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Note to Correspondents

EXHIBITION COMMEMORATING VICTIMS OF SLAVERY, TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

OPENS AT UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, 24 MARCH

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Ambassador's Caucus and the African Union, in association with the United Nations Department of Public Information, will open an exhibition titled *400 Years of Struggle: for Freedom and Culture* at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, 24 March in the South Gallery of the Visitors' Lobby at United Nations Headquarters.

To be launched by Kiyo Akasaka, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, the exhibition will be on display until mid-April as part of the activities marking this year's International Day of Remembrance of Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, designated in General Assembly resolution 62/122.

The first of the three-part exhibition, *Amistad: A true Story of Freedom*, uses large scrims and canvas text panels to tell the story of the 1839 slave revolt aboard the slave ship *Amistad* and its aftermath. The second component, *The African Resistance*, comprises 33 JPEG images exhibited as a slide show, highlighting the efforts of slave-trade victims to combat that tragic practice from its onset, through a multifaceted campaign that was to extend to four continents over the course of four centuries. The third element, *The Haitian Inspiration*, celebrates what came to be known as the revolution of Saint-Domingue, the rebellion against the slave trade which liberated modern-day Haiti as the first independent country in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The combination of these three components graphically captures the overall theme of this year's commemoration: "Expressing Our Freedom through Culture" -- a testament to the centrality of the cultural heritage of enslaved African peoples in their struggle to regain their freedom. That heritage strengthened their fraternity and resolve to rebel against their captors, and its preservation underscores their spiritual connection to their original motherland.

The Haitian component in particular underlines the dedication of this year's observance to Haiti, in recognition of the many ways in which the revolution of Saint-Domingue inspired many other enslaved peoples to step up efforts to combat the transatlantic slave trade, undeterred by the threat of torture, degrading punishment and execution.

The Department of Public Information organized the exhibition in collaboration with the New London Maritime Society-Custom House Maritime Museum (www.nlmaritimesociety.org); the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (www.nypl.org/locations/schomburg); the Caribbean Cultural Centre (www.cccadi.org); and United Haitian Artists (www.unitedhaitianartists.org).

The week of commemoration at United Nations Headquarters opened on Monday, 22 March, with a music and food cultural event, followed by a film screening on Tuesday, 23 March, of the documentary *Slave Routes: Resistance, Abolition and Creative Progress*, produced by New York University's Institute of African-American Affairs.

Other commemorative activities include: a panel discussion on "The impact of cultural expression as a means of resistance to the transatlantic slave trade", by renowned intellectuals and experts on the subject; a student videoconference on the theme, involving more than 500 middle and high school students from all regions; and a solemn ceremony to be attended by Member States and featuring sombre readings and recitals by various artists, including United Nations staff.

For more information, please contact Jan Arnesen (exhibition), Outreach Division, Department of Public Information, at tel.: +1 212 963 8531 or e-mail: arnesen@un.org. For information on other commemorative activities please contact Jullyette Ukabiala, Publications and Editorial Cluster, at tel.: +1 212 963 1961 or e-mail: ukabiala@un.org.

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