

International Conference in Celebration of Professor Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's 70th Birthday

Conference Dates: May 21-23, 2025

Venue: Howard University, Washington, DC

Submission Deadline for Abstracts: February 1, 2025

Notification of Acceptance: February 15, 2025

About Professor Paul Tiyambe Zeleza

Professor Paul Tiyambe Zeleza will be celebrating his 70th birthday on May 25, 2025, that coincidentally is also Africa Day. To mark this occasion, an international conference will be held at Howard University to recognize and reflect on his academic career and scholarly contributions.

Professor Zeleza's education and professional life span six countries—Malawi, Britain, Canada, Jamaica, Kenya, and the United States—across three continents and the Caribbean region. Over his career, he has worked in fourteen universities and held fellowships or honorary professorships at three others. His administrative roles include serving as college principal at Trent University, Director of the Center for African Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Chair of the Department of African American Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Dean of the Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts at Loyola Marymount University, Vice President for Academic Affairs at Quinnipiac University, Vice Chancellor (President) at the United States International University-Africa (USIU-Africa), and Associate Provost at Case Western Reserve University. Currently, he is Senior Advisor for Strategic Initiatives for the President of Howard University.

Professor Zeleza has also served in numerous national and international academic organizations, including the Executive Board of the Canadian Association of African Studies, the Board of Directors of the African Studies Association (ASA) and President of the ASA from 2008 to 2009, and the Administrative Board of the International Association of Universities. He has also served on the Advisory Board of the Alliance for African Partnership, the University of Ghana Council, the Advisory Council of the Carnegie African Diaspora Program, and the Board of Trustees of the Kenya Education Network. He is currently a member of the Advisory Board of The Africa Institute at the Global Studies University in Sharjah, UAE.

In addition to his academic leadership roles, Professor Zeleza has worked with major foundations, including the Ford and MacArthur Foundations, on initiatives aimed at revitalizing higher education in Africa. His groundbreaking research on the African academic diaspora for the Carnegie African Diaspora Corporation (2011-2012) led to the establishment of the Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program in 2013, which has sponsored more than 600 African-born academics in Canada and the United States to work at over 170 universities in nine African countries. His leadership in securing tens of millions of dollars for institutional development and research is noteworthy, with the \$63.2 million grant from the Mastercard Foundation to USIU-Africa in 2020, supporting 1,000 African students over ten years, being a significant achievement.

A highly sought-after speaker, Professor Zeleza has delivered over 300 keynote addresses, papers, and public lectures at leading universities in 32 countries across every continent. He has served on the editorial boards of more than two dozen journals and book series, and his scholarly output is prolific, with over 400 journal articles, book chapters, encyclopedia entries, reviews, short stories, and online essays. He has authored or edited 30 books and five monographs, including works of creative writing, such as short stories and a novel. His most recent book, *Re-Envisioning the African and American Academies* (2024), written

during his W.E.B. Du Bois Fellowship at Harvard University, follows his 2016 work, *The Transformation of Global Higher Education, 1945-2015* (2016), written during another fellowship at Harvard.

Professor Zeleza's interdisciplinary scholarship spans numerous fields, including African economic history, development studies, intellectual history, diaspora studies, gender studies, human rights, cultural studies, and literary studies. One of his books, *A Modern Economic History of Africa, Vol. 1: The Nineteenth Century* (1993) won the 1994 Noma Award for Publishing in Africa, and another, *Manufacturing African Studies and Crises* (1997) received the 1998 Noma Award Honorable Mention. Two of his books including his novel, *Smoldering Charcoal* (1992), were shortlisted for Africa's 100 Best Books of the 20th Century. He has received several awards from major universities and academic organizations worldwide, including an honorary Doctor of Laws from Dalhousie University in 2015, the Thabo Mbeki Award for Leadership in 2018, and recognition by *The New York Times* on July 4, 2013, as one of the "43 Great Immigrants in the United States."

Conference Focus

This conference will celebrate Professor Zeleza's remarkable scholarly contributions over the past four decades, offering an opportunity to reflect on his interdisciplinary work. We invite papers and presentations that examine and engage with his extensive body of work across the following fields:

1. Economic History and Development Studies: Discussions on Professor Zeleza's contributions to understanding African economies, development challenges, and post-colonial economic transformations.
2. Intellectual History: Exploring his contributions to the history of ideas, higher education globally and across Africa and in the United States, and the development of academic disciplines, interdisciplinary studies, and area studies.
3. Gender Studies: Examining his scholarship on gender dynamics in Africa, gender equality, and feminist theory.
4. Diaspora Studies: Investigating his pioneering research on the African diaspora, migration, and transnationalism.
5. Human Rights Studies: Reflecting on his insights into global and African human rights issues and advocacy.
6. Creative Writing, Literary Criticism, and Cultural Studies: Examining his literary works and contributions to African literature, literary criticism, and cultural studies.
7. Peace and Conflict Studies: Delving into his perspectives on African conflicts, peacebuilding efforts, and post-conflict reconstruction.
8. International Affairs and Globalization Studies: Engaging with his analysis of Africa's role in international affairs, globalization, and evolving geopolitical dynamics including the continent's relations with the U.S., China, the BRICS, and other global powers.

9. Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance: Engaging with his scholarship on Pan-Africanism, African unity, and the vision of an African Renaissance.

10. Leisure Studies: Exploring his research on sports, entertainment, and the creative industries, with a focus on African leisure and popular culture.

Call for Papers

We invite scholars, researchers, and practitioners to submit abstracts for presentations that explore any of the above themes. Submissions should present original research, reflections, or critiques that engage with the work of Professor Zeleza and its broader impact.

Selected papers presented at the conference will be published.

Submission Guidelines

- Abstracts should be 250-300 words in length and outline the scope, objectives, and key arguments or findings of the presentation.
- Include a brief bio (150 words) and institutional affiliation with the submission.
- Submissions should be sent to The Organizing Committee for Professor Zeleza's 70th Birthday via: ptz70birthday@gmail.com

Conference Chair:

Dr. Mohamed Camara
Chair, Department of African Studies
Howard University
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Venue and Accommodation

The conference will take place at Howard University, a premier institution in Washington, DC, with a legacy of leadership in African and African American intellectualism. A list of nearby hotels will be provided to participants upon acceptance.

Join Us

This international conference will provide a significant opportunity to celebrate Professor Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's intellectual legacy, while engaging with contemporary scholarly debates and future directions in the fields he has influenced. We welcome you to join us in honoring this distinguished scholar and contributing to the academic discourse on his wide-ranging impact.

For further inquiries, please contact the Organizing Committee at: ptz70birthday@gmail.com.