



Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality

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For immediate release

Statement on the occasion of Human Rights Day 2021

The Board, membership and secretariat of the [Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality \(ECADE\)](http://WWW.ECEQUALITY.ORG) join the world in celebrating International Human Rights Day.

Under the theme “**Reducing inequalities, Advancing human rights**,” we collectively, as a large extended family of human beings, commemorate the anniversary of the day in 1948 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration on Human Rights - December 10, International Human Rights Day. Appropriately, this day calls for remembrance, celebration, reflection, positive affirmation, commitment and bold action.

Communities, activists, civil society organisations, watchdogs, researchers, collaborative fora and indeed governments as well as other duty-bearers, must be commended for all the progress made while supported and encouraged to do better where improvement is required. What still holds true is that whilst we have come a long way, there is still a long journey ahead. We learn from an old African proverb that, “If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.” We must all journey together towards full enjoyment of our inalienable human rights, truly leaving no one behind, recognising that diversity is a strength, a superpower! To quote Human Rights High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet, “Equality and non-discrimination are the key to prevention of some of the biggest global crises of our time”.

It is sobering to acknowledge the reality of the existing and persisting inequalities, that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, have escalated in frequency, intensity and visibility. The facts continue to fly in our faces. One need only think of the rapid accumulation of incidents of gender based violence (GBV), an ugly reality, or the inclusion we lack, in some instances the exclusion that is promulgated, which tends to render LGBTQI+ people, migrants, indigenous and tribal people, the disabled, minors, the elderly and women, among other groups, devoid of the necessary tools to stay afloat or thrive.

Having said this, we should be willing to recognise, as best we can, our own part in the state of affairs and as an act of leadership, reconcile how we both help and hurt the noble cause of doing justice to the fundamental proposition that, “All humans are born free and equal in rights and dignity”. We need to reflect on our behaviours, actions and inaction; understand where we fall short and endeavour to learn; demonstrating continuous growth.

Especially in this regard, ECADE is determined to lead by example and use this forum to acknowledge and take ownership of all our shortcomings. At the same time we express gratitude and appreciation for the many opportunities that have been made available and are anticipated, for future opportunities for learning, character building and healing. Let us remember, with reflection and commitment to action, we come to embody true leadership in service of humanity, as advancing human rights requires both individual and collective responsibility in working to achieve equality.

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About ECADE

The Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality Inc, is an independent umbrella of human rights organisations operating in the small islands in the eastern Caribbean. The Alliance's core membership represents the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community. Associate membership comprises organisations working intersectionally. ECADE currently serves 26 member organisations in 9 countries.

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