



La très honorable · The Right Honourable

MICHAËLLE JEAN*A.N.*A.A.*A.K.K.*A.M.K.*A.B.

27^{ème} gouverneure générale et commandante en chef du Canada · 27th Governor General and Commander in Chief of Canada (2005-2010)

**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION**

Nairobi Summit of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

The Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean Invites the International Community to National Black Communities Summit in Canada

OTTAWA, November 12, 2019 — The Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, 27th Governor General of Canada and 3rd Secretary General of La Francophonie, is joining today and until November 14 the Nairobi Summit in Kenya, a high-level meeting marking **the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)** held in Cairo in 1994, which for the first time recognized the rights of women and girls as an essential vector of international development. This year in Nairobi, an important portion of the Summit is devoted to the **International Decade of People of African Descent (2015–2024)** proclaimed by the United Nations, aimed at achieving full recognition, greater justice and equity for the Black communities, still are among the most discriminated against and marginalized.

Today, former Governor General Michaëlle Jean, an African-Canadian from Haiti, and H.E. Ms. Epsy Campbell Barr, Vice President of Costa Rica, the first black woman to hold such high office in Latin America, made a strong appeal to the international community: *“The International Decade of People of African Descent must result in the implementation of concrete, coordinated and multisectoral action plans to end the chronic and systemic discrimination that affects black communities everywhere. Racism is a source of exclusion, hatred and violence, a relic of colonial times when millions of men, women and children captured in Africa were deported to the Americas and Europe to be enslaved. It remains a devastating scourge with immeasurable social consequences, including in terms of sustainable economic development, which should above all be human and inclusive,”* Michaëlle Jean stressed.

A large working session will be devoted to the mobilization already underway in several Caribbean and Latin American countries, and also in Canada with the National Black Communities Summit, spearheaded by the Michaëlle Jean Foundation, a third edition of which will be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, from March 20 to 22, 2020, with March 21 marking the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Dis-

crimination. With more than 2,500 participants in its previous editions, in Toronto in 2017 and Ottawa in 2019, the National Summit is the largest gathering of its kind for Black communities in Canada, with the broad participation and solidarity of many partners from the public and private sectors, national and international institutions and organizations, and groups from civil society at large.

Michaëlle Jean, also slated to give a closing address to Nairobi proceedings today, invited the international community to join in Halifax the strong mobilization around the National Black Communities Summit. “The **Halifax Appeal** will be universal in scope and a historic step towards achieving the objectives of the International Decade for People of African Descent. It offers an opportunity to say and show with all our voices and all our forces gathered together that the elimination of racial discrimination is a shared responsibility, one which we must assume collectively everywhere, for a more just and inclusive world. Leave no one behind is our motto, an essential condition, a prerequisite to fulfill the 2030 Agenda and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.”

For more information:

Soraya Lemur

Director of Communications and Programming

Michaëlle Jean Foundation

1-613-562-4861, communications@fmjf.ca

Relevant links:

michaellejean.ca

NairobiSummitICPD.org

blackcanadiansummit.ca
