

GARIFUNA COALITION USA, Inc.

La Ceiba Will Host the 8th Annual Garifuna Nation 2007 Conference

Commemorating a Historic Past and a Brilliant Future

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Contact:

Rejil Solis Garifuna Coalition USA, Inc. (718) 451-0614 GarifunaCoalitionUSA@msn.com	Jose Francisco Avila New Horizon Investment Club (917) 783-5298 joseavilaus@yahoo.com
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La Ceiba - The Garifuna Coalition USA, Inc. and Garifuna World, Inc., are pleased to announce that the city of La Ceiba, Atlantida in the North Coast of Honduras has been selected to host the 8th Annual Garifuna Nation Conference in April 2007.

The magnificent Quinta Real Hotel will be the host Conference Hotel. The conference will be accompanied by a series of activities designed as a genuine expression of our idiosyncrasy and culture. These activities will include the following:

- **African Heritage Month Celebrations** - On December 24th, 2002, the Honduran Government's Official Newspaper "La Gaceta" published a law decree 330 – 2002 passed by the Honduran National Congress declaring April 12th of every year as the "The Honduran Ethnic Group's Day". It also, instituted April as the "African Heritage Month in Honduras" to recognize African Descendants' rich culture and their contributions to the development of the Honduran society.
- **The Commemoration of the 210th Anniversary of the Arrival of the Garifunas to Honduras and Central America.** A series of activities have been programmed in the Garifuna village of Triunfo de la Cruz starting on Wednesday April 11th and will conclude on Thursday April 12th as part of our strategic plan to attract a greater number of tourists and foreign currency to benefit the economic development of the Garifuna.
- **The Eighth Annual Garifuna Nation Conference** from Friday, April 13th – Sunday April 15th 2007, where we will analyze our historical past, our present reality and visualize a brilliant future for the Garifuna people. The VIII Garifuna Nation 2007 Conference will continue to concentrate its agenda in promoting harmony and unity among the Garifunas, while promoting the Garifuna Coalition USA, Inc.'s vision of being protagonist of the Garifuna Diaspora's economic development.
- **Garifuna Cultural Carnival** - The First Garifuna Cultural Carnival is scheduled for Saturday April 14th in alliance with the local Garifuna organizations and entrepreneurs, in order to launch the Garifuna Coast Tourist Circuit.

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In his book *La Ceiba, its roots and its History*, Antonio Canelas Diaz states the following: *"The beginning of (presently Barrio La Barra). The Garifunas Arrived in 1810, giving life and movement to the rich Atlantic Coast which had remained dormant and forgotten for over 300 years. In the decade of 1810-1820, the Vincentian blacks started to arrive to the shores of the Cangrejal River in canoes and barges full of merchandise from almost all the Caribbean ports and islands, to be sold in this zone at "give away prices", which was later transferred to Trujillo, Tela, Olanchito and to the interior of the country. The Garifunas opened the first ground routes in the Atlantic Coast, which were known; as "Coast Line Routes"*

During his speech at the VI Annual Garifuna Nation 2005 Conference, the Honorable René Becerra Zelaya Ambassador of Honduras in Mexico and Presidential Commissioner for the Honduran Communities in the United States, representing the Government of President Ricardo Maduro, expressed the following: *"To know the past is the suitable way to understand the present and to plan our actions to affect the type of future we hope for, that is why I want to express my recognition to the organizers of this event for their initiative to retake the history of the Garífuna nation and from that perspective consider what role they want to play in the political life of our country and the importance that it has in search of the development of your communities and consequently for the whole Honduran family."*

It is from the perspective of our historic past that we have chosen La Ceiba as the host city for our VIII Garifuna Nation 2007 Conference and from that perspective search for better levels of development for our communities as we launch a brilliant future, said Rejil Solis, president of the Garífuna Coalition USA, Inc.

About Garífuna Coalition USA, Inc.

The Garífuna Coalition USA, Inc. is a nonprofit organization, integrated by several Garifuna organizations the United States de North America. The Coalition was founded on May 9th 1998. On May 24th incorporated under the nonprofit organization laws of the state of New York. Its mission is Garífuna organizations, empowering them so that they can better help meet the needs of Garífuna community in New York City.