

African-Caribbean Diaspora Launch Strategy at Stormont Parliament

January 11, 2010

Belfast, NORTHERN IRELAND: The Afro-Community Support Organisation of Northern Ireland (ACSONI) today launched its 2010 - 2013 Strategic Plan, to increase Integration, Community Development and Cohesion, with a primary focus upon furthering engagement with all stakeholders in Northern Ireland.

The event was sponsored by The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) with guest speakers - Junior Ministers, Gerry Kelly MLA and Robin Newton MLA, The Rt. Hon Lord Mayor of Belfast, Cllr Naomi Long, Dr Christopher Stange – ACSONI Management and Hon. Consul for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Peter Gitari – ACSONI’s Chair, Andrew Gitari and Azaria Baker - ACSONI youth leaders.

Both Junior Ministers explained that the Executive is committed to social cohesion and integration, because of the enrichment it provides. An inclusive, integrated, equal and shared society, which is at peace with itself, is what we are determined to achieve.



L - R: ACSONI Management, Advisory Board and Youth Leaders with Junior Minister - Gerry Kelly MLA, Lord Mayor of Belfast – Cllr. Naomi Long MLA, Junior Minister - Robin Newton MLA and Brian Rowntree – Chairman NIHE

The Lord Mayor extended her congratulations to ACSONI management on the launch of its 3 year Strategic Plan and the efforts being made on behalf of the African and Caribbean Communities.

“The changes and increasing diversity in Northern Ireland and specifically within the Afro-Community has enriched our lives in many ways, bringing real social, cross-community and cross-cultural, and of course, economic benefits to the province.”

Peter Gitari detailed the main objectives of the strategy and history of ACSONI while Andrew Gitari and Azaria Baker explained the Afro-Soul Youth Project aimed at the younger generation.



L –R: Azaria Baker, Lord Mayor of Belfast – Cllr. Naomi Long MLA, Andrew Gitari

Dr Stange commended all the statutory bodies and organisations that have been working with ACSONI and that we build and strengthen these relationships for a better society of all citizens in Northern Ireland.

The event concluded with a live musical performance from Jamaican mezzo-soprano artist Clover Watts and pianist/composer Gary McDowell followed by food and Fairtrade refreshments.

For more information please visit our website: www.acsoni.org

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