

Yurumei Declaration

We, the participants of the First International Garifuna Conference, convened at Peace Memorial Hall from March 10th – 13th 2012 in Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines commemorate the survival of the Garifuna People. We have gathered in Yurumei, the birthplace of the Garifuna Nation, to share ideas, examine issues, network and strengthen global links to support the development of the International Garifuna Research Centre (IGRC). The Centre was created to research, document and disseminate information on the history, heritage and culture of the Garifuna worldwide;

As scholars, social and cultural activists and students from Barbados, T&T, Dominica, Belize, Honduras, Canada, Martinique, USA, Venezuela and St. Vincent and the Grenadines we :

- Remember that 217 years have passed since the death of the Garifuna Resistance Leader Paramount Chief Joseph Chatoyer;

- Deplore the brutal suffering of our Garifuna people on the island of Baliceaux and remember the brutal expulsion of our Garifuna people from Yurumei 215 years ago;

- Reaffirm our commitment to continuing the struggle for freedom and consciousness, until the construction of one unified Garinagu people.

- Recognize the importance of organized struggle and strategic alliances for the promotion of human rights for Afro-descendants, Indigenous peoples and Garifuna communities that will make possible their equal participation and integrated sustainable development which do not compromise their identity and dignity;

- Celebrate the 2001 UNESCO proclamation that Garifuna Heritage and Culture is a masterpiece of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity;

- Acknowledge the 2007 United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples , and affirm that the Garifuna People forms part of that Indigenous struggle;

- Acknowledge the contributions made by progressives in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and other countries in lifting the Garifuna consciousness of our peoples and for laying the groundwork for the Garifuna Heritage Foundation;

- Salute the 2011 United Nations Resolution A/66/460 proclaiming 2012-2022 as the first Decade of Afro-Descendants as a direct result of Recommendations made by the First World Summit of Afro-descendants celebrated in La Ceiba Honduras in August 2011;

- Reaffirm Yurumei as the ancestral homeland of all Garifuna people around the world;

WE, the scholars, social and cultural activists, and students attending this conference:

- 1) Express support for the initiative of The Garifuna Heritage Foundation in organizing and convening this First International Garifuna Conference.
- 2) Approve the establishment of the First International Garifuna Research Centre here in Yurumei.
- 3) Recommend that the island of Balliceaux be preserved and protected as a sacred heritage site for the use of future generations.
- 4) Are committed to the retrieval and documentation of historical and cultural information about Garifuna people
- 5) Will share our research with the Garifuna Heritage Foundation in a continued effort to augment its library and archives on Garifuna history and culture.
- 6) Support all efforts to revitalize and encourage the Garifuna heritage, language and culture here on Yurumei.
- 7) Support south/south cooperation between our countries, such as the Memorandum of Understanding and alliance between ODECO (Ethnic Community Development Organization) Honduras and TGHF Yurumei, and commit ourselves to further such alliances.
- 8) Recommend the convening of an annual Garifuna Studies conference or colloquium here in Yurumei.
- 9) Demand reparation for the loss suffered by Afro-descendants, Indigenous People and Garifuna People as a result of the actions of those responsible.

Made at Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, this 12th day of March, 2012.