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## Lord Makes Appeal for Donors for Mary Seacole Statue

With the final approval of the design for the Mary Seacole memorial statue completed, an international appeal for donors has been launched by Chairman of the Mary Seacole Memorial Statue Appeal, Lord Clive Soley of Hammersmith. The funding target is £500,000.

Speaking at the House of Lords at a special reception on July 21, Lord Soley said that Mary Seacole will become the first woman of African descent to have her statue mounted in the precinct of the British Parliament, which already features statues of such prominent figures as British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill; U.S. President, Abraham Lincoln and former South African President, Nelson Mandela. High Commissioner to the United Kingdom (UK), Anthony Johnson, who was the guest speaker at the reception, said that Nurse Seacole was well worth the honour on at least three grounds. "The first was her pioneering the involvement of Jamaican women in British military exercises. At her own expense, she established a military hospital for the British Forces during the Crimean War. Since then, Jamaican volunteers have played a critical supporting role in every major British war right up to the present conflict in Afghanistan," he said. Her second contribution, Mr. Johnson added, was in pioneering Jamaican migration to the Americas when she crossed the Isthmus of Panama and operated a hotel and hospital for travellers crossing the Las Cruces trail during the famous California gold rush of the 1850s. "Her final and most significant contribution was her role in the establishment of the modern profession of nursing. Her systems and methods were widely adopted by others and along with Florence Nightingale, she is regarded as a founder of the profession of nursing," the High Commissioner said. Mr. Johnson endorsed the appeal for funding to erect the statue which, he said, would be a tribute to all persons of African descent, especially Jamaicans. Nurse Seacole died in London in 1881 and has been the subject of many plaudits in recent years amid growing public and official recognition of her achievements. The Mary Seacole Memorial Statue Appeal is a registered British Charity that was founded in 2004. The main objectives are to erect a permanent public memorial to Mary Seacole and to educate the public on her life, work and achievements. The statue is to be erected on the grounds of the St. Thomas' Hospital by the River Thames, facing the British Houses of Parliament in London.