



The Slave Route Project: Resistance, Freedom, Heritage

Celebration of the 20th anniversary of the project

Proposals for activities 2014

I. Background

1. The Slave Route project was launched by UNESCO in 1994 in Ouidah, Benin. Entitled since 2010 *The Slave Route: resistance, freedom, heritage*, this flagship program of UNESCO has now become a reference and plays a key role in the international arena on issues and challenges relating to dialogue and cultural diversity. Its long experience in the implementation of diversified operations and a large visibility around the world has allowed it to contribute significantly for a better social integration and understanding of the history of the slave trade in societies carrying this memory.

2. Indeed this universal and unifying project addresses different aspects of the history of this human tragedy for recognition, reconciliation, and a culture of peace, and helps better understand the historic formation and evolution of modern, multicultural and multiethnic societies. From this first globalization, it is also an indicator of the substantial human relations and deep cultural interactions that were woven between people from different parts of the world: on the one hand, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe and on the other Africa, Indian Ocean and Middle East.

3. Based on a holistic and inclusive approach, this multidisciplinary and intersectoral program develops a broad spectrum of activities several fields of UNESCO activities:

- Develop research on unknown aspects of this history, on the African spiritualities and their role in the resistance against
- Promote intangible cultural and artistic expressions born out of this tragedy
- Develop innovative and entertaining educational materials
- Preserve and promote sites and places of memory

- Preserve written archives and oral traditions expressed in African languages
- Promote Africa and the Diasporas contribution to the modern world

4. This initiative, which is at the heart of UNESCO's mandate, along with the General History of Africa, is a major contribution for better understanding Africans and its Diasporas.

5. Faithful to the mandate of UNESCO, this project has been a laboratory of ideas and a catalyst for cooperation in the field of development for research, intercultural education and deconstruction against racism, promotion of cultural expressions and heritage material born out of this history, and has had a lasting impact. Among the most significant contributions, it is important to mention the following:

- Substantial contribution during the World Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa, 2001 for the recognition of slave trade and slavery as crimes against humanity;
- Proclamation of 2004 as International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition and the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Haitian Revolution;
- Proclamation of the International Day of Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition, 23 August each year;

Publication of several reference books on this subject and broadening the scope of research in the Mediterranean, Red Sea, Indian Ocean and the Pacific;

- Production of information and public awareness materials (DVD- Rom " Slave Route: A Global Vision "+and its accompanying educational toolkits such as the multilingual documentary " Slave Route: The Soul of Resistance" and its educational booklet for young people);
- Completion of the first phase of the international competition for the construction of a permanent memorial dedicated to the victims of the slave trade and slavery in the United Nations compound in New York;
- Development of a conceptual and methodological guide to strengthen the capacities of site and places of memory managers related to the slave trade and slavery to develop tourism memory
- Establishment of an international network of site and places of memory managers related and current development based on web site platform on itineraries of memory and slavery museums

6. Through experience and collaborations, the project has developed a vast network of high-level strategic partners (Foundation Cultural History, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization, World Tourism Organization , High Commissioner for Human Rights, TV5 Monde, France Television, Telesur, etc..), and also a large number of public and artistic personalities (Kofi Annan, Marcus Miller, Pedro Pires, Lilian Thuram Manu Dibango, Baba Maal, Ray Lema, etc..) who are already involved or wish to become more involved in the project activities.

II. Celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Slave Route Project

7. To mark the twentieth anniversary celebrations of the project planned in different parts of the world throughout 2014, UNESCO plans to organize, in cooperation with all its strategic partners, a series of activities with high visibility. Far from being celebrations to commemorate the past, these events will demonstrate, both from a cultural, social, educational and policy perspective the timeliness and relevance of this project in the promotion of mutual understanding, reconciliation and intercultural dialogue which are of major concerns for modern societies today.

8. During its implementation, the Slave Route project has gradually positioned itself as a gateway between Africa and the Diaspora, especially in the Caribbean, the Americas and the Indian Ocean. Also, in continuity of this historic connection, we wish to build on the concept of "routes" to organize celebrations in each of these regions, in collaboration with stakeholders of this route and societies that have largely been shaped by this history. In addition, an international event is planned at UNESCO Headquarters to bring together policy makers, public figures and civil society to support the project and associate its anniversary with the launch of the Decade of People of African descent (2013-2022).

III. Objectives of the celebration

- a. Project review and drawing up of new perspectives
- b. Re-engage various partners around the new objectives of the project
- c. Promote the most significant initiatives that have helped to highlight the changes caused by this tragedy and the cultural heritage (tangible and intangible) born out of Africans resistance and their descendants to slavery
- d. Promotion of the matrix bond between Africa and its Diasporas
- e. Adoption of the Declaration of the Slave Route supporting the Decade of People of African Descent
- f. Define a Joint Action Plan for the Decade of people of African descent between the project and its strategic partners

IV. Strategies

9. To celebrate this double event (20th anniversary and the launch of the Decade) UNESCO wishes to organize throughout 2014, a series of high-profile multidisciplinary activities highlighting the main achievements and results of the Slave Route Project and at the same time to think of new opportunities for its action, particularly in the framework of the Decade of people of African descent. To this end, UNESCO will draw on the Ad hoc Committee composed principally by few eminent personalities and members of the International Scientific Committee (ISC) of Slave Route Project to (i) identify additional activities and events at national level, (ii) mobilization of extra-budgetary funds and partnerships, and (iii) mobilization of media and artists.

10. The members of the Honorary Committee will be invited to play the role of spokesperson of The Slave Route project at various events organized in this context.

V. Proposed activities

11. The activities are aimed at promoting the achievements of the project and also include it in the future, especially focusing its action in favor of young people

12. The following events are planned:

1. An **high-level international forum** with the participation of political personalities (Heads of State, Prime Ministers, First Ladies and Ministers of culture), (Artists for Peace UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors such as Marcus Miller, Manu Dibango, Danilo Peres, etc..) and representatives of partner institutions to mark their commitment to the project and define a common agenda to be implemented during the Decade. On this occasion, a *Declaration for recognition of the contributions of people of African descent to the modern world* (The Slave Route Declaration) could be adopted.
2. On the occasion of the International Forum, a series of round table / panel discussions bringing together important intellectual figures, (researchers, scientists, etc.) opinion leaders, heads of government agencies will be held to discuss the outcome of the project and its new perspectives. These debates will be punctuated with side events including exhibitions, film screenings and art events to celebrate the contributions of African descendants in the world's cultural diversity. A roundtable will focus on the African spiritualities, their influences in the other regions around the world and the dialogue with other religions.
3. A travelling exhibition which will go around the world presenting, through a holistic approach, the significant contributions made by Africans and the Diaspora, in

different fields (science, technology and know-how, philosophy, human rights and political culture, etc.) in shaping today's world.

This exhibition will be developed both in electronic media means adapted to High Tech proposed by new museum, spaces at receptions and cultural events and also on traditional media (text / images panels and prints) so that it can be exposed in areas less equipped.

4. The first Festival of African Diasporas of yesterday and today (music, dance, theatre) celebrating creativity born of cultural resistance of Africans and their descendants in the slavery system held in Dakar, Gorée Island. This edition could be composed as follow:
 - A concert celebrating the African roots of jazz, blues, tango, salsa and introducing new talents of the African scene.
 - A dance performance featuring the presence of African dance in contemporary dances of Latin America, North America and the Caribbean
 - A Film Festival showing works that addresses the history of Africa and its diaspora in particular towards a better understanding of the slave trade, slavery and its consequences but also to help promote the history of the African Diaspora and their multiple contributions to the modern world.
 - The launch of the travelling exhibition highlighting the many contributions of African Diasporas in the modern world in the fields of science and technology, politics, spirituality, culture, etc.
 - Development of sensibilization and information tools on the project and its actions (spot, brochures and multimedia contents). To do so, some materials already realized by the project as two films, will be dubbed in

VI. Partnerships

13. Efforts will be made at international, regional, national and local levels to encourage stakeholders (public institutions, foundations, NGOs, private companies, etc.) to accompany us in this initiative. The following partners could be actively involved in the implementation of the activities planned for the celebrations: OCHCR, Palmares cultural foundation, TV5 Monde, France TV, Telesur, CNRS, ASA, African America, Fundevi, Africophonie, African American History and Culture Museum, Ministry of Culture (Senegal, Colombia, Uruguay, Cape Verde, Angola, Benin, Panama, Venezuela, etc.).

VII. Calendar of Activities for the 20th Anniversary in 2014

Activities	Janv.- Feb.	Mar- Apr.	May-June	July- Aug	Sept- Oct.	Nov.-Dec.
High-level International Forum						
Travelling Exhibition on the contribution of Africans and the Diasporas						
First edition of the African Diasporas of yesterday and today festival						

14. The Committee members are invited to get actively involved by proposing activities visible throughout 2014. Please note that each activity will be funded by the organizers.