

Dear Friends in Struggle:

The HAITIAN CONGRESS TO FORTIFY HAITI in collaboration with the Haitian Congress for Civic Engagement (The Haitian Congress PAC) invite those of you who are interested in amending the Haitian Constitution to grant Dual Citizenship/Nationality to join us in a series of telephone conferences to be held every Saturday at 4:00 p.m. central time for an hour, starting March 21, 2009 and lasting until June 27, 2009.

We have enclosed an agenda that we will follow strictly for these calls. Those who want to work together, please join us. Please respond to the invitation and indicate that you will participate so we can plan properly. To join the conference call, please dial 641-715-3625. Once you are prompted, dial the access code 335776#. Once you get into the call announce your name, organization, city, state, and phone number.

Purpose

The purpose of the series of conference calls is to give those of us in the Diaspora an opportunity to collectively prepare relevant “*propositions de loi*” to submit to the Chamber of Deputies, the Parliament, and the Executive Branch of our Haitian government so that the sitting legislature can “**declare that the Constitution should be amended**”.

Time is of the essence. TITLE XIII, entitled “*Amendments to the Constitution*” provides in ARTICLE 282 that:

“On the recommendation, with reason given to support it, of one of the two (2) Houses or of the Executive Branch, the Legislature may declare that the Constitution should be amended.”

Title XIII further provides in ARTICLE 281-1 that:

“This declaration must be supported by two-thirds (2/3) of each of the two (2) Houses. It may be made only in the course of the last Regular Session of the Legislative period...”

“[T]he last Regular Session of this actual legislature...” will begin from the first Monday of June 2009 to the first Monday of September 2009, in other words, June 1, 2009 to September 7, 2009. We have no other time to submit our “Proposition de loi” to ask the sitting legislature to recommend the amendment the Constitution to grant Dual Citizenship/Nationality. Please understand, if we miss this opportunity, we must wait until the last regular session of the next legislature which begins its term in 2010 and will hold its last Legislative session from June 2, 2014 to September 2, 2014.

Once the current legislature “...declare[s] that the Constitution should be amended... by two-thirds (2/3) of each of the two (2) Houses...during... the last Regular session and publish such nationally, Title XIII, Article 282 provides that the Constitution can, in fact, be amended by the following legislature at its first session of the following legislature period.

ARTICLE 283 of the same Title XIII on Amendments, states that [a]t the first session of the following legislature period, the Houses shall meet in a National Assembly and decide on the proposed amendment.”

Finally, ARTICLE 284-2 of the same Title XIII entitled “Amendments” states that:

[T]he amendment passed may enter into effect only after installation of the next elected President. In no case may the President under the Government that approved the amendment benefit from any advantages deriving therefrom.

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE HAITIAN CONGRESS PARTICULARLY ON THE ISSUE OF DUAL CITIZENSHIP/NATIONALITY

Since the Haitian Congress is asking activists to participate in this process, it is legitimate to ask the above question. As an organization, The Congress enters this discussion at the national and international level to amend the 1987 Constitution to grant Dual Citizenship to Haitians who have adopted the citizenship of other nations to facilitate their survival as we entered the struggle to fortify Haitians and Haiti in 2004.

As a result of 12 months of concerted effort, we created an organization, the Haitian Congress to Fortify Haiti. We articulated a draft of a working strategic document to guide our work. We united around the mission of The Congress which is:

“To mobilize ourselves as Haitians in the Diaspora to help develop Haiti; to strengthen and organize our human and material resources, our children, friends and allies of Haiti to make a positive contribution towards the creation of a stable, peaceful and prosperous Haiti where we, as Haitians in the Diaspora, can reintegrate ourselves into the life of our country.”

The following represent the additional steps The Congress has undertaken to win Dual Citizenship/Nationality:

November 2006

In preparation for a visit of a delegation of several parliamentarians under the leadership of Senator Lambert, then President of Parliament, to Chicago in November 2006, The Congress led a coalition of activists and scholars through several study sessions of our Constitution of 1987, in general, and Articles 11 and 15, in particular, pertaining to its interdiction of Dual Citizenship/Nationality; the growing international trend on nations granting Dual Citizenship/Nationality to their nationals; the actual consequences of the depopulation; and the disintegration of Haitians from one another, etc. The Congress and the coalition presented to the parliamentarians a “**Petition for the Amendment of the articles of the Constitution of 1987 concerning the Question of Dual Nationality**”. This presentation was done before a crowd of approximately 500 guests at a town hall meeting with these legislators.

December 2006

The Congress established a sub-committee to further articulate our position and educate the local Haitian community about Dual Citizenship and to organize a National Conference on Dual Citizenship. As well, the Congress created a Petition for circulation (See attachment 2) to gather signatures, Diaspora into the national life of Haiti;

January – October 2007

The Congress conducted a series of workshops on Dual Citizenship aimed at religious leaders, leaders of local organizations, and the general public on the North and South Sides of the Chicago Area. For every meeting, we sent invitation packages that included the relevant Titles and Articles of Constitution, the “**Petition for the Amendment of the articles of the Constitution of 1987 concerning the Question of Dual Nationality**”, copies of articles from various publications on the issue of Dual Citizenship from various nations, the Petition for Circulation to gather signatures, etc. As well, members of The Congress went on our various local radio programs to be interviewed and to announce the meetings. At every event during 2007 and currently, we articulated our position, distributed literature and gathered signatures.

November 17, 2007

The Congress held its first national and community-wide event on Dual Citizenship in commemoration of Bataille de Vertierres. We did a national and international mailing which included the relevant Titles and Articles of the Constitution, the Petition that was submitted to the Parliamentarians and the Petition for Circulation to gather signatures. A delegation of twelve Haitian Senators led by Senator Lambert, the then President of Parliament, Depute Maxeau Balthazar, then Keizer of the lower chamber, Maitre Gerard

Gourgues and some journalists attended this event. The Congress made a comprehensive argument for amending our 1987 Constitution to allow Dual Citizenship. This delegation of Parliamentarians also visited New York, Boston, Florida and elsewhere to carry the message that our Constitution must be amended to allow Dual Citizenship.

June 27 – 28, 2008

The Congress launched a call for and held a two-day National Conference on Dual Citizenship on Friday June 27 and Saturday June 28, 2008. The Congress prepared an invitation packet made up once again of the relevant Titles and Articles of Constitution, the **“Petition for the Amendment of the articles of the Constitution of 1987 concerning the Question of Dual Nationality”**, copies of articles from various publications on the issue of Dual Citizenship from various nations, the Petition for Circulation to gather signatures, etc.

We sent invitation packages to local organizations and individuals, to various Haitian media outlets, to various organizations in New York, Florida, Boston, Montreal, Toronto, and Haiti. We invited each political party through their Executive Directors. After the invitations went out to all of the invitees, we made telephone calls to follow up.

The Conference was attended by several individuals representing themselves and organizations. Besides the members of the Haitian Congress, there were Economist Harry Fouché, Chairman of the Consortium for Haitian Empowerment (CHE), Dr. Daniel Faustin, M.D., an officer of SIMACT, Inc., Accountant Frantz Bourget, Census 2010 Organization, Professor Joseph Alfred, CEO of Haitians Community Relations, Inc., Dr. Bernier Lauredans, M.D., President of the Haitian League, Attorney Joseph (Makhandal) Champagne, Vice Chairman and Attorney Emmanuel Coffy, Chairman of the Haitian Leadership Conference, Inc., Mecca AKA Grimmo, Haitian-American Poet/Rap Artist and others. Two of the organizations represented are political parties. Fusion was represented by its President, Pasteur Chavannes Jeune. Both parties are based in Haiti. Among the individuals who attended, two were Haitian elected officials, Senator Roudolph Boulos and Representative Maxeau Balthazar and three were U.S. elected officials- U.S. Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, Illinois State Senator Kwame Raoul and Alderman, Lionel Jean-Baptiste, Chairman of the Haitian Congress to Fortify Haiti. The invitation was made to all political parties, all organizations that we had contact with and the entire Haitian community. We had a great conference. The agenda was comprehensive. The Conference packet included a questionnaire on Dual Citizenship, a Proposition de Loi to Amend the Constitution, requests for participation on a national and international effort to hold an international Conference on Dual Citizenship, requests for participants to assist in the development of the Proposition de Loi, etc.

Out of the Conference came a commitment on the part of the participants who were willing to continue the effort to work to further enhance a Proposition de Loi submitted by the Congress, to hold an international conference in Haiti in the **Summer of 2009** (the dates will soon be announced) and to work to mobilize Haitians in the Diaspora to strengthen the support to Amend the Constitution of 1987 to grant Dual Citizenship.

October 2008

Representatives of the Congress traveled to NJ to a Conference/ Convention sponsored by the Haitian League and to present its argument to representatives from various parts of the United States and to representatives of the Haitian Government present, such as, President Kelly Bastien and Chief of Staff of the Premier Ministre.

Today we are in the process of organizing for the International Conference in Haiti to be held this summer in Port-au-Prince and we are calling on all interested Haitians to join us in this process. We are calling for a series of telephone conference calls to be held every Saturday from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekly until the momentous event. We are calling on those who unite with seizing the moment to submit propositions of law to the sitting legislature to influence them now to declare the need to amend the Constitution so that the succeeding Legislature can actually amend the Constitution to grant Dual Citizenship.

We can be reached at the Law Offices of JEAN-BAPTISTE & ASSOCIATES,
847-424-0400.

Together, we can win!

Lionel Jean-Baptiste, Esq.
Chairman