CONCEPT NOTE
PAN AFRICAN FORUM
“YOUTH AND CULTURE OF PEACE”
IN VIEW OF LAUNCHING A YOUTH NETWORK FOR
A CULTURE OF PEACE IN AFRICA

Theme: “African youth and the challenge of promoting a culture of peace in Africa”

Organized in partnership with
the Omar Bongo Ondimba Foundation for Peace, Science,
Culture and the Environment,
with the support of UNESCO

UNDER THE HIGH PATRONAGE OF HIS EXCELLENCY ALI BONGO ONDIMBA, PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF GABON, HEAD OF STATE

(Libreville, Gabon: 13-14 DECEMBER 2014)
I – RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND

Within the framework of the implementation of UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth (2014-2021) for the period covered by its new Medium-Term Strategy (37 C / 4), and in accordance with its founding ideals, UNESCO highlights its longstanding commitment to youth which dates back to its creation.

For UNESCO, it is indubitable that paying attention to youth issues – giving young people the fundamental freedoms and rights they are entitled to require, improving their living conditions, education and training, contributing to their professional integration and participation in political decisions that affect them and their communities – that is “to contribute to peace and security” among the nations and all around the world. Youth has been recognized, in fact, by the Organization as “equal partners and actors for development and peace”.

As an extension of UNESCO in its member States, the National Commissions for UNESCO are tasked, among others, not only to raise the interest of youth for the activities of the Organization, by collaborating with local youth organizations, but also to strive to act as platforms for exchange and cooperation. In 2009, the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum also invited "all National Commissions for UNESCO to create permanent youth desks."

In order to echo the commitment of UNESCO to youth at national the regional level, the Gabon National Commission for UNESCO in partnership with the Omar Bongo Ondimba Foundation for Peace, Science, Culture and the Environment took the initiative to launch the Pan-African Youth Forum.

The choice of the overall theme for the Forum entitled “African youth and the challenge of promoting a culture of peace in Africa” converges with the objective of contributing to the implementation of the Action Plan for a Culture of Peace in Africa and the “Make Peace Happen” Campaign which originated from the conclusions and recommendations of the Pan-African Forum on “Sources and Resources for a Culture of Peace held from 26 to 28 March 2013 in Luanda (Angola), co-organized by the Angolan Government, the African Union and UNESCO.

In Africa today, more than elsewhere in the world, peace and security remain, against a background of persistent conflicts that keep shaking and engulfing the continent, fundamental political and social needs, sources for the development of the African states.

Such peace and security are indispensable for Africa and cannot be built without the contribution of young Africans who make over 35% of the population on the continent. African youth is therefore potentially a real and essential resource of social transformations and consequently of promotion and establishment of a culture of peace. It is crucial to encourage young Africans to increase their sense of responsibility towards civil and political involvement in their respective countries in particular, and in Africa as a whole. In this context, this Forum is not only in line with the third axis of UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth but also with the United Nations’ Secretary General Global Education First Initiative.

Besides contributing to the implementation of the Action Plan of Luanda, this Pan African Youth Forum is also linked to the first Flagship

Since peace and security are necessarily long-term goals, it is important to bear in mind that the mobilization of African youth in the promotion and establishment of a culture of peace and non-violence in Africa must be continuous and focused on the long term.

On this basis it is worth noting that the Pan-African Youth Forum will lead to the creation of a Youth Network for the promotion of a culture of peace in Africa.

In creating such a Network, this forum is intended to be a truly youth-driven dynamic, not only as a movement of reflection, but also as an action and education oriented one, both on the themes of the Luanda Forum (which are the sources and cultural, natural and human resources) and inclusive citizenship.

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To support the existence of the Network, the Omar Bongo Ondimba Foundation will create and launch an International "Youth and Culture of Peace" Award to reward and encourage the significant contributions and achievements of public or private institutions, schools and Universities, associations, youth organizations or working for youth for the promotion and establishment of a culture of peace involving youth in Africa.

This forum will also be an opportunity to revive the African UNESCO Clubs movement. Indeed, after the creation of UNESCO, UNESCO Clubs, Centres, and Associations, groups of dedicated and selfless people of all ages, from all origins and professional backgrounds, were born out of the dynamics created by the spontaneous and popular movement of adhesion to the Organization’s ideals of peace.

The first UNESCO club was founded in Sendai, Japan, on 19 July 1947 long before the country became a member of UNESCO. Today UNESCO clubs are to be found in almost all member states of the Organization. Following the example of the first one, UNESCO clubs contribute to preventing wars, maintaining and building peace through education, science, culture, communication and information.

Since they are mainly composed of students from junior high schools, secondary schools as well as universities students, and since they promote dialogue among cultures, the UNESCO Clubs are fit places for a citizenship's education that fosters the promotion of a culture of peace.

Finally, the Pan-African Youth Forum will be an opportunity to renew the call upon all member states of the African Union to ratify of the African Youth Charter, in view of accelerating the implementation of the Plan of Action of the African Youth Decade 2009-2018.

II – OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT

II-1) Overall Objective

The overall objective is to mobilize and unite African youth in particular through several operational, inclusive networks working on the ground in order to promote a culture of peace in Africa.
II-2) **Specific Objectives**

- Raise awareness among young Africans on topics related to the culture of peace and on the importance of their involvement in the establishment of a lasting peace in Africa;
- Promote the participation of young people in the implementation of the Plan of Action for a Culture of Peace in Africa, "Make Peace Happen", which crowned the work of the Pan-African Forum "Sources and Resources for a Culture of Peace", Luanda (Angola), 26-28 March 2013;
- Create a network of youth for a culture of peace in Africa, to provide a statutory framework for this mobilization and federation of young Africans, and which would be part of the campaign "Make Peace";
- Support and disseminate the African Youth Charter, a political and legal framework intended to formulate the strategy and the orientations for youth empowerment and to support development activities for youth at continental, regional and national level in Africa;
- Re-energize the UNESCO Clubs movement by organizing and holding a General Assembly of the African Confederation of UNESCO Clubs (SRAC), which has not met since November 2008 and has not ever since renewed its organs.

III – **Expected Outcomes**

- Establishment of a dynamic and sustainable network of youth organizations of the African continent as well as of its governing bodies;
- the Youth Network for a culture of peace in Africa;
- Sharing best practices relating to culture of peace;
- Launch of a "Youth and Culture of Peace" International Award to support the existence of the network;
- Renewal of the bodies of the African Confederation of UNESCO Clubs (SRAC) and recovery activities.

IV – **Participants**

**Organizers:**

- Omar Bongo Ondimba Foundation
- Gabonese National Commission for UNESCO

**In collaboration with:**

- UNESCO
- African Union

**With the participation of:**

- Presidents and Representatives of National Youth Councils of the 54 Member States of the African Union
- Presidents or representatives of the National Federations of UNESCO Clubs in the Africa region
- Representatives of African youth organizations recognized by UNESCO and the African Union and other relevant organizations

- Secretaries General of National Commissions for UNESCO of the Africa region