

On this day, this 22 February 2003, we the participants of this Conference on *Arab-Led Slavery of Africans*, do solemnly make this declaration that, we the people, Africans and African descendants, herein referred to as Africans, striving for the unity of the African Nation, intend to reclaim our voice, and to speak for ourselves on the above and related issues, after centuries of silence and non-self-expression.

We attest to the fact that the African continent and people have served as a millennia-long reservoir for uncompensated labour obtained through brutal and dehumanising processes for the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Indian Ocean areas and trade routes. Arising out of these labour extraction processes, in the form of slavery, Africans have historically become people whose slavery amongst all others had, for centuries, assumed inter-continental forms. In this context:

WE CONDEMN, in the strongest possible terms, all forms of slavery, historical and contemporary, in all parts of the world.

WE RECOGNISE that the Arab-led slave trade of African people predates the transatlantic slave trade by a millennium, and represents the largest and, in time, the longest involuntary removal of any indigenous people in the history of humanity.

WE RECOGNISE the need to combat and eliminate the collective amnesia about Arab enslavement of Africans. In this respect, more research needs to be conducted on the subject of the Arab and Ottoman slave trade of Africans. More workshops need to be undertaken which will facilitate the conscientisation of people in Africa and the wider world. Academics and scholars of African descent are called upon to play an active role in this.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE the need to mobilise structures, worldwide, for the elimination and banning of slave practices in the world.

WE DEMAND that the issue of the contemporary slavery of Africans in the Afro-Arab borderlands be placed before the African Union (AU).

WE DECRY the impact of African slavery on Africans and its effects towards the cultural denationalisation of Africans.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE the need to establish relations between continental Africans and the African Diaspora in the Arab world.

WE CONDEMN the practice of buying slaves to free them. In the estimation of the Conference, buying slaves in order to free them – the so-called ‘slave redemption’ – amounts to legitimising slavery.

WE CONDEMN, in the strongest possible terms, the practice of forced concubinage of enslaved African women, and the use of enslaved African women for the purpose of breeding children who become and continue to be property held by Arab masters.

WE CONDEMN in the strongest possible terms the collaborationist role of some Africans in this trade.

WE ACCUSE Arab societies of historical and continuing crimes committed against African boys subjected to forced castration (of which the survival rate has been one in ten), to create a eunuch class.

WE ACCUSE Arab societies of the historical and continued taking into slavery of young girls to serve as sex slaves to their masters with no right to marriage unless prescribed by their masters.

WE ACCUSE Arab societies, in some areas of the Afro-Arab borderlands, of genocide against Africans, particularly in the Sudan.

WE CHARGE the responsible Arab societies with ethnocide of African people through forced cultural Arabisation processes.

GIVEN THE FACT that the millennia-long Arab-led slavery of Africans has wreaked incalculable damage on Africans and African society, apologies and reparations are due to Africans.

WE CALL for a civilisation dialogue between the Arab and African peoples.