

June 14th, 2017

Mayor Tory and The Mayor's Executive Committee
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor John Tory and Executive Committee Members,

Re: Approval of the Interim Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti Black Racism

We are writing this letter in support of The Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism that has been put before you for consideration, and to provide some important feedback on it. We represent a diverse cross section of members of the African Canadian community in Toronto. We commend the City of Toronto for showing leadership in developing this initiative, especially at a time when Anti-Black racism is having a particularly devastating impact on the African Canadian community. It is long overdue.

African Canadians are successful, contributing members of this fine city, but we continue to see their aspirations and full potential restrained by the toxic mix of state violence, income inequality and Anti-Black racism. In our school system, in child welfare, in policing, in employment, in hate crimes - Anti-Black racism manifests in numerous ways and as noted in the plan this has been outlined in over 41 separate reports. As you know the evidence of the economic cost of racism and Anti-Black racism for the City of Toronto is also clear and compelling. The time for concrete action is now.

African Canadian communities are a vital part of this City and we all lose when Anti-Black racism crushes human potential. Our community has not only been struggling and speaking out for justice for generations, but has also been involved over many years in building numerous concrete, community based initiatives to build capacity and combat oppression. In this regard, we applaud and support the persistent advocacy, activism, and commitment of Black Lives Matter Toronto and others.

To build a better future for all of us this plan needs to be approved and supported by your Executive Committee and eventually the full Council. We commend its focus on:

- Children and Youth Development
- Health and Community Services
- Job Opportunities and Income Supports
- Policing and the Justice System
- Community Engagement and Leadership

We believe that there are some critical elements that must also be considered:

The need for a coordinated Inter-Governmental response - We recognize that solutions to Anti-Black racism require engagement and collaboration from all three levels of government. We commend the City for becoming a leader in this work and sending a signal through actions that Toronto is serious about addressing Anti-Black racism. We note the commitment to working with the Province (e.g. the 3-year *Anti-*

Racism Strategic Plan) but this collaboration seems underdeveloped. We did not note any similar recognition of collaboration and alignment with the Federal government.

African Canadian community oversight and accountability- Page 47 of the plan references the need for engagement from African Canadian community experts to create working groups to guide the implementation of this plan. We believe this is essential. **However, the plan needs to articulate a clear and consistent vision and values framework for African Canadian community development and engagement that provides for diverse African Canadian leadership, oversight, and respectful collaboration at every level of the plan.**

We therefore propose the following amendment to the Staff Report:

*"Staff report back on the possibility of working with the African Canadian community to establish a diverse, representative **African Canadian Affairs Oversight and Collaboration Committee**".* The membership of this Committee would be determined by a process developed by the African Canadian community and would ensure that planning, decision-making and information sharing is transparent and promotes a robust and respectful permanent structure for ongoing engagement between the City and the African Canadian community.

The need for appropriate and meaningful resources - We believe it is critical that the Executive Committee support the need for the plan to be well appropriately and strongly resourced through the allocation of new resources. We recognize the many demands on the City's budget, and that the current financial framework of the city presents a problem for a comprehensive Anti-Black racism strategy being adequately funded. We strongly suggest that the framework needs to be seriously reviewed in order to not undermine this important agenda. **An important measure of the strategy will be evident in the resources applied to it.** Additionally, where feasible examine the reallocation and prioritization of existing spending for programs and City grants to take on an African Canadian community focus. This is a cost-neutral way to immediately garner resources for this plan. Additionally, the creative exploration of leveraging resources from other jurisdictions is also recommended.

The need for a "whole system approach" at City Hall. Because we are mindful of the complex nature of City government, internal alignments, integration, collaboration, and accountability are all important conditions for success. We strongly believe that the plan should:

1. Direct all Directors responsible for the recommendations to **review and consult with their staff to develop a multi-year plan of action/response to the recommendations** including existing programs/services, existing budget allocations and any new services and relevant required programs, services and funding emerging from the action plan.

2. Direct the Office of Partnerships to work with Directors and the community to **develop a roundtable of funding partners** to explore funding and investments for moving forward on the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan.
3. Direct the Diversity and Human Rights Division to **track, monitor and report on the implementation of the plans to the Executive Committee** on a tri-monthly basis in the first year and bi-annually thereafter.

In conclusion, we urge you to approve this **Action Plan to Confront Anti Black Racism** and push for its approval at Council. By approving this plan and supporting its implementation, the City will show that it is in genuine solidarity with its African Canadian residents.

Original Signed by,

List of African Canadian Organizations

African Canadian Legal Clinic- Margaret Parsons
African Canadian Social Development Council- Brianna Makwele
All Afrikan People's Revolutionary Party- Thandiwe Chimurenga
Afri-Can Foodbasket- Anan Lololi
African Canadian Coalition of Organizations- Arlene Wallace
Black CAP- Shannon Ryan
Black Community Network of Peel (BCAN)- Dr. Julian Hasford
CEE Centre for Young Black Professionals- Dr. Kofi Hope
Dejinta Beesha Community Services- Dr. Mohamed Gilao
Harriet Tubman Community Organization- Akilah Hamilton
Jamaican Canadian Association- Yolande Davidson
Midaynta Community Services-Mahad Yusuf
Tabono Institute- Nene Kwasi Kafele
Zero Gun Violence Movement- Louis March

Individual Citizens

Dr. Winston Husbands
Rosemarie Sadlier
Andrea Pierce
Lloyd Mckell
Kemi Jacobs
Tiki Mercury Clarke
Dave D'Oyen
Trevor McAlmont
Dr. Shamara Baidobonso
Dr. Uzo Anucha
Idil Abdillahi
Dr. Jennifer Clarke
Floydeen Charles-Fridal
Wendy Komiotis
Gwyn Chapman