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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Draft resolution

Item 3.1 of the agenda

DRAFT RESOLUTION

Submitted by Angola

Consideration and adoption of the Draft Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021 (37 C/4)

The General Conference,

Referring to the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance, adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union at Khartoum in 2006, which recognizes in its Preamble “*that the unity of Africa is founded first and foremost on its history*” and stipulates in Article 7 that “*African States agree on the need for reconstruction of the historical memory and conscience of Africa and the African Diaspora*” and consider “*that the general history published by UNESCO constitutes a valid base for teaching the history of Africa and recommend its dissemination, including in African languages...*”,

Recalling that the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) highlights the link between education and culture and stresses the need to improve the quality of educational content,

Also recalling decision EX.CL/Dec.492 (XV) Rev.1 of the Executive Council of the African Union, adopted in July 2009, which underlines the commitment of the African Union alongside UNESCO to the pedagogical use of the *General History of Africa* at all levels of education in Africa and to the updating of the collection through the drafting of a ninth volume,

Further recalling the decision of the fifth ordinary session of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF V), document EX.CL/725 (XXI), adopted in April 2012, calling upon Member States of the African Union to contribute to the proposed fund for the implementation of the pedagogical use of the *General History of Africa*,

C4-dr

37 C/4/DR.3

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(Joint Meeting of Commissions)

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Recalling the Organization of African Unity-African Union (OAU-AU) Fiftieth Anniversary Solemn Declaration, adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, declaring their commitment to promote and harmonize the teaching of African history, values and pan-Africanism in all schools and educational institutions in Africa as part of advancing their African identity and Renaissance,

Also recalling resolution 44, adopted by the General Conference at its 36th session, which calls upon UNESCO Member States to continue to support this project by all appropriate means, and to mobilize partners and financial resources to enable the implementation of the activities of the second phase of the project, including the promotion and dissemination of the *General History of Africa* in education systems, mass media and cultural and creative industries and the writing and publication of a ninth volume to include the history of the African diaspora and to reflect progress in African, Caribbean and Latin American historiography,

Taking note of the recommendations of the scientific committee for the project and the various meetings organized by UNESCO in the framework of the project, in particular the first meeting of experts held in March 2009 on the occasion of the launch of the second phase of the project and the meeting of experts on the ninth volume held at Addis Ababa in May 2013 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the OAU-AU,

Congratulates UNESCO on progress made in the implementation of the second phase of the *General History of Africa*;

Welcomes the translation into Portuguese and free access to the eight volumes of the *General History of Africa* on UNESCO websites;

Also welcomes the launch of a ninth volume of the *General History of Africa* in view of the updating of the series, taking into consideration the latest research developments and major events that have occurred in Africa since the last volume in the series was published;

Expresses its gratitude to the Member States that have contributed financially or in kind to the project, including Libya, Zimbabwe, Brazil, Angola and Burkina Faso;

Emphasizes the importance of this project for improving the quality of education and its contribution to mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue and therefore expresses its satisfaction that the project is part of the operational strategy for Priority Africa;

Stresses the need to link this project to the Slave Route project, with a view to undertaking joint activities in the framework of United Nations Decade for People of African Descent (2013-2022) to be proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly;

Urges Member States to provide the financial resources needed to ensure the continuity and implementation of the various components of the project on the pedagogical use of the *General History of Africa*, including the production of educational materials for countries in other regions, particularly those with citizens of African descent and historical ties with Africa;

Encourages the Director-General to continue cooperation with the African Union for the implementation of the project and in particular for the integration of the *General History of Africa* in the curricula of African schools, training institutes and universities, especially the Pan-African University;

Requests the Director-General to take all the necessary measures to ensure the continuation of the second phase of the project, including the pedagogical use of the *General History of Africa* and the drafting of the ninth volume, seeing it through to its completion;

Invites the Director-General to submit to it, at its 38th session, a report on the implementation of the second phase of the project and the mobilization of extrabudgetary resources from Member States and private-sector partners.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

1. The Pedagogical Use of the *General History of Africa* (“the Project”) is the first part of the second phase of the *General History of Africa* (GHA) project that UNESCO launched in 1964 at the request of the newly independent African States. Under the guidance of an International Scientific Committee for the drafting of a General History of Africa comprising 39 members, some 350 specialists undertook, over more than 35 years, the preparation, drafting and publication of the GHA in eight volumes, with a main edition in English, French and Arabic, and an abridged edition in English, French, Kiswahili, Hausa and Peul. The volumes in the series have been translated into 13 languages worldwide. In addition, two series entitled “The General history of Africa: studies and documents” and “Guide to Sources of African History”, in 12 and 13 volumes respectively, have been published in the framework of the *General History of Africa*. The drafting of a ninth volume of the GHA is the second part of the second phase.

2. The Project is a response to the repeated calls by Member States of the African Union for UNESCO to develop educational tools based on the eight volumes of the GHA.

3. The overall objective of the Project is to contribute to the renovation of the teaching of history in Africa, based on the GHA, highlighting Africa’s contribution to the general progress of humanity and common heritage of African peoples to promote regional integration in the continent. In addition, it aims to strengthen the ties that bind the peoples of Africa and of African descent across the world.

4. The project is crucial for the African cultural Renaissance that Member States of the African Union have called for repeatedly in Africa and its diaspora, aware that the teaching of history helps to form peoples’ identities and enable them to understand the heritage and values shared by the different peoples of Africa and of African descent.

5. The project represents a priority area in the cooperation between UNESCO and the African Union. It falls within the framework of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015), which focuses on reinforcing the links between culture and education and on improving the quality of pedagogical content. It is within this context that the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, as well as the Conference of African Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF), have many times taken decisions congratulating UNESCO on its initiative and reaffirming their support for implementation of the project.

6. The project was officially launched in March 2009, thanks to generous funding from the Libyan Government. It includes five components: namely, (i) the development of shared pedagogical materials for use in primary and secondary schools in Africa and the diaspora, (ii) the pedagogical use of the *General History of Africa* in African higher education institutions, (iii) the promotion of the *General History of Africa* through informal and non-formal education and awareness-raising activities, (iv) the development of the ninth volume of the GHA and (v) a strategy of communicating and mobilizing artists and civil society around this project.

7. Since then, significant progress has been made in the project implementation, and particularly the following activities:

- establishment of a scientific committee of 11 members, responsible for the scientific and intellectual orientation of the project, including eminent African specialists from the five geographical regions of the continent and the African Union Commission;
- development of a conceptual framework for the project that defines, on the basis of the principal strategic documents of the African Union, the main themes and focus areas of the project to address the needs of African regional integration;
- review of the content of *General History of Africa* volumes, under the scientific coordination of the Association of African Historians (AHA), which defines the content,

makes a critical analysis of each volume and suggests possible themes for developing common content;

- development of a report assessing the current state of the teaching of African history in African primary and secondary schools. This report was prepared on the basis of a questionnaire sent by UNESCO to African countries;
- development of a report assessing the current state of history teaching in general, and the use of the GHA in particular, in African higher education institutions;
- definition of themes and topics to teach to African students in the three age groups (under 12 years, 13-16 years and 17-19 years) selected;
- designation by the scientific committee of the members of the three editorial teams, as well as three coordinators in charge of drafting common pedagogical content and the teacher's guides for each age group;
- preparation of the first draft of common content that will be reviewed by African peers and then by the scientific committee to check the relevance of content and harmonize quality;
- organization of an expert meeting for the launch of the ninth volume of the GHA in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 20-22 May 2013, during which the experts defined the main themes of the volume. This meeting was held within the framework of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization of African Unity (OAU-AU);
- organization of the regional conference on the use of the *General History of Africa* in African higher education institutions in Accra (Ghana), on 21-24 October 2013;
- reorganization and updating of the GHA website by making available the different documents mentioned earlier and posting online the collection in the different languages. Further, as at 31 October 2013, more than 1,000 CD-ROMs containing the main GHA collection and the abridged version, in the different languages, as well as more than 1,200 brochures on the project, had been distributed to the different stakeholders.

8. Following the extension of the project activities after the widening of its scope and the withdrawal of Libyan funding in March 2012, the future of the project has been threatened several times. In order to anticipate such a situation, it is important to mobilize, for this project that is essential for Priority Africa, strong intellectual, political and financial support, in order to enable it to reach its objectives. It is to this end that the General Conference at its 36th session had already adopted a resolution (36 C/Resolution 44) calling for Member States to provide financial support for the implementation of the project.

9. The total budget for the different parts of the project is \$11,450,000. Brazil, Angola and Burkina Faso have pledged, respectively, the sums of \$1.4 million (2013-2015), \$887,000 (August 2013) and \$50,000 (September 2013). Consequently, the sum that remains to be mobilized is \$9,113,000. Hence the need, through the present resolution, to launch a new appeal to Member States to ask for their contribution in support of the fundraising efforts already undertaken by the Director-General.