



DEBATES OF THE SENATE

2nd SESSION • 43rd PARLIAMENT • VOLUME 152 • NUMBER 38

THE PAN-AFRICAN HERITAGE WORLD MUSEUM

Statement by:
The Honourable Patricia Bovey

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

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Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, I'm very pleased to let you know that Canada is playing a significant role in the forthcoming Pan African Heritage World Museum, set to open in Ghana in the fall of 2023. Indeed, the sod-turning for this stunning building was this morning. The plans can be found online.

Appointed to the international curatorial council for this large transformational international museum project, my role is to liaise between Canadian and international participants and its museological and logistical aspects. Canadian Black artists from all creative disciplines, from every part of Canada, have been engaged with me in meeting to discuss the approaches for our physical exhibition in the new building and the online virtual exhibitions. Virtual presentations are slated to commence in 2022. A content steering committee, the membership of which is about to be confirmed, will represent all art forms. This group of Canadian Black artists will determine the overall themes and the curators for both the physical and virtual dimensions.

Leading up to this point, the discussions of the wider group have been rich, the realities brought forward both tough and inspirational, and the visions of the artists truly exciting. All have underlined the uniqueness of the Canadian Black experience globally while recognizing the lack of knowledge at home and abroad of Canadian Black history. In determining the project scope, one member of the group said, "Canada is what

pan-African is envisioned to be: cultural identity, not a melting pot." Another quote: "Centering Blackness and Canadian culture" is key. Ideas will develop, I know, and the interdisciplinary approach these artists are proposing is exciting and innovative.

Meanwhile, the international leaders of the project have proffered that Canada will be the signatory project in the inaugural presentations and the featured North American nation. Also, our virtual contributions, given the group's initial ideas, will "provide the mantle framework regarding diversity in unity."

Colleagues, this project embodies the spirit of the Senate's *Cultural Diplomacy* report and the strong bilateral relations between Canada and Ghana. You can appreciate my support and willingness to do what I can to realize this opportunity. I am grateful for the honesty, creativity and energy of the many artists already involved, as I am for the community groups looking to ensure logistical aspects.

The many discussions I have had with people across Canada and in government have been enlightening and passionate. All are in favour of the project and of Canada's participation and leadership role. I know Canada will tell its story of Black Canadians in a compelling and innovative way. And I also know the messages and insights will challenge us all to be united in our diversity. Let's show the world we are up to it. Opportunity is knocking and Canada is answering.
