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# THE ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

A Manifesto for the Acceleration  
of Black Wealth-Creation and Economic Cohesion

Prepared by:  
Stéphanie Melyon-Reinette, PhD

& Contributors:  
Kerlande Mibel, Chanzo Greenidge, Sharon  
Nelson, Anaïs Verspan, Karine Pédurand, Döry, Will Prosper, Christian  
Agbobli, Lyndsay Daudier, Pamela Alfred, Frantz Saintelley, Thierry Lindor, Émilie Nico-  
las, Elvira Kamara-Nangnigui, Marjorie Villefranche, Jaël Elysée, Gisèle Hortense Ndong  
Biyogo, Alice Niyizurugero, Abisara Machold

# **PREAMBLE**

We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discrimination

Money won't create success.  
The freedom to create it will.

– Nelson Mandela



# Rationale for the Alliance and Manifesto

This Alliance emerges from the concern of a number of individuals for the welfare and betterment of their communities. They are young CEOs, researchers, community leaders, artists, intellectuals and activists who have mobilized to organise for action- collective action for the good of all.

The Economic Alliance aims to bring together Black men and women from a range of backgrounds around their development both as a people and as individuals, their prosperity and that of their countries (of origin and residence). We will invest our efforts and resources not only in our communities, but in all societies, all decision-making bodies, and all opportunities in order to secure our economic well-being.

The aim of the IBEF is the advancement and economic empowerment of Black people at national, international and local levels. Its mission is the acceleration of wealth among Blacks, and this Economic Alliance is one of its cornerstones, relating to its stated objectives of:

- Promotion of the economic empowerment of Black people
- Engagement Blacks on economic issues
- Proposal of pragmatic solutions to economic issues faced by Blacks
- Mobilization of stakeholders relevant to these challenges and issues to drive the economic advancement of Black people

It is apparent that Blacks around the world are socially marginalized. A cinderblock - or a glass ceiling- is clearly working to restrain Black people and communities in their vast majority to the lowest strata of the

societies in which they live. We speak then of institutional racism. We can also have cause to speak of a 'color line'.

As DuBois noted, «the problem of the color line (must be questioned) not simply as a national issue and personal goal but rather in its larger world aspect in time and space.»

Indeed, the color line has penetrated the collective unconscious, and even today's political consciousness. And if it is the result of an economic system of domination and exploitation of Blacks and people of color imposed by white colonizers, it also stems from the internalization of this color line by these self-same Black and oppressed peoples. The internalization of this color line leads to the internalization and social codification of subaltern color status relating to social class, opportunities, wealth distribution, etc.

- Dr. Stéphanie Melyon-Reinette (Guadeloupe)

The result is not only violence that is 'allegedly' intrinsic to Blacks, but also apparent in our representation of ourselves, sometimes engendered in the absence of a general determinism which favours our identities, sometimes rejected, but stereotyped, over-determining us in our accused bodies. A destiny that we, members and supporters of the Alliance, wish to dismantle in order to embrace who we are and to reinvent our identities, our ideas, our imagination and our destinies.

These facts present us with a challenge: that of a change of direction. We have defined guidelines in order to déchouer, to uproot the evils noted above. In proclaiming the following guidelines, we are the heralds of a total emancipation from the clichés, grievances, di-



visions, stagnation and deficits that some would assign to us. We proclaim them as a profession of faith. We have based our reflections on two definitions of «wealth»:

**Cultural and civilizational values: moral, intellectual and spiritual.**

**Material goods. Products from the economic activity of a community.**

These guidelines are primarily the results of the 1st unconference organized by the IBEF, whose iterative approach advocates the combination of reflection and real and tangible initiatives to meet our respective economic needs. At this event, Canadians of diverse origins (Germany, Austria, Cameroon, Canada, Congo, Ivory Coast, Haiti, Jamaica, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo, Trinidad & Tobago) as well as French citizens (Guadeloupe) made proposals on priority economic issues and perspectives in order to collectively build a strategy to promote our empowerment.

These guidelines are also the result of reflections from several engaged intellectuals and activists who mobilized to submit key ideas for the development of this Alliance, a profession of faith which we wish to see applied at the individual, community and national level.

Furthermore, it is important to point out that this Economic Alliance is possible thanks to various movements and initiatives, such as Negritude, which preceded the IBEF, as well as those who fight today for the emancipation of racialized and oppressed and racialized and the defence of their heritages.

Finally, it is essential to emphasize that our Alliance is a grouping of partisan reflections that addresses itself to Black people and for Black people, while not aligning under any ideological framework other than that of the emancipation of Blacks. Our guidelines transcend political parties and ideological families, whatever they might be (ethnic, clan, political, color-based, etc.). The drafting of these guidelines is part of a comprehensive approach embracing all that we are. A participatory approach to stress that we all work for our respective and common futures, since we are masters of our own destinies.

« Je dis qu'il faut tirer la chaîne et lever l'ancre et puis partir Car cette heure est propice et bonne »

.....  
– Anthony Phelps (Haïti)

Car il est temps d'enlever les sutures aux cicatrices du passé faisant de tout noir une victime, fébrile, inconsistante, et impuissante.

Car il est temps d'abroger les conséquences de la colonisation, et de faire feu de tout bois, nous descendants du bois d'Ébène, en tirant la meilleure essence de notre génération, de celle dont nous procédons et de celle qui procédera de nous.

.....  
– Nèfta Poetry (Guadeloupe)

« Le temps n'est plus au jeu nous avons dépassé le chant des marionnettes. Le temps n'est plus au sommeil »

.....  
– Anthony Phelps (Haïti)



# Core precepts of the economic alliance

In signing the Economic Alliance, we commit to:

## #1 CHANGING OUR OUTLOOK FAIR AND WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

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« Il m'arrive, je l'avoue, d'avoir honte de cette pitoyable trahison de nos exploits et de nos conquêtes d'antan. Trahison de nos aspirations les plus nobles à la liberté, l'égalité et la fraternité. Trahison de nos rêves les plus grands de briser toutes les chaînes. »

– Michaëlle Jean

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We are committed to never betray our ideals and to demonstrate boundless honesty about what we are for those who are to come after us, come what may. We must take an uninhibited and uncompromising look about our shortcomings in order to overcome them and to work in a positive dynamic.

It is true that the perspectives others may take towards us may leave us with a palpable bitterness, which can disconcert the best among us. However, we will

not allow ourselves to be labelled, or even named by others. From here on, we will work in full authority over our identities.

We must leverage the media. But which ones? To counteract the harm caused by directed information, misinformation in a word, we must **#MiserSurLes-BonsMédias**, but even better:

- Create our own news media to develop a new narrative,
- Use our existing news media
- Ensure the visibility of black intellectuals
- Define our own aesthetics **#NappyMovement**

We reject colorism and sexism as well as all forms of discrimination so that our respective well-being contributes to improving our social, cultural and economic lives **#SharonNelson**

In acknowledging the racialization and feminization of poverty, we embrace our peers, colleagues, collaborators and fellow citizens in all their diversity and difference. Racism and/or structural discrimination related to gender must under no circumstances continue to contribute to the impoverishment of our communities and peoples. **#MyrlandePierre**, sociologist.

## **#Bilan #Manquements #StopauxStéréotypes**

For us, the economic welfare of Black communities will be also measured by the level of development of Black women.



## #2 CREATING CONSCIOUSLY VALUING OUR ARTISTES

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« To most white people, Jazz means Black and Jazz means dirt, and that's not what I play. I play Black classical music ».

– Nina Simone

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Nous devons « poser une base, construire, enraciner un rapport de confiance, une relation solide et sororale, c'est l'éthique de notre travail. Nous prenons pour modèle le #sousou et nous le transposons dans nos arts. Nous avons pour but de créer une économie culturelle solidaire, pérenne, et autonome en valorisant l'esthétique noire hors des stéréotypes et des blés imposés. Être une femme artiste, c'est être créatrice de mémoire(s), c'est aussi être un connecteur de patrimoine. Nous semons les graines d'agrumes du Nouvel An chargées d'espoir, d'amour et de prospérité pour une économie fertile »

– Collectif LFP Anaïs Verspan –plasticienne  
Karine Pédurand –comédienne  
Dory Sélèsrika –Slameuse  
#LFP : Lanmou Pli Fò / Love. Perfect.Feeling

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We will excel when given the opportunity to demonstrate our abilities. And if the color line prevents us from attaining these roles, we will have recourse to OUR artists and creatives to make it happen: for Blacks, by Blacks, and as Blacks.

We recognize the economic impact of the artistic and cultural sector and will always value the work of our artists, because they are bearers of our collective imagination and a part of our Legacy.

We know that art and culture can contribute to improving the living conditions of communities by reducing violence on the ground.

#PeterFlegel, Fondation Michaëlle Jean.

## #3 EDUCATING IN OUR IMAGE

We know and will consciously act to commemorate and teach the contribution of Blacks to civilization as well as the history of colonization, genocides and the slave trade, firstly for the benefit of our children and our peers, and then for the host society.

We recognize that «the future prosperity of our communities also requires this effort of remembering that is an essential step in the valorization of Black people in order to allow everyone to be aware and to take stock of the machinery of destruction that has been put in place to achieve commercial objectives and the acts of the heroes of Black societies who have resisted.» #KerlandeMibel

We know and will pass on the great deeds of our ancestors as well as their suffering, without glorification or a sense of victimhood, in order to bring about collective appreciation of our stories in full recognition of our complete integrity and our contributions to humanity. #WillProsper, Founder of the MNR (Montreal-NordRépublik).

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« Les modèles de réussite au sein des communautés noires sont fondamentaux pour la persévérance scolaire et le développement professionnel »

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We will strive to innovate in education, to integrate, inspire and mobilize young people by offering them examples of success within their communities. We will choose to provide pedagogical guidelines in accordance with the type of citizen that we want to see emerge from within our communities: individuals who are conscious, (pro-)active, determined and committed to the prosperity of their people.

## #4 ESTABLISHING VIRTUOUS CYCLES, OUR NETWORKS

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« You don't fight racism with racism, the best way to fight racism is with solidarity »

– Bobby Seale (Black Panther party)

« Revolution is about the need to re-evolve political, economic and social justice and power back into the hands of the people, preferably through legislation and policies that make human sense. That's what revolution is about. Revolution is not about shootouts »

– Bobby Seale (Black Panther party)

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We will dispense with the concept of «every man for himself» to form ourselves into a lobby which transcends our differences. Our differences cannot separate us, nor can our personal opinions and individual ambitions work against our common and respective development. **#ChristianAgbobli #ChanzoGreenidge**

We, ourselves members of Diasporas, commit to refraining from condemnation of fellow brothers and sisters who have left to develop themselves overseas. We undertake to never prejudice their identities or their belonging to the larger black community, regardless of their life choices (be they sentimental or residential).

The context of globalization in which we live must not only become an asset, but another string to our bows. We will leverage various international networks to build our businesses in a sustainable manner at all geostrategic levels. We embrace our brothers in the Diaspora, as unwavering contributors to the improvement of our countries, and as representatives of our cultures abroad. They are bearers of innovation, knowledge and initiatives. **#ChristianAgbobli**

When we belong to the economic elite of the country, we commit to investing in and for our cultures (education, businesses, organizations, artists, creativity...). We will use our native traditional and contemporary cultures as spearheads and battle-horses so that we will no longer be obliged to beg for pennies from external powers that do not adhere to our codes. We will capitalize on our cultures. **#StéphanieMelyonReinette**

When we belong to the economic elite of the country, we will enable the establishment of co-operatives or new models of cooperation and economic development. We must support our more established institutions as standard-bearers for our communities and our cultures. **#MarjorieVillefranche**

## #5 DEEPENING TIES THAT BIND OUR PEERS AND OUR PARENTS...

« I think what motivates people is not great hate, but great love for other people. »

– Huey P. Newton (Black Panther Party)

We will create networks of influence. Our first network, the family, must be protected from all pernicious influences in its path; we therefore commit to restoring the foundations of family in the face of the ruinous impact of colonization, to assist single-parent households by establishing systems of assistance and communication to offer our offspring the necessary frameworks for health and success in life.

Our homes and habitats must be strengthened, valued and respected. It is important to resist gentrification while revitalizing our neighborhoods and countries with a strong black presence and through a strong black population. We will make our presence an attractor, an indication of strength, and an asset. **#Lyndsay-Daudier**

«There is still much to do to facilitate economic integration. It is up to black communities to develop a clear vision on what they want and to create the necessary levers to ensure commitment on the part of government agencies to the achievement of those objectives. In effect, bureaucrats and elected officials can provide leadership and have a role in the social mobility of our communities” **#KerlandeMibel**

In developing our economic might, we will invest in the political and public spheres to deepen the involvement of our communities in state institutions and government organizations to ensure a presence that goes beyond quotas. Strategic alliances and institutional politicization must be weapons which are acquired in greater volume and are better distributed. The democracies in which we operate will have to reckon with us, our skills and our demands. **#ÉmilieNicolas**



We are committed to overthrowing «White privilege» and bringing down systemic racism, which plays a key role in keeping black populations in conditions of poverty. **# ElviraKamara-Nangnigui**

We will promote and introduce ground-breaking initiatives, reflections of our confidence and our mutual trust. It is essential to encourage risk-taking. We will enter, therefore, into a dynamic of bravery **#Dare**. We will achieve this by fostering networking, and strengthening ties. **#KomlanMessie**

## #6 THE TECHNOLOGICAL CUTTING-EDGE AND PROTECTING OUR CULTURES

« Penser et agir par nous-mêmes et pour nous-mêmes... accéder à la modernité sans piétiner notre authenticité »

– Léopold Sédar Senghor (Sénégal)

Future prosperity requires the appropriation of new technologies. The sciences offer real opportunities and contribute to social mobility (availability of jobs, professional mobility, emerging careers)

**#FrantzSaintellemy**, Founder and CEO, incubateur 3737 **#YvesToussaint**, Co-Founder of Outpower

We foresee our sustained involvement in the emergence of new technologies which are respectful of both our socio-cultural and natural environments. We commit to creating while preserving our native habitats, to invest our knowledge within a framework of sustainability. Our environmental responsibility will ensure sustainable economic development both in terms of developing cutting-edge technologies and in the natural diversity of which we are custodians and inheritors. Social mobility, the development of new tourism, competitiveness and ecology will be combined.

We will encourage our youth to build enterprises in these two areas: Cutting-edge technology and ecology to establish and/or sustain our competitiveness in international markets.

We will create, protect and defend our intellectual property and patents while valuing our natural, renewable and clean resources. **#Sustainability**

## #7 OUR MARCHES, OUR MARKETS CREATING OUR ENTREPRENEURIAL DYNAMICS

Dark & Lovely, you will think this brand is by dark and lovely people, but no, it is from L'Oréal !”

– Abisara Machold

We understand that our consumption choices and our spending contribute to or detract from the development of our societies. So what if we decided as citizens to consume responsibly? **#GisèleHortenseNdong-Biyogo**

We must create our own markets and put an end to the co-optation of our own niches by Western conglomerates. We need to create our own entrepreneurial synergies in order to highlight our strengths and to exercise control over our supply **#StéphanieMelyonReinette**

We will advance by controlling our markets. Our communities, here and elsewhere, are high growth-potential markets. We will create wealth while valuing our black heritage and contributing to the display of our aesthetics, codes and values in a positive light. **#AbisaraMachold**, CEO of Inhairitance.

« L'immobilier – the Ultimate Equalizer – est un levier de taille dans la création de la richesse des individus et des collectivités. Nous investirons dans la pierre. C'est un devoir de devenir propriétaire » **#ThierryLindor**, PDG de REMAX Griffintown

If our people were expropriated from their own country and/or their land, we will launch a counter-offensive aimed at facilitating access to ownership by our peers. We are committed to energizing our entrepreneurship by working for access to public procurement markets, by developing support networks - beyond capitalist precepts of competitiveness - among entrepreneurs, by supporting small traders - crafts are also at the heart of our economies and cultures - for the maintenance of life-sustaining economic activity, and by creating new businesses with high growth potential.



We are committed to creating self-sustaining networks able to perpetuate themselves without closing ourselves to other spheres of exchange. We wish to develop the markets of black communities as future sources of economic vitality. We will develop innovative philosophico-economic thinking in which solidarity has pride of place. We recognize our pioneering potential which has been spurred by the impoverishment to which we have been subjected. Economic Solidarity will be our watchword, both a lever and a protective buffer for our businesses. #Tontines #Sou-souBigScale #PamelaAlfred, Founder of Ask Pam. réer des réseaux autosuffisants, en capacité de s'auto-alimenter, sans se fermer aux autres sphères d'échange.

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We fully support the precepts outlined above and position ourselves as signatories and stakeholders in this profession of faith. By signing onto this Alliance, we adhere to the principles contained herein in order to forever acknowledge, take action and take a stand for our prosperity and our economic development.

**And we proclaim in unison:**

**«I am Black and  
I create wealth.»**



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