



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ACIJ/JMB HOSTS PUBLIC LECTURE ON THE YORUBA EXAMPLE OF STORYTELLING

February 12, 2021. (Kingston, Jamaica): - As part of its February Programme Events held under the theme “Jack Mandora: The Roots of Afro-Jamaican Storytelling as an Element of Intangible Cultural Heritage”, the African Caribbean Institute of Jamaica/ Jamaica Memory Bank (ACIJ/JMB) will be hosting a public lecture titled “Storytelling as Social Engineering – the Yoruba Example”. The lecture will be presented live by Professor Emeritus John Ayotunde Bewaji, former professor of Philosophy, University of the West Indies, Mona, on Thursday, February 18, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. on the ACIJ/JMB YouTube platform.

The lecture will shed light on how storytelling is used in the Yoruba societies in West Africa as a vehicle to train young persons and future generations in wholesome traditions and practices, while curbing those which inhibit human progress and the growth of the society at large. In his presentation, Prof. Bewaji will expand on the *raison d’etre* of storytelling, as well as the types, methodologies, and art of storytelling.

Prof. Bewaji, a native of Nigeria and of Yoruba ethnicity, is excited to share with the audience on the Yoruba example of storytelling as a means of social engineering. He states, "Stories are powerful instruments by which society records, preserves, communicates and consolidates ideas, experiences, and values. When used as instruments for the education of the youth, and when they are presented in the native language of the child, with all the cultural values, ideas, and expectations represented, they constitute foundational materials for the lifelong preservation of the identities and realities of the society”.

Prof. Bewaji feels that Jamaica can benefit from the use of wholesome narratives, “especially those that are native to the environment of the youth and developed from the traditions of the society, and those which present concrete ideas which can inform decision-making and choices in life”. He is of the view that Jamaicans need to know about their ancestral connections to Africa, especially through a thorough reform of the stories that they are fed.

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The mandate of the ACIJ/JMB is to research, document and disseminate information on African heritage and its impact on Jamaican culture. The division highlights the contribution of African cultural retentions to Jamaican belief systems to instil awareness and appreciation of African culture as a part of Jamaican heritage.

The ACIJ/JMB is a division of the Institute of Jamaica (IOJ), an agency of the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport.

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