

Cllr Jean-Roger Kaseki

Motion: Black History Month's Celebration – Draft Speech

Thank you Mr Mayor

Mr Mayor, I am delighted to follow my two colleagues who spoke excellently and passionately while moving and seconding this motion

Mr Mayor Black History Month celebrates the journey, the talents, the spirit and the joy that our black community has given to this country

Black History Month can be a wonderful celebration of the contributions that black people have made to our country's history. All too often, however, those contributions are heralded in October but seldom mentioned throughout the rest of the year. Ideally, every month's history curriculum should include those contributions, but how do you integrate black people history and cultural heritage into the curriculum on a regular basis?

Mr Mayor I am proud to be Black African, proud to be in this country the United Kingdom, where a Labour government brought forward the Race Relations Acts of 1968 and 1976, and the Equalities Act of 2010, proud to live in Islington, which is one of the most diverse boroughs in London. "One society, many cultures"

As we say knowledge is power, education is really important to enable various communities, including black communities to learn from each other's' cultures and values to foster mutual understanding, mutual respect and co-operation for community cohesion and community safety. That is why, it is imperative we recognise every person's contribution to our society at a time when there are forces in British politics determined to undermine our Great British values of openness, tolerance and respect: values that make Britain great.

Mr Mayor, as we live in a diverse society, there is no doubt that more education of black history and cultural heritage in schools and

universities will help our children and our citizens about understanding the world we live in and this will be beneficial for the good of the humanity as to learn, to witness is to validate the existence of stories, and to protect their places in the world. We are acting as witnesses when we participate and learn about others and communicate what we have experienced to others. The active listening and witnessing is vital to the production of co-ownership of people's truth, and it is also an obligation of engaging the conversation that is essential to the process of getting into it

Having said that on black history's education let me now share with you a cultural philosophy from Sub-Saharan Africa called UBUNTU as this inspired many great African Leaders to excel in different fields of life, iconic leaders such as Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Patrice Lumumba and whose struggle for peace and justice was legendary. 'UBUNTU' in the Xhosa culture means: "I am because we are".' It means standing for the ideals of justice, peace, equality, freedom, and reconciliation.

In a speech given by President Barack Obama:

Ubuntu is a very African concept and really means sharing and giving, being part of a community. Obama explained that Nelson Mandela understood the ties that bind the human spirit. ... There is a word in South Africa — Ubuntu — that describes his greatest gift: his recognition that we are all bound together in ways that can be invisible to the eye; that there is a oneness to humanity; that we achieve ourselves by sharing ourselves with others, and caring for those around us

The appeal of all peace makers is to feel the human-ness within ourselves, our immediate families and the communities to which we belong and then apply this same feeling to the whole world. It is an appeal that is made again and again in many different ways

The other aspect of Ubuntu, 'Achieving ourselves by sharing with others' seems to work at a deep and personal level. A sense of achievement and fulfilment from helping others seems to be a basic human characteristic. We depend on others for our existence. What makes humans so successful is our ability to pass on knowledge,

technology and skills; building up from one generation to another. Each generation doesn't have to invent the wheel. As world communication has improved from simple transport to flight, from the telegraph to World Wide Web, the sense that "we are all bound together in ways that are invisible to the eye" becomes more real.

Mr Mayor UBUNTU: I am because we are

Let us all promote black history education in schools to continue breaking barriers for a fairer society. Thank you