BIOSKETCH DR. WILLARD R. JOHNSON

Dr. Willard R. Johnson is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where, for thirty one years he specialized in teaching and researching topics relating to African studies, with an emphasis on international relations, and development policies and institutions. Throughout his professional career, he has combined scholarship and teaching with leadership in public education and political activism relating to the economic and political advancement of disadvantaged or historically victimized communities. Dr. Johnson's research interests have included African international relations and foreign policy, especially as regards ending colonialism, dependency, racism and apartheid in Africa. His research also has concerned the role and potential of finance institutions and non-governmental organizations to enhance African human and organizational capacities.

He is a founder and Senior Advisor to the Boston Pan-African Forum Inc., which fosters public education about and engagement with the African world. He was one of the founders and has served on the national Boards of Directors of TransAfrica and the TransAfrica Forum. He also founded and led the TransAfrica Boston Chapter and its "Free South Africa Movement" campaign that was instrumental in making the banning of South African Krugerrand part of the national U.S. anti-apartheid agenda. He has served as the President of the Board of Trustees of the U.S. branch of the International Defense and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, which channeled legal assistance to, and support to the families of persons detained under apartheid, and the Advisory Board of the Fund for a Free South African and the Interim Board of Directors for the FREESA South African Development Fund.

He helped to establish and/or lead a number of other organizations that have fostered a sense of activism and responsibility among professional scholars as well as the general public for more mutually satisfying U.S. relationships with the developing world. Among these are the African Heritage Studies Association (where he served on the national Board and helped to found its Committee on Positive Action in the early 1970s) and the Association of Concerned African Scholars (having served as National Co-Chairman.) Both of these organizations have been effective instruments for mobilizing professional as well as lay public support for African liberation and development and for U.S. foreign policies and actions respecting underdeveloped countries that are more mutually beneficial.

In 1972 Dr. Johnson directed the Africa Policy Task Force for the McGovern for President Committee, and throughout the 1970s he served on the Democratic Party Advisory Council's Foreign Affairs Study Group. His earlier public service included two terms on the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO.

On leave of absence from his duties at M.I.T. in the late 1960s Dr. Johnson established and led a community-owned and -based non-profit economic development promotion complex, the Circle Inc., that included an education and training as well as public affairs and planning consulting firm (Circle Associates, Inc.), a small business development component, an investment fund, and a management training institute (The Roxbury Institute of Business Management).

He is a founder and currently (1999) serves as President of the Kansas Institute of African American and Native American Family History, a non profit research and service organization to document and commemorate the historic ties between African- and Native-Americans and to promote their common interests.

PROMOTING AFRICA HAS BEEN EASY FOR ME BECAUSE MY EXPERIENCE TEACHES ME THAT IT IS A MATTER OF SELF PRESERVATION (THIS A WIDELY FELT SENTIMENT AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAS –

IN THE 1960S THE KENYA NATIONALIST LEADER TOM MBOYA STATED ON AMERICAN TELEVISION SOMETHING TO THE EFFECT THAT "WE DO NOT THINK YOU HONEST IF YOU SUGGEST THAT YOU THINK AFRICANS ARE BEAUTIFUL, BUT AFRICAN-AMERICANS ARE UGLY"

I DO NOT THINK ONE IS HONEST IF THEY PROMOTE HUMANISTIC AND EGALITARIAN CAUSES HERE AND FOR AMERICA AND AMERICANS, BUT NOT ELSEWHERE, AND ESPECIALLY FOR AFRICA, WHERE WE SEE THE GREATEST CHALLENGES TO, AND PERHAPS THE GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES FOR REAL PROGRESS IN HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS, GOOD GOVERNANCE, SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC PROGRESS FOR THE BROAD SOCIETY BASED ON ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND FOUNDATIONS, SECURING WORKERS RIGHTS, SOCIAL JUSTICE, GENDER EQUALITY, ADVANCING THE PROTECTION OF HEALTH, AND SECURING AND PROTECTING PEACE.

DESPITE THE GREAT PROSPERITY THAT THE AMERICAN ECONOMY HAS ACHIEVED, WE, ESPECIALLY SHOULD BE AWARE OF HOW UNEVEN THE BENEFITS OF THAT PROGRESS IS EVEN IN AMERICA, AND HOW HORRIBLY UNEVEN ECONOMIC HEALTH AND SECURITY IS AROUND THE WORLD.

IN THESE DAYS, WE CONFRONT A SITUATION WHERE THE TOP THREE OR FOUR WEALTHIEST AMERICANS CONTROL ASSETS THAT ARE WORTH MORE THAN THE COMBINED GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCTS OF THE SUB-SAHARAN COUNTRIES COMBINED.. (THE THREE RICHEST PEOPLE IN THE WORLD HAVE MORE WEALTH THAN THE GDP OF THE POOREST 48 COUNTRIES)

OVER 4 BILLION PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD HAVE NO ACCESS TO BASIC SANITATION

AS THE UNDP'S 1998 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT POINTS OUT, OF THE 4.4 BILLION PEOPLE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES,

ONE-FIFTH OF THEIR CHILDREN DO NOT GO BEYOND 5TH GRADE

IN AFRICA, PERHAPS 150 MILLION CHILDREN DO NOT GET TO SCHOOL AT ALL

AND THE COSTS OF ADDRESSING THESE PROBLEMS IS RELATIVELY LOW

BASIC EDUCATION FOR ALL WOULD COST ONLY 3/4 OF WHAT IS SPENT IN THE US ON COSMETICS

INSTALLING WATER AND SANITATION WOULD COST ONLYA BOUT 3/4 OF WHAT EUROPEAN SPEND ON ICE CREAM

BASIC HEALTH CARE COULD BE PROVIDED FOR ABOUT 3/4 OF WHAT EUROPE AND THE US SPEND ON PET FOOD

SO IF WE ARE SERIOUS ABOUT ADDRESSING THE ILLS OF OUR OWN SOCIETY, AND THE OBVIOUS PROBLEMS THAT ARISE FROM GREED, AUTOCRATIC AND OPPRESSIVE GOVERNMENT, PATRIARCHY, AN UNREGULATED GLOBAL ECONOMY THAT FAVORS THE NEEDS OF CAPITAL AND TOTALLY IGNORES THE NEEDS OF LABOR, THAT PUTS PROFIT OVER PEOPLE

WE MUST ADDRESS THE ISSUES THAT ARISE FROM THE WAY THE UNITED STATES RELATES TO AND INTERACTS WITH AFRICANS

IT IS OUR GREATEST CHALLENGE AND OUR GREATEST OPPORTUNITY. IF WE ADDRESS THOSE ISSUES WELL, THERE WILL BE SPILL OVER EFFECTS IN ALL THE WORK THAT WE DO

THE REGIONAL SUMMIT WILL INVOLVE

A ONE DAY POLICY DEIBERATION AND SELECTION OF DELEGATES

PREPARING FOR IT WILL REQUIRE

GOING THROUGH AND CAREFULL ASSESSING AND SUGGESTING AMENDMENTS TO THE BASIC POLICY PLAN OF ACTION

RECRUITING AND ORGANIZING PARTICIPANTS FOR THE BOSTON MEETING

AND FOR THE NATIONAL MEETING

AND FOR A FEW PERSONS, ALSO THE EASTERN STATES REGIONAL

WE NEED

TO GET THE WORD OUT
TO RAISE MONEY
TO RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS
TO RECRUIT DELEGATION ORGANIZERS AND LEADERS
TO IMPROVE/APPROVE THE DOCUMENT
TO GET THE PARTICIPANTS TO THE BOSTON MEETING
TO GET THE DELEGATES TO THE NATIONAL MEETING

Activists plan Africa summit to influence U.S. policy

Kelley Chunn

"Africa is one of the world's greatest frontiers for development.

"With its vast and varied population and resources, and its rich heritage, it will be as important as any region of the world to the future prosperity, harmony, cultural and esthetic expression, and moral well being of the peoples of New England," says Doctor Willard Johnson in explaining the significance of the upcoming New England Regional Forum of the National Summit on Africa.

Johnson, Professor Emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is the presiding chairman of the regional summit which takes place on July 16 and 17 at several venues including Boston's new Bayside Expo and Conference Center,

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the J.F.K. Library, the State Archives and U of MA Boston. Registration is $20 and is open to the general public.

The summit agenda includes a business roundtable on Nigeria under its new civilian government, the screening of African films, a reception which will preview Blackside Productions' new multimedia historical documentary called "Hopes on the Horizon," policy deliberations and the election of delegates.

Organized by the Boston Pan-African Forum, the summit is expected to draw people from all six New England states as part of an historic nationwide effort to create a shared policy agenda to guide U.S. relations with the countries of Africa; educate the public; and broaden the network of Africa's supporters inthe U.S.

Summit deliberations will focus on five themes: Economic development, Trade and Investment; Democracy and Human Rights; Environment and Quality of Life; Peace and Security; and Education and Culture.

Participants will adopt a major new policy plan of action which includes recommendations on those five themes. Delegates from each state will also be elected to represent the region at the National Summit in Washington, D.C. from February 17-20, 2000. In addition, New Englanders will have a voice at the Northeast Regional Summit to take place in Baltimore, Maryland on September 10 and 11.

The New England Regional Summit is the latest in a series of such meetings held in cities around the country including Atlanta, Chicago and San Francisco. The Summit Project arose out of the long experience of people in goverment, aid agencies, and funding sources trying to develop better relationships between the American government and African governments.

Johnson says, "The black community — the African American mainland community and those who have come from the Caribbean and from other parts of the world where there are people of African descent

Willard Johnson, Professor Emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to serve as chairman at the July 16 and 17 New England Regional Forum of the National Summit on Africa, organized by the Boston Pan-African Forum.

— have been intensly interested and involved in Africa, but, for the most part, they have not been an activist community around international policy issues."

Beyond the black community, the summit will give anyone with an interest in Africa or issues concerning global interdependency an unprecedented opportunity to shape official policy towards and societal relations with African states and peoples. Johnson says, "We encourage the widest possible participation in these crucially important deliberations."

Partner organizations for the New England Regional Summit include the J.F.K. Library; John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs, Trotter Institute, and the Africana Studies Department of the University of Massachusetts Boston; Corcoran-Jennison Companies; Massachusetts Trade Office; Massachusetts Export Center; the Embassy of Nigeria; the State Office of Minority & Women's Business Assistance; the World Affairs Council; and the Boston University Humphrey Program.

Contributing Organizations include HSBC Equator (USA), Incorporated, Boston Research Center for the 21st Century; African Studies Center, Boston University; Feinstein International Famine Center, Tufts University; and the Global Citizens Circle.

The Boston Pan-African Forum is a tax-exempt open membership organization created in 1997 to promote a widespread understanding of current social, economic, political and other issues affecting relations between Americans and peoples of African descent around the world.

For more information on the BPAF or to register for the New England Regional Summit, call the BPAF at (617) 524-8529 or log onto their Web Site at www.bpaf.org.