



## **JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ**

**between**

**The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural  
Organization (UNESCO)**

**and**

**African Union (AU)**

**UNESCO Headquarters  
Paris, 16 May 2005**

## UNESCO/AU

### Joint Communiqué

At the invitation of UNESCO's Director-General, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Professor Alpha Oumar Konaré, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), paid an official visit to UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on the 16<sup>th</sup> May 2005 at the Head of a high level delegation.

During his visit, the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union had a bilateral meeting with the Director-General.

President Konaré reiterated his congratulations to Mr Matsuura for the impressive reform work he had undertaken as Executive Head of UNESCO since his election. He expressed his satisfaction with the excellent cooperation existing between the African Union and UNESCO, and expressed his appreciation to the Director-General for the full cooperation UNESCO has been giving to the implementation of the African Union programme, in particular, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). He reminded the Director-General that in July 2004, the Assembly of the Union adopted an unanimous decision calling for Mr. Matsuura to apply for a second mandate. He expressed the hope that the Director-General will soon respond to that call.

The Director-General emphasized the fact that President Konaré had come at a crucial time, as the Executive Board of UNESCO had just considered his preliminary proposals for the Organization's next biennium programme and budget. He reaffirmed his commitment to a stronger partnership with the African Union in the implementation of its programme NEPAD. He also expressed his satisfaction with the fact that the African Union will hold a Summit especially devoted to Education and Culture in January 2006, and thanked President Konaré for closely associating UNESCO with this important endeavour. He confirmed that, after attending the Conference of African Ministers of Education in Algiers (COMEDAF II) that recommended a new Decade of Education for Africa, he would also participate

in the Conference of Ministers of Culture scheduled for 3 and 4 November 2005 in Kenya and which will be preceded by the Pan-African Cultural Congress. He reaffirmed his determination to address Africa's concerns in UNESCO's areas of competence and paid tribute to the Chairperson of the African Union for his vision in facing Africa's challenges in order to accelerate the integration and the sustainable development of Africa.

During the visit, the two organizations' Chief Executives held discussions which focused on the evaluation of the current cooperation between the two Organizations in the fields of education, science, culture and communication as well as governance, peace-building and health. More specifically, questions of common interest were examined, concerning : the evaluation of the ending of the first OAU's Decade of Education ; the follow-up in Africa of the World Education Forum in Dakar (EFA + 5) ; the development of new partnerships, the regional integration through UNESCO fields of competence, teachers' training, adult literacy, science and technology, environment, early warning systems for natural disasters, and water resources management. Questions relating to the fight against HIV/AIDS and malaria, conflict prevention, management and resolution, the role of women in development, were also tackled within the framework of a comprehensive strategy to reduce poverty.

Working methods and modalities of cooperation were also discussed with a view to strengthening the partnership between the African Union and UNESCO within the global context of the African Union cooperation with the United Nations system. In this perspective, a revised UNESCO/AU Cooperation Agreement, to be signed in due course, was drafted and endorsed by the Director-General and President Konaré.

Discussions and exchanges between the two Chief Executives showed their full agreement on all the issues addressed.

They were also pleased to note the privileged relationship that has always existed between UNESCO and the African Union and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening this cooperation, among others, through the closer association of

African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) within the framework of the Strategic Plan of the African Union.

They renewed their undertaking to promote gender equality, peace, democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms, in particular the freedom of the press, the rule of law, and the protection and promotion of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the continent.

At the end of his visit to UNESCO, Prof. Alpha Oumar Konaré, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, expressed his gratitude to the Director-General, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, for the warm welcome and kind hospitality extended to him and his delegation throughout their stay in Paris and invited the Director-General to visit the African Union at its Headquarters in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia. The Director-General accepted the invitation.

Paris, 16 May 2005

For UNESCO  
(United Nations Educational,  
Scientific and Cultural Organization)

For AU  
(African Union)

Mr Koïchiro Matsuura

Prof. Alpha Oumar Konaré