

For immediate release

**Haitian-Americans United Inc. ( HAU )**

Re: Haitian Unity Parade

Contact: Eno Mondesir, 617-298-2976

Date: April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004

The Haitian-Americans United, Inc. is pleased to invite the general audience to participate in a series of events organized to celebrate Haitian Heritage Month in Massachusetts. HAU and its partner organizations continue to focus on “Unity” as a central theme for this year, while evoking the spirit and the determination of the ancestors that led to Haiti’s independence on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1804.

The Haitian Heritage theme for this year is **One Haiti, One community**. As for the past 3 years, HAU will coordinate two major events for the Haitian Heritage Month:

- A Haitian Flag Day, where the Haitian flag will be raised on Tuesday May 18, 2004 between 12 and 2PM, at Boston City Hall, Government Center, with the participation of high school students, cultural groups, city and state officials. Several other cities in Massachusetts will hold similar events.
- The Haitian Unity Parade that will take place on Blue Hill Avenue, Sunday May 16 in Mattapan and Dorchester, starting in Mattapan Square at 1PM. More than one hundred local organizations, schools and businesses from all over New England, dozens of floats, marching bands etc., are expected to attend. The parade will be led by Mrs. Edna Etienne, a respected Haitian-American business leader as Grand Marshall for this year, and will feature lead sponsors Mr. Thomas Menino, Mayor of Boston, State Representative Marie Saint-Fleur and a host of public officials from the city of Boston and the State of Massachusetts.

While celebrating 200 years of the Haitian slave revolt victory, HAU acknowledges the profound humanitarian crisis affecting millions of people in Haiti. HAU will be joined by 15 regional organizations with roots in Haiti, local churches and other institutions to launch a massive collection drive of personal items, hygiene articles, medical supplies, school supplies to ship in rural Haiti that have been affected by recent political turmoil. Part of this collection will take place between May 8 and May 16. A symbolic collection of children school supplies will take place on the Day of the Parade, May 16, to mark HAU’s emphasis on the value of education to help address the future of Haiti.

All Haitians and friends of Haiti are invited to join this effort. Please contact HAU to obtain more information on the parade, or inquire on ways to support the humanitarian relief efforts.