

## 2013-J2097

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 42nd Anniversary of the International African Arts Festival

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body, in keeping with its time-honored traditions, to recognize and pay tribute to those organizations which foster ethnic pride and enhance the profile of cultural diversity which strengthens the fabric of the communities of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 42nd Anniversary of the International African Arts Festival, to be celebrated on July 4-7, 2013, at Commodore Barry Park in Brooklyn, New York; and

WHEREAS, This year's theme is "NDUNGA" Justifier/Justice from the Congo; and

WHEREAS, The International African Arts Festival (IAAF) is dedicated to the preservation of art forms, traditions, and cultures of Africa and its diaspora; the IAAF perpetuates all the artistic traditions that stem from African cultural practices throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, The mission of the IAAF is to bring together traditional and contemporary arts of African Diaspora by creating a venue that provides programs for artistic expression, entrepreneurial economic opportunities, and shares cultural experiences with a diverse audience of patrons; and

WHEREAS, The IAAF began in 1971 as the African Street Carnival, a PTA's block party fundraiser for an independent school in the Bedford Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn with local entertainers, about 20 arts and crafts vendors, along with food prepared by the parents; almost 2,000 people came to the event and it was a success; and

WHEREAS, The IAAF has been part of Brooklyn's cultural landscape for 40 years; each year a committed team of Board members, consultants, part-time seasonal staff and volunteers, work together to transform a city park into an outdoor African cultural oasis that celebrates traditional and contemporary expression of various African cultural art forms; today, the IAAF is a community-based, non-profit organization that produces an annual event attracting an estimated 75,000 attendees from Brooklyn and all around the world; and

WHEREAS, In 2001, the IAAF relocated to Commodore Barry Park which is the third transition to a larger venue to accommodate its growing audience; the original lineup of local folk arts entertainment which has included dance companies such as Dinizulu African Dancers and Drummers, Marie Brooks Pan-Caribbean Dancers, emerging singers like Martha Redbone and many others, continues to be an important part of the Festival's programming; and

WHEREAS, Over the years, the stages of the Festival have featured renowned artists such as Blue Magic, The Mighty Sparrow, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, KRS-1, Lauryn Hill, and India Arie, artists who grew to achieve national and international acclaim; the small vendor market has grown into an African Marketplace with over a hundred micro-enterprise vendor/small business membership database of entrepreneurs; and

WHEREAS, The marketplace offers an array of one of a kind, handcrafted, original designs of merchandise ranging from jewelry, urban fashion, t-shirts and body oils to imported African fabric, artifacts and furniture, original paintings, hand-carved marble sculptures and more; in addition, the outdoor Food Court offers the community an array of talented cooks and chefs preparing a wide variety of cuisines; and

WHEREAS, Savory flavors range from traditional soul food to spicy Caribbean dishes, to African, Latin, vegetarian food, seafood and even gourmet style raw foods; a true asset to society, the IAAF provides family entertainment and essential resources for the community; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those who enhance the well-being and vitality of their community and have shown a long and sustained commitment to excellence certainly have earned the recognition and applause of all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 42nd Anniversary of the International African Arts Festival; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Akosua K. Albritton, International African Arts Festival.