

# CULTURAL HERITAGE OF TOWNS AND TERRITORIES, THE AIMS OF THE PARTNERSHIP

Special session organized by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, with the France-UNESCO Cooperation Agreement and the participation of the Val-de-Loire Mission  
September 20, 2006

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## A FRAMEWORK FOR DISCUSSION AND EXCHANGE

In December 2003, at the time of the *Africités 3* Summit in Yaounde, three questions served as a basis to create a dialogue between UNESCO, the Municipal Development Programme, and the African mayors, on the importance of cultural heritage in the African cities:

- Why protect the cultural heritage in the African cities?
- Which should heritage be protected?
- What is gained from the protection of heritage?

The first “African Cities and Heritage” special session established the foundation for actions on the long term, aimed at the protection and the valorisation of the African cultural heritage in all its variety and complexity. The elements summarized in the final report, and the recommendations of the “Yaounde Initiative” establish the base for an *African urban cultural heritage project*. The Nairobi session will provide an opportunity to reflect on territory and partnership issues, through the presentation, on the one hand, of the “Cultural heritage and local development” guide for the African local governments, and on the other hand, through the advancement of the “Niger river and Heritage” project.

**The “African Cities and Heritage” special session (Africités 3) represents the beginning of a reflection on the importance of urban heritage and the role of local governments.**

Organized by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, the France-UNESCO Cooperation Agreement for Heritage, the French Senate and the Municipal Development Programme, the “African Cities and Heritage” special session brought together African and European mayors and parliamentarians, and representatives from universities and international co-operation organizations. This made it possible to open a discussion on the economic, social and cultural impacts on the local development brought by the valorisation of cultural heritage; it also allowed the evaluation of the heritage conservation needs of the African cities, which are in constant expansion, resulting in the increased risk of loss of the cultural heritage and the traditional values. It was then established that:

- The culture, and the cultural heritage in Africa, are a potential foundation for development still largely unexploited, particularly in the urban centres;
- In the present context of progressive decentralization, the local authorities have an essential role to play in the implementation of strategies intended to protect the urban heritage, to develop the local cultural identity and, more largely, to improve the quality of life in the cities;

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- It is advisable to integrate cultural resources as part of the city development, and all projects dealing with the improvement of the living conditions of the population.

## **The Yaounde initiative – new perspectives**

The Yaounde session participants, and in particular Mr. Simon Campaoré (Mayor of Ouagadougou), Mr. Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi (Coordinator of the Municipal Development Programme), Mr. Tijiani Serpos (UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Africa), Mrs. Minja Yang, (Former Assistant Director of the World Heritage Centre, now Director of the UNESCO office in New Dehli), and Mr. Yves Dauge (Senator of Indre and Loire, Advisor for the UNESCO World Heritage Centre), pled for a clear implication of the international community to assist the African authorities responsible for the management of cultural heritage, and suggested a strong initiative in favour of the African cultural heritage, particularly in urban contexts.

This special session resulted in the formulation of a coherent set of recommendations for the municipal and national authorities, the professionals in the field, and the international organizations. These recommendations constitute “the Yaounde initiative for the protection and enhancement of urban heritage and the cultural diversity of the African cities”. This initiative encourages each stakeholder to take into account the report carried out on the resources for the development of the African urban heritage, and at the same time be aware of the risks related to the loss of cultural heritage; It is a call to implement operational and realistic projects to safeguard and enhance heritage.

Also, it expresses the need for each mayor to identify the local heritage, to set up policies to contribute to its protection, its integration in the municipal development plan, to provide training opportunities for the elected collaborators and the professionals in the field, and to sensitize the local population on the importance of cultural heritage.

In order to facilitate the implementation of these recommendations, the mayors requested the assistance from the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, for the elaboration of a heritage management guide.

## **From Yaounde to Nairobi**

The *Africités* summits represent a unique opportunity to further explore the subject of the valorisation of cultural heritage in Africa.

The World Heritage Centre, supported by the France-UNESCO Cooperation Agreement and the French Senate, decided to extend their support, initiated in 2002. In June 2005, a workshop was

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held in the Senate, on the joint initiative of Mr. Jean Faure, parliamentary administrator in charge of the decentralized co-operation with the Senate, Mr. Tijani Serpos, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Africa, and Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, coordinator of the Municipal Development Programme, in order to enrich and validate the works in progress for the development of the *guide for African local governments*.

This meeting was also an opportunity to sign a convention between these three institutions, aiming at supporting the implementation of the Yaounde Initiative.

The recommendations of “the Yaounde initiative” are also used as reference for the great project “Niger River and Heritage” launched in 2003, and which is mainly based on the mobilization of local communities. An international conference was held in Angers in May 2005 to affirm the strategy of this project on aspects such as the importance of a territorial and partnership-based approach of heritage. Work on the guide and the project “Niger River and heritage” will be used as a basis of reflection at the time of the second special session of “Heritage and territory: stakes of the partnership” in Nairobi.

### **Africités 4, special session “Cultural heritage of towns and territories, the aims of the partnership”**

The special session “Cultural heritage of towns and territories, the aims of the partnership” to be held in Nairobi follows the session that took place in Yaounde, and aims at developing the initiatives implemented during the past three years. While the Yaounde session revolved around the city, a privileged centre of economic, social and cultural activity, the initiatives taken since the session, specifically within the framework of the “Niger river and Heritage” project and through the reflection for the development of the guide, show that the associated territories and the partnership approach are essential and should be taken into account.

The new session will thus take into account a larger territorial scale: urban, peri-urban or rural, a territory is a coherent geographical and cultural entity, related to specific social and government organizations which often regroup administrative sub-divisions - the municipality, the region, etc. The diversity and complexity of a heritage-based approach requires a comprehensive study of the city and its associated territories. The city and its associated territories represent one defined entity where multiple elements of our past and our ever-evolving cultures are found; they should be considered as the common basis for territorial planning and management operations, in which the mayors and local authorities play an important role. The cities themselves are complex networks,

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and their associated territories should be taken into account in all projects dealing with the local heritage. The approach of a territory in all its diversity and complexity requires the consistent participation of the actors, internal or external, through the dynamics of partnership.

The Nairobi meeting will more particularly analyze the stakes of a territorial and partnership-based approach of cultural heritage.

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## PROGRAMME PRESENTATION

The session will be opened by the representatives from UNESCO, the PDM, and the French Senate, who, in December 2005 signed a convention with the African local governments, to safeguard their own heritage values. The session will then continue as follows, in four sequences:

➤ ***Presentation of the handbook «Cultural heritage and local development. A Guide for African local governments».***

Created in response to the request formulated in Yaounde, this guide was designed as a tool to help in the decision making process in matters dealing with culture and heritage in sub-Saharan African countries. It is structured in three parts:

- A thoroughly illustrated “definitions” chapter, bringing answers to the questions dealing with the definition of heritage, and more particularly, the African heritage
- A second chapter is dedicated to the links existing between the heritage resources and the development of the territory; it tackles the following questions : why should we be interested in heritage? How to integrate heritage in the regional planning policies? How to reconcile heritage and modernity?
- A third part gives indications concerning the implementation of a development policy, which integrates the cultural heritage and provides a series of examples of operations.

This guide is the result of the vast involvement and participation of several African professionals: a call for participation was issued on the African continent for more than 250 professionals in the field of culture, to contribute on a number of selected topics.

Written in particular with the support of the World Heritage Centre, the *Ecole du Patrimoine Africain* (EPA), the EAMAU (*Ecole Africaine des Métiers de l'Architecture et de l'Urbanisme*, Lomé, Togo) and the Municipal Development Programme (PDM), this handbook is co-edited by the France-UNESCO Cooperation Agreement and CRATerre-ENSAG.

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### ➤ *The “Rivers and Heritage” UNESCO Programme*

This program illustrates the territorial approach suggested in this session, and takes a new dimension with the strong emergence of the Niger river project.

Water management is one of the main stakes for the new millennium, as identified by the United Nations organizations. Carried out jointly by the sector of Culture and the Sector of Science, the “Rivers and Heritage” Programme aims to:

- Research on the socio-cultural matters related to the management of water, and support the sensitization of the local populations, the authorities and the development agencies;
- Encourage the integration of the cultural and heritage dimensions in all operations related to the rivers;
- Reinforce the links between the safeguard and the valorisation of the biodiversity and the cultural diversity.

All around the Niger river, Several initiatives are being developed within the framework of this innovative programme.

In spite of the international recognition of the exceptional natural and cultural value of the Niger river, its resources remain under-developed today, and are threatened by the demographic expansion and urbanization processes. The bordering communities of the river have a very important role to play in the global development of the territory, and in the maintenance of the values associated to the river and its environment.

It is in this context that the “Niger river and Heritage” project was created; it is already implemented in Mali, and will soon be implemented in Niger.

In order to support the development of the communities and bordering communities through the identification, the recognition and the valorisation of the cultural and natural resources linked to the river, through effective planning operations, a partnership between the Loire and the Niger rivers was established.

The Loire-Niger charter, signed in November 14, 2005 in Bamako by the Régions Centre and Pays de la Loire and the African authorities, represents the foundation of this decentralized co-operation.

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This charter, whose implementation was entrusted to the Mission Val de Loire, aims at supporting the sustainable development of the territories located on the banks of the Niger through the participation of the Loire collectivities. It also settles the many partnerships of the project.

Other synergies are developing: it is the case in Senegal with a partnership between the Senegal river and the Rhone river in France.

➤ ***Diverse partnership initiatives that regard culture and heritage as essential elements to be integrated in the development policies for the local communities***

This third sequence deals with the examples of the many new initiatives that are developing within the framework of decentralized co-operations (Saint-Louis of Senegal and the urban community of *Lille métropole* in France, Porto Novo in Benin and Lyon in France), long-term co-operations between the local authorities (North-South) as well as the World Heritage Centre.

This sequence will also be an opportunity for institutional partners (the World Bank, African Development Bank) and professional partners (African Architects Union) to develop partnerships with the local governments for the implementation of heritage-related projects. This sequence will be an opportunity to generate interactions and debates among the participants.

➤ ***Conclusions by Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi***, Secretary General of the Municipal Development Programme (PDM) and of the CGLU-A, ***Mr. Yves Dauge***, Senator and Director Advisor to the World Heritage Centre, and ***Mr. Jim Williams***, Chief of Unit, Latin American Unit, World Heritage Centre and Secretary General of the France-UNESCO Cooperation agreement

They will conclude the session by tracing new perspectives for the implementation of collaborations between UNESCO, the Municipal Development Programme (PDM), the Senate and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the subject of « Culture and Development », on the application of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Heritage, on the definition of actions to be undertaken, and on the engagements and work perspectives for the elaboration of *Africités 5*.

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## PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

### **Introduction**

- M. MASSAQUOI, Director of the UNESCO Regional Bureau, Nairobi, representing M. TIDJANI SERPOS, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Africa
- Jim WILLIAMS, Chief of Unit, Latin America Unit, World Heritage Centre and Secretary General of the France-UNESCO cooperation agreement
- Jean-Pierre ELONG MBASSI, Secretary General of the Municipal Development Programme (PDM) and CGLU-A
- Yves DAUGE, Senator, Indre-et-Loire, Director Advisor, World Heritage Centre

### **Presentation of the handbook: « Cultural heritage and local development. Guide for African Local Governments».**

Isabelle LONGUET, Secretary General of the France-UNESCO cooperation agreement, *Ministère de la culture et de la communication, Direction de l'architecture et du patrimoine*, France.

### **«Rivers and Heritage» Programme**

Presentation and debate conducted by Yves DAUGE, Senator, Indre-et-Loire, Director Advisor, World Heritage Centre

Cooperation programme between the Niger and the Loire rivers in Mali

- M. Daniel ROUSSEL, Chief of the «Loire-Niger project», Val-de-Loire Mission
- M. Oumar BATHILY, Mayor of Mopti, Mali and Bernard VALETTE, vice-president, *Région Centre*, France
- M. Vincent ROTGE, Director, International Institute "Rivers and Heritage"

«Niger river and heritage», Niger

- M. Boubacar Ganda SEYDOU, President of the Urban Community, Niamey, President of the Niger Municipalities

Senegal and Rhone rivers: an active cooperation

- Ibrahima BAO, President of the *association Maison du Sénégal* and Jacky VIEUX, Director of *la Maison du Fleuve Rhône*

### **Partnership initiatives for the valorisation of heritage in the local governments: examples and debate**

Presentation and debate conducted by Abdelkader SIDIBÉ, President of the Association of the Municipalities of Mali

Decentralized cooperation:

- M. Amadou TOURE, Mayor of Saint-Louis du Sénégal et Mrs. Danièle DE FONTAINE, vice-president *Lille métropole* Urban community
- M. DOSSOU, mayor of Porto Novo et M. Jean-Michel DACLIN, vice-mayor of Lyon and president of the Commission *coopération décentralisée*, Cités et Gouvernements Locaux Unis (CGLU).

Points of view from the international institutions and the professionals in the field

- African Development Bank (to be confirmed)
- Bernard Domenjoud, World Bank
- M. Lopez Torne and Mrs Janna Mitsou, International Union of Architects

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With the participation of the *Agence française de développement* (AFD), EPA, EAMAU, USAID, ICCROM, CHDA...

## ***Conclusions***

By Mr. Elong Mbassi, with Mr. Jim Williams and Mr. Yves Dauge

Culture and development: new perspectives for the African continent; perspectives for the elaboration of Africités 5.