments. Relevant textbooks and study guides were made available by the Ministry of Education;

(b) Greece included the issue of slavery and the slave trade under the human rights education curriculum at the primary and secondary levels. The key concepts and principles of intercultural education are covered in school curricula, including respect for diversity, equal chances and democratic citizenship;

(c) The Government of Jamaica has been working through various organizations to educate society on the issue of slavery. The work of the Ministry of Youth and Culture is guided by the National Cultural Policy, which encourages and promotes awareness of the history and cultural expressions of Jamaica, and is implemented by various bodies: the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission promotes cultural programmes and activities; the Institute of Jamaica has responsibilities involving several museums and libraries, including the African Caribbean Institute of Jamaica/Jamaica Memory Bank; the Jamaica National Heritage Trust is responsible for the declaration, preservation and maintenance of national sites and monuments, several of which are associated with the transatlantic trade; and the Jamaica Intellectual Property Office protects instruments of traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions and genetic resources. The Ministry of Education has developed the Culture in Education Programme, which

encourages the study of, reflection on and use of national images, symbols and heroes, as well as participation in events marking local and national achievements, and encourages visits by the school community to places of historical and cultural interest. The Programme requires that each school appoint a culture agent responsible for overseeing the implementation of the programme. Various tertiary-level institutions, such as the University of the West Indies, offer heritage-based degree courses;

(d) Jordan integrated the issues of slavery and the slave trade in the civic and national education modules of its curriculum for grades 8, 9, 11 and 12, including the feudal and slavery system and its consequences;

(e) Kenya included the teaching of slavery and slave trade in the education curriculum at its primary and secondary school levels. The Kenyan Ministry of Education has recommended that the study of the issue be strengthened in the upcoming curriculum review;

(f) The Supreme Council for Education of Qatar included the issue of slavery and the slave trade in the school curriculum under the topic of the development and promotion of human rights, based on freedom, which comprises two elements: human rights and fighting slavery;

(g) The Ministry of National Education of Senegal has developed a curriculum on the history of slavery and the slave trade for secondary school students, which includes a field visit to and/or a school project about the House of Slaves on Gorée Island; Senegalese schools that are members of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network participate in activities linked to the commemoration of the victims of the slave trade and the abolition of slavery;

(h) Social and civil competency is one of the components of the mandatory secondary education in Spain. In support of the curriculum, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of Spain has developed educational materials that include the issue of slavery. The theme of slavery is also being taught in a multidisciplinary approach, which has resulted in several projects, such as the award-winning Slave Route multimedia product for primary school students;

(i) The history of slavery and the slave trade has been included in the school curriculum of Togo at the primary and secondary levels since before the country's independence. The curriculum currently is being revised to ensure an increased awareness of slavery and the slave trade by present and future generations with the goal of fostering dialogue and understanding among peoples. The new curriculum is being developed along with a broader project on the Slave Route in the Gulf of Guinea.

VII. Contribution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to the programme of educational outreach on the transatlantic slave trade

34. Within the framework of the strategy defined for its initiative entitled "Slave Route Project: resistance, freedom, heritage", UNESCO has produced a new educational film entitled *A Story Not to Be Forgotten* in order to more effectively tap the potential of audiovisual material in raising awareness about the tragedy of

the slave trade, slavery and their consequences in modern societies. A related pedagogical booklet targeting young people has also been released.

35. The initiative was made possible thanks to the generous financial contribution of the Government of Bulgaria. The 35-minute film, presented from the perspectives of enslaved men and women, tells their stories through archival documents, contemporary works of art, film excerpts and other sources. The film is sponsored by the renowned French soccer player Lilian Thuram. Produced with the active participation of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network, the film has involved more than 300 young people and some 50 education professionals from different regions. A preview screening was organized in April 2012 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris in the presence of the Director General, several high-profile figures and 250 young people. The film was broadcast in France in May 2012 by Ô television channel, on the French national day dedicated to the memory of the abolition of the slave trade and slavery. A talk show recorded at UNESCO was prepared for this occasion with school teenagers and experts, including Christiane Taubira, Minister for Justice of France.

36. Since its release, the film has been screened at various prominent cultural events around the world, including on 16 June on Gorée Island within the framework of the UNESCO transatlantic slave trade educational project entitled “Breaking the silence” and on 1 July during the popular Ketikoti festival in Amsterdam, celebrated annually to mark the abolition of slavery in the former Dutch colonies.

37. Currently available in French and English versions, the film will be broadcast on television stations in various regions of the world and also made available on the UNESCO website. In addition, plans are under way for the creation of a DVD version to ensure the widest possible dissemination.

VIII. Future activities

38. The Department of Public Information will further strengthen its collaboration with Member States in the annual observance of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. It will seek practical and innovative ways to engage in education outreach activities on the theme of the transatlantic slave trade, including in different locations around the world. An initial review of the surveys distributed following the student videoconference confirmed the importance of the educational outreach activities to ensure that the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade is better understood. The Department will build on the results of the survey to further develop its educational outreach efforts.

39. The Department will continue to lend its full support to the promotion of the permanent memorial initiative, in the planning of which member States from the Caribbean Community and the African Union play a primary role, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Partnerships and UNESCO. The network of United Nations information centres will assist in awareness-raising activities.

40. The Department will seek ways to consolidate existing partnerships and establish and develop new relationships with research institutions, schools, colleges and other educational entities involved in the study of the slave trade, and to

communicate the dangers of racism and prejudice. Collaboration with UNESCO will be intensified, including through the dissemination of educational materials developed under the UNESCO Slave Route Project.

41. Efforts will be made to strengthen partnerships forged in 2012 and during past commemorations with civil society organizations, museums and academic and cultural institutions. The Department will explore the possibility for these partners to co-host or sponsor commemorative activities on their premises, with the goal of expanding the scope of activities and reaching an even wider audience.
