



July 12, 2017

## **PRESS RELEASE**

The Emancipation Support Committee of Trinidad & Tobago was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of South African icon and world famous composer, musician and singer Mr. Ray Phiri in the early hours of this morning (Trinidad time). Mr Phiri whose international fame as a composer rose with his contributions to the Graceland Album featuring Lady Smith Black Mambazo and Paul Simon was due to arrive in Trinidad and Tobago on July 25 to begin rehearsals with the Massy All Stars Steel Orchestra and local choirs Jeune Agape and Signal Hill for a proposed CD and musical tour of selected African countries, beginning with South Africa in 2018.

An initial performance of two songs was planned to launch the international project at this year's *Pan Night* organized by the Emancipation Support Committee of Trinidad & Tobago as a special feature of our twenty fifth anniversary commemoration. The international project coordinator and the major South African sponsor were due to accompany Mr. Phiri to hold talks and enter into formal agreements with the local groups which had agreed in principle to the project. All were looking forward to the implementation of this dynamic international musical collaboration.

Just over a week ago the Emancipation Support Committee of Trinidad & Tobago was about to deliver a proposal to a Trinidad and Tobago company seeking sponsorship for local components of the initial phase of the project when we learnt from our South African partners that Mr. Phiri had entered hospital. At the time Phiri's spokespersons assured that he would be out well in time for travel. However a few days ago we received a call from South Africa and later the BBC news announced that Mr. Phiri had lung cancer.

We wish to send public condolences to South Africa from our organization, from all those in the know and supportive of the project including our musical heroes who were about to enter this partnership, from the people of Trinidad and Tobago who are familiar with the name Ray Phiri. Our condolences go to the family, friends and musical partners of this famous South African who was willingly preparing to add to Trinidad and Tobago's rich musical heritage; to those who helped us to organize this special collaboration and to all the global fans and friends of Mr. Ray Phiri.

The ESCTT has sent condolences directly to the family of Mr. Phiri and will dedicate this year's Pan Night at the Emancipation Village to this giant of the musical world who was willing to share his talents with some of our own great artistes.

Khafra Kambon  
Chairman