



NEWSLETTER

"The Slave Route Project"



*From Slavery
to Freedom...*



2004.

*International Year to Commemorate the
Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition*

Special issue

Contents

Foreword	1
Introduction	2
Assessment of the 2004 Year	4
Activities conducted throughout the year	
Closing events of the 2004 Year	
■ The launching of the 2004 International Year	
■ The Haitian Revolution of 1804	
■ The celebration of the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition: 23 August	
■ The travelling exhibition: Lest We Forget: The Triumph Over Slavery	
■ UNESCO-Toussaint Louverture Prize	
■ Communication strategy	
Quotes	18
■ Kofi Annan	
■ Koïchiro Matsuura	
■ Boniface Alexandre	
■ Thabo Mbeki	
■ Michael Omolewa	
Extracts from the International Symposium, “Issues of memory: Coming to terms with the Slave Trade and Slavery”	19
■ Dr Carlo Sterlin, psychiatrist	
■ Ms Sylvia Serbin, journalist	
■ Ms Aisha Bilkhair Khalifa, internships coordinator	
■ Mr Howard Dodson, Director of the Schomburg Center For Research in Black Culture	
■ Dr Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya, Coordinator of The African Diaspora in Asia (TADIA)	
■ Ms Libia Grueso Castelblanco, specialist in the process of integration of Black communities in Colombia	
■ Professor Louis Sala-Molins, philosopher and member of the International Scientific Committee for the <i>Slave Route</i> project	
■ Professor Jean-Michel Deveau, historian and member of the International Scientific Committee for the <i>Slave Route</i> project	
Interviews	22
■ Ms Christiane Taubira, French Deputy	
■ Mr Howard Dodson, Director	
■ Ms Susanna Baca, Vocalist	
Combating contemporary forms of slavery	26
Intersectorality at work in UNESCO	28
■ Breaking the Silence (Education Sector)	
■ Countering the aftermath of slavery (Social and Human Sciences Sector)	
■ Safeguarding of slave trade archives (Communication Sector)	
■ Cultural heritage associated with the slave trade (World Heritage Centre)	
Ten years of the <i>Slave Route</i> project (1994-2004)	34
■ Evaluation of the <i>Slave Route</i> project	
Memorial tourism and oral tradition	37
■ Memorial tourism: cooperation with the World Tourism Organization (WTO)	
■ Saving oral memory in the Indian Ocean	
■ Retracing the history of the “Forgotten Slaves”	
■ Madagascar and Reunion: two stelae and a garden, symbols of an intermingled history	

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Foreword

The International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition has enabled the international community to reflect upon one of the most tragic pages in human history, while measuring the global transformations generated by the Slave Trade – a form of globalization before its time – and to consider the cultural interactions to which it gave rise.

The tragedy of the slave trade, indelible and imprescriptible, is still present among us today. Between the 16th and 19th centuries, millions of Africans were enslaved and deported to plantations in the New World. This deportation is without historical precedent and has left the African continent, depleted of precious human, intellectual and cultural resources, in a precarious and vulnerable state that weighs heavily upon the continent's future.

Commemorating the bicentennial of the first black Republic, proclaimed in 1804 after the Saint-Domingue (Haiti) uprising, the 2004 Year not only provided the international community with an exceptional occasion to remember this tragedy but also highlighted the struggle against slavery that led to its abolition. The struggle against slavery, including its bloody revolts and heroic freedom wars, as well as the philosophic, legal and political advances – which were often overlooked or in some cases reversed – has led the international community to condemn the slave trade and slavery as a “crime against humanity” acknowledged by the Durban Conference in 2001.

At a time when our daily lives are once again dangerously threatened by talk of racial and cultural purity and when we are haunted by catastrophic predictions of new confrontations between civilizations, it would seem essential for us to remember this tragedy and the enforced dialogue that took place during the traumatic period of the slave trade and slavery.

Study of this tragedy shows us how, despite the institutionalization of prejudice and deep-rooted stereotypes as well as the application of the most brutal policies of discrimination, a significant step towards interculturality was taken.

The propensity of cultures to exchange and interact, regardless of the taboos and social systems put in place to protect the established order, reflects the power and potential of such interactions.

Analysis of the consequences of slavery, allows us to more thoroughly reflect on the future of intercultural dialogue in modern societies, particularly those which are multicultural and multiethnic, and on new forms of citizenship respectful of cultural diversity and the multiplicity of identification models.

This special issue of the **Bulletin on the Slave Route** reports on the many activities carried out during this International Year and testifies to the rich cultural diversity constituting the complex heritage of slavery. A heritage that triumphed over this tragedy through the production of new cultural forms and innovations, born of the enforced dialogues, which have flourished thereafter while never losing sites of slavery's horrors.

While the slave trade, slavery and its abolition are a part of history, these are also events which do not belong exclusively to the past. The lessons we take from one of the most tragic pages of mankind's history have also an instructive and informative value. Today, the potential for insidious mechanisms to transform men, women, and children into slaves, by alienating their freedom and denying their dignity, sadly remains. UNESCO thus has not only a duty to remember and commemorate; it has also an ethical responsibility of vigilance.

Katérina Stenou

Director of the Division of Cultural Policies
and Intercultural Dialogue

Introduction

■ Remembrance as a way of understanding the present and preparing for the future

It was on UNESCO's initiative that the year 2004 was proclaimed by the United Nations *International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition*. The reflection pursued on this subject, particularly under the *Slave Route* project, enabled us to convince the international community of the need to devote an entire year to this question in addition to the two dates dedicated to it annually, namely the celebration on 23 August of the *International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition* and the observance on 2 December of the *International Day for the Abolition of Slavery*.

An enormous gap of remembrance was indeed waiting to be filled – an oversight that an increasing number of abolition commemorations and celebrations in recent years has made even more blatant. As a result, it was necessary to find a way to also pay tribute to the victims themselves (the millions of men and women reduced to slavery) and to honour their unyielding struggle for dignity and freedom. There was a need to remind the world of their heroic resistance to the barbarity of slavery and to celebrate the remarkable cultural ingenuity that they demonstrated in efforts to advance slave societies and in order to survive slavery's processes of dehumanization.

The year 2004 was chosen to mark an emblematic date in that resistance – the 200th anniversary of the *Haitian Revolution*. On the nights of 22 and 23 August 1791, an insurrection broke out on the island of Saint-Domingue that, under the leadership of Toussaint Louverture, was to culminate in the independence of Haiti in 1804. Regarded as the first victory in human history of slaves against their oppressors, this revolution was also the first to put into real practice *the universality of human rights*, which were still denied to a large part of humanity. Accordingly, the Haitian revolution would have a considerable impact on emancipation movements that were to lead to independence for the people of Latin America. Resisting all attempts to smother it, it transmitted a message of hope to the hearts

and minds of all those who dreamed of freedom and justice throughout the world. The *2004 Year* was thus the occasion to reflect on the contribution of the slaves to the forward march of history and to the far-reaching changes taking place in the world.

Following the close of the *International Year* and in light of the initial lessons it yields, it is gratifying to observe that the United Nations' choice was not without impact, as some had feared. On the contrary, 2004 provided a formidable opportunity to lift much of the veil that still covers the tragedy of the slave trade and slavery. The strong mobilization in the different countries, the diversity of activities carried out and the lively debates to which these gave rise demonstrated the scale of expectation and desire to understand this tragic past that continues to haunt our present and mortgage our future.

Throughout the course of numerous conferences, exhibitions, film screenings and performances organized in this context, a remark recurred like a leitmotiv in the comments of participants from all backgrounds: *"We did not know that this tragedy had made such an impact on the changes in the world and that it could concern our own lives to such an extent"*. The relevance of the programmed events, their coverage in the media and their impact on opinion makers gave new impetus to efforts underway working to ensure that proper recognition be given for the many important contributions made by slaves.

Of course, it would be naive to believe that a single year of awareness-raising, however successful, would suffice to break centuries of organized silence. But 2004 served to further weaken the wall of indifference and ignorance that continues to surround this tragedy, unprecedented though it is in human history.

In this special issue of the BULLETIN on the *Slave Route*, we have attempted to offer a glimpse of what took place during the International Year. Rather than carrying out an exhaustive assessment, we have tried to illustrate the different kinds of actions undertaken by UNESCO and our various national and international partners.

Now that the *International Year* has concluded, the most difficult part begins for



Slave Route project leaders and partners: managing the hopes and expectations, responding to the requests formulated – in short, channelling the momentum created by this commemoration. This mission coincides with the tenth anniversary of the project launched at Ouidah, Benin, in 1994. It also comes at a time when we begin an evaluation that will study the road travelled and define new directions.

The challenge is considerable, but the encouragement received during the *International Year* and the prospect of fruitful partnerships gives us the resolve and energy to assume it.

Ali Moussa Iye

Chief

of the History and Culture Section,
In charge of the *Slave Route* project

The Year 2004: Assessment of a celebration marked by emotion and reflection

Given the diversity of activities organized throughout the world, this review cannot be exhaustive and the list of events selected cannot give more than a glimpse of the wealth of actions undertaken during this commemorative year.

We recall that it was at the request of UNESCO's General Conference (31 C/Resolution 28) that the United Nations General Assembly at its 57th session in December 2002 proclaimed 2004 as the International Year to Commemorate the *Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition (Resolution A/RES/57/195)*. Following the adoption of this resolution, UNESCO undertook a series of consultations with its Member States and civil society organizations to mobilize them to reflect on questions regarding slavery and organize activities at the international level, in coordination with the *Slave Route Secretariat*. Thus on the 20th and 21st of January 2003, members of UNESCO's Task Force for activities relating to the study of the slave trade and its implications met with representatives from UNESCO's Permanent Delegations to define a joint strategy for the commemoration of the International Year.

During the consultations, a preliminary commemoration programme was drawn up based on the *Slave Route* project's three main themes – *scientific research, living memory and encounters and dialogue* – and recommendations were assembled. We are pleased that the National Commissions, UNESCO Field Offices and non-governmental organizations played such an active part in the commemoration of this Year. The range and quantity of dossiers and comments sent to UNESCO enable us to underscore the most significant events and to share some observations.

The *2004 Year* logo was chosen from a range of proposals. The selected design, representing the links of a chain being broken and releasing a flight of doves in the direction of freedom, was the work of Stéphane Rébillon and Elodie Jarret. It captures perfectly the spirit of the commemoration.

The diversity of initiatives undertaken throughout the year was striking. Some 75 Member States submitted requests to UNESCO, which granted its sponsorship or financial assistance

to approximately 100 activities including international symposia, seminars, forums and exhibitions focusing on the theme of the International Year and organized by Member States themselves or by non-governmental organizations and UNESCO Field Offices. The international community as a whole was mobilized and discussed the question of the slave trade within populations of varying outlooks and origins. The result was, as described by Christiane Taubira, Deputy for French Guyana, "the liberation of a phenomenal energy that shame had crushed and ignorance fragmented".

For the first time, the commemoration of 23 August, *International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition*, took place at UNESCO Headquarters and was marked by a series of events dedicated to the memory of the victims of the slave trade and slavery and designed to stimulate reflection on the singularity of this tragedy, finally recognized as a crime against humanity at the 2001 Durban World Conference Against Racism. The programme of the Day had three components – the emphasis being on the power and magic of language that enabled millions of men and women to transcend the hell of deportation and slavery – including *poetry* seared by expressions of suffering experienced by dehumanized individuals and communities, *slam* or rhythmic words voicing the anger and hopes of younger generations, and *songs* of resistance sung in response to the calls of *voodoo drums*. The painful memory and, at the same time, striking victory of the *Haitian Revolution* moved more than one participant. As well, a magnificent *exhibition of Royal tapestries* told the story of the massive deportation of Africans, while the striking film, *SANKOFA*, made us relive the transatlantic slave trade and highlighted the link between the present and this painful past.

It should be noted that the various debates and questions raised concerning future activities of the *Slave Route* project referred in equal measure to slavery from the historical standpoint as well as all other forms of slavery and enslavement.

Mention must also be made of the large number of scientific publications, novels



and essays produced in the course of the *2004 Year*, as well as the press articles, audiovisual productions and exhibitions on slavery and the commemoration of its abolition, addressed to a public worldwide. Many of the exhibitions, such as that created by the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, are travelling exhibitions that will continue to tour and carry on the message of this International Year for years to come.

The close of the *2004 Year* – with the stirring concert given by Mr Gilberto Gil, the Brazilian Minister of Culture, and the International Symposium outstanding for the quality of its presentations and the strong participation of philosophers, sociologists, psychiatrists, psychologists, journalists and linguists from all parts of the world – earned UNESCO unanimous congratulations. As Sylvia Serbin,

journalist and author of *Reines d'Afrique*, commented: “it is remarkable that UNESCO should have organized such a symposium since one senses more and more the need for younger generations to hear the world speak about a past that has been denied”.

A new stage has therefore begun with the implementation of the *Slave Route* project, which is a genuine opening to the future since, as Howard Dodson, Director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, said: “If we do not understand the importance and seriousness of this period, we cannot understand what we are today”.

The commemoration of this International Year gave rise to the worldwide organization of events and activities, of which an indicative and non-exhaustive list can be found below:

January

- 1 January: Cultural event: Bicentenary of Haiti, *Year 2004* (UNESCO Office, Port-au-Prince, Haiti)
- 10 January: Official launch of the *Year 2004* by Mr Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO (Accra, Ghana) (UNESCO Office in Accra)
- 10 January: Simultaneous launch of the *Year 2004* by Mr Mounir Bouchenaki, Assistant Director-General for Culture, Havana, Cuba (UNESCO Office in Havana)
- 23 January: Conference on “The influence of African music outside Africa”; Concert by the “Free Spirits” with Jean-Jacques Quesada, organized by Soho Music (Libourne, France)

February

- 17 February: Regional launch of the *Year 2004* in the Indian Ocean by Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO (Port-Louis, Mauritius)
- 17 February: International seminar on the theme “Slavery, Resistance, Abolition, and Memory” (Port-Louis, Mauritius) organized by the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, the Mauritius Cultural Centre and the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture
- 26-27 February: Exhibition “Links with Jamaica”, organized by UNESCO’s Africa Department (UNESCO Headquarters, Paris)

March

- 8-12 March 2004: Third subregional workshop on teaching the slave trade in the Indian Ocean: “Learning about our Common Past to Build a Peaceful Future” (Maputo, Mozambique), (UNESCO Associated Schools)
- 15 March: Tribute to Mr Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye, Curator of the Slaves’ House on Gorée island, in recognition of his remarkable contribution to the denunciation of slavery. He was awarded the “Haiti” medal by the Director-General (UNESCO Office, Dakar, Senegal)
- 20 March: Conference on “Women’s Resistance and Abolition. Women in the Indian Ocean” (UNESCO Headquarters, Paris), (Association réunionnaise Communication et Culture – ARCC)
- 21 March: Celebration of the *International Day for the Elimination of Racism*. Launching of the virtual exhibition “Lest We Forget: The Triumph over Slavery” (UNESCO Headquarters, Paris)
- 21 March: Launching of the project “International Coalition of Cities United Against Racism”, by UNESCO’s Social and Human Sciences Sector (UNESCO Headquarters, Paris)
- 24-27 March: Conference on slavery, organized by the National Slave Route Committee of the Dominican Republic (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic)

April

- 7 April: Commemoration of the death of Toussaint Louverture – Screening of film about Toussaint Louverture directed by Sarah Maldoror (UNESCO Headquarters, Paris)
- 6-10 April: International conference on “African and Afro-American Culture” (Santiago de Cuba), (UNESCO Office, Havana, Cuba)
- 23 April: Press conference for the new research and information programme “Forgotten Slaves” concerning the wreck of the slave ship *L’Utile* on the island of Tromelin in 1761 (Marine Archaeological Research Group, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris)
- 29 April: Project “Memory of Slavery/Memory of the River”; Conference on “Black Images in Western Literature” and concert by Jean-Jacques Quesada, organized by Soho Music (Ste-Foy, France)
- April-June: The Schomburg Center’s travelling exhibition “Lest We Forget: The Triumph over Slavery” (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic)

May

- 3 May: Conference on “History and Commemoration: the struggle against slavery: hope and disillusionment, 17th-20th centuries (Paris)”, organized by the town of Schoelcher in Martinique
- 16-22 May: 36th annual conference of the Association of Caribbean Historians, (Barbados), ACH of Barbados
- 16-19 May: World Forum on Human Rights – Workshop on “Humanism of Human Rights and the Barbarity of the Slave Trade”, Social and Human Sciences Sector (Nantes)
- 19-21 May: Creation of the Afro-American Centre in Esmeraldas (UNESCO Office, Quito, Ecuador)
- 20 May: Seminar on “Slavery in the Caribbean and the Struggle for its Abolition” (Nassau, Bahamas), (UNESCO Office, Kingston, Jamaica)
- 21 May: Regional launch of the *2004 Year* in the Caribbean by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General (Nassau, Bahamas), (UNESCO Office, Kingston, Jamaica)
- 24-25 May: Study Days on the poet Auguste Lacaussade (1815-1897), son of a slave freed before 1848 (University of Reunion)
- 24-27 May: International preparatory meeting for the International Youth Forum Seminar on the transatlantic slave trade (Oslo, Norway), UNESCO Associated Schools
- 25-27 May: International symposium “Oral Memory and slavery in the south-west of the Indian Ocean”, Association Historun and the Centre de recherches sur les sociétés de l’océan Indien (CRESOI) (Reunion)
- May-June: The Schomburg Center travelling exhibition “Lest We Forget” (Maputo, Mozambique)
- May-July: The Schomburg Center travelling exhibition “Lest We Forget” (Nassau, Bahamas)

June

- 1-17 June: “The Black Book” project – meeting with writers and filmmakers, organized by Soho Music (Bordeaux, Bègles, France)
- 4 June: Videoconference on interculturality, freedom and equality among people, and conducted with students from Aquitaine, Libreville, Fort-de-France and New York, in the presence of Edouard Glissant, organized by Soho Music
- 25-28 June: Meeting on “Teaching about the struggle for freedom in the Southern United States” (University of Pennsylvania, United States)
- 29 June: Concert by Free Spirits Special Septet, organized by Soho Music (Eysines, France)

July

- 5-9 July: International conference on the transatlantic slave trade and slavery (Accra, Ghana)
- 22 July-10 October: Exhibition “Victor Schoelcher: his travels, his fights, his passions” (Houilles, France)
- July-September: The Schomburg Center travelling exhibition “Lest We Forget” (Brasilia, Brazil)

August

- 9-11 August: International seminar on “The Black Slave Trade and Slavery: Lest We Forget” (Pointe-Noire, Congo), (UNESCO, Brazzaville, Congo)



- 23 August:** Commemoration of the *International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition*: “Textures” exhibition, debate on the Haitian Revolution, poetry readings, song and dance performances (UNESCO Headquarters, Paris)
Relighting of the eternal flame for the monument of the “Neg Mawon” (Unknown Maroon) UNESCO Office in Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Conferences, lectures, debates, exhibitions in schools and higher education institutions in Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo);
National Commission Concert, memorial hike, pilgrimage to the Slaves’ House in Gorée, exhibition, film (UNESCO Office, Dakar, Senegal)
- 23-25 August:** Meetings to raise awareness of slavery and its impact in contemporary society, Panama City (UNESCO Office, Costa Rica)
- 28-29 August & 2, 4, 9, 11 September:** Performance “The Knight of Saint George, an African at Court” (Château de Versailles, France)
- July-August:** The Schomburg Center travelling exhibition “Lest We Forget” (Dakar, Senegal)

September

- 4 September:** Conference on “Struggles and Victories against Slavery”, UNESCO Office, Kingston, Jamaica
- 10 September-10 November:** Exhibition “The Long March”, with a programme of concerts devoted to slave songs, by Musiques de la Terre (Baux-de-Provence Museum, France)
- 16-17 September:** Launching of the project “Black Atlantic: Travelling Cultures, Counter-Histories, Networked Identities” (Berlin, Germany)
- 25-26 September:** Organization of three concerts at Taninges (Haute-Savoie), Annecy (Haute-Savoie) and Méribel (Haute-Savoie) by the Association of Carillon Rhônalpin, in cooperation with the Association philosophique Victor Schoelcher (Geneva, Switzerland)

October

- 1-20 October:** The Schomburg Center travelling exhibition “Lest We Forget” (Geneva, Switzerland)
- 18 October:** International symposium on “The Slave Route in the region of Rio de la Plata: history and consequences”, organized by the UNESCO Office in Montevideo, Uruguay, in close collaboration with UNESCO-Brasilia and researchers in the region
- 1-25 October:** The Schomburg Center travelling exhibition “Lest We Forget” (Saint Lucia)
- 19 October-19 November:** Travelling exhibition “Breaking the Silence” (Andorra) , National Commission
- 21 October:** Conference of Cuban ethnologists and writers (Andorra)
- 26 October-19 November:** The Schomburg Center travelling exhibition “Lest We Forget” (Stockholm, Sweden)
- 27-28 October:** International Seminar on the *International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition* (United Nations Office, Lisbon, Portugal)

November

- 1-19 November:** The Swedish government in collaboration with UNESCO organized a series of events to mark the closure of the *2004 Year*, including: an exhibition, a teachers’ seminar, a concert, a screening of the film “Sankofa”, a public discussion on the relationship between slavery and the current racism in Europe, a special mass in memory of the victims of slavery, a seminar on “Gender and Slavery”, a special evening devoted to those who fought for the abolition of slavery, and a day of songs and prayers, (Stockholm, Sweden)
- 4 November:** Conference entitled, “The Persistence of Slavery: A Focus on Human Trafficking (United Nations Department of Public Information, New York, United States)
- 4-6 November:** Seminar entitled, “How to teach the slave trade, slavery and its abolition” (Marly-le-Roi, France), French National Commission
- 8-13 November:** The town of Evry, in partnership with UNESCO and organizations working to eliminate slavery, organized a six-day awareness-raising campaign to commemorate the struggle against slavery and its abolition (Evry, France)

- 12-16 November:** International Youth Forum (National Commission, Trinidad and Tobago)
- 15-19 November:** International Seminar on the preservation and management of immovable African cultural heritage, organized by the World Heritage Centre, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) and the Grenoble Architecture School Research Centre (Porto Novo, Benin)
- 15 November 2004-31 January 2005:** The Schomburg Center travelling exhibition “Lest We Forget” (Yaoundé, Cameroon)
- 22-24 November:** International meeting on the Slave Trade Archives project, organized jointly by the UNESCO Communication Sector and the National Archives of Cuba (Havana, Cuba), (UNESCO Office, Havana, Cuba)
- 24 November:** Symposium 2007: “Towards a strategy for remembrance” (London Mayor’s Office, United Kingdom)
- 25 November-17 December:** The Schomburg Center travelling exhibition “Lest We Forget” (Helsinki, Finland)
- 25 November-15 December:** The Schomburg Center travelling exhibition “Lest We Forget” (UNESCO Headquarters, Paris)
- 25 November-20 February 2005:** The Schomburg Center travelling exhibition “Lest We Forget” (Cape Town, South Africa)
- November:** Publication in the 24th issue of *Nuntium* “Slavery and Indigenous People, Yesterday and Today” (The Vatican)

December

- 1 December:** International seminar on “Slavery – Yesterday and Today” (National Commission, Helsinki, Finland)
- 2-7 December:** Launching of the commemoration of the National Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition (Libreville, Gabon), (UNESCO Office, Libreville, Gabon)
- 3-5 December:** Closure of the *International Year* at UNESCO Headquarters (Paris)
- 9-10 December:** Adoption of the Coalition of European Cities Against Racism by the 4th European Conference of Cities for Human Rights (Nuremberg, Germany)
- 10-24 December:** The Schomburg Center travelling exhibition “Lest We Forget” (New York, United States), (UNESCO Office, New York, U.S.)
- 17 December:** Event in memory of slaves and indentured labourers (Fort-Dauphin, Madagascar)
- 23 December-7 February 2005:** The Schomburg Center travelling exhibition “Lest We Forget” (Port-Louis, Mauritius)
- 29 December:** Launching of the “Network of Memorial Sites of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in Africa” (RASTA) (UNESCO Office, Dakar, Senegal)

■ **Closure of the International Year**

The *International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition* was launched simultaneously in Ghana, Haiti and Cuba, while its closure was organized and held at UNESCO’s Headquarters on the 3rd, 4th and 5th of December 2004 in Paris. During the closure, a series of events were presided over by Mr Marcio Barbosa, Deputy Director-General

of UNESCO, and presented by RFO and FR3 journalist, Michel Reinette:

- Inauguration of the exhibition “Lest We Forget: The Triumph over Slavery”;
- The award ceremony for the UNESCO-Toussaint Louverture Prize;
- Concert given by Gilberto Gil;
- International symposium on “Issues of memory: Coming to terms with the Slave Trade and Slavery”.



Award ceremony for the UNESCO Toussaint Louverture Prize.
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The UNESCO-Toussaint Louverture Prize was presented by the Deputy Director-General, Mr Marcio Barbosa in UNESCO's Room I, to two laureates: Mr Abdias do Nascimento, and Mr Aimé Césaire, represented by the Senator for Martinique, Mr Claude Lise. Speaking via two-way videoconference from his office in Martinique, Mr Césaire was able to talk with his old campaign comrade, Mr Nascimento. They had not seen each other for 15 years and the award ceremony provided the opportunity for them to see and speak with each other while thousands of kilometers apart – a particularly moving moment for both the laureates and the public.



Abdias do Nascimento
© UNESCO, Michel Ravassard



Concert given by Gilberto Gil at UNESCO
© UNESCO, Michel Ravassard



The outstanding concert given by the Brazilian Minister of Culture, Mr Gilberto Gil, in UNESCO's Room I, which attracted over 1,400 people, was a striking demonstration of the interactions generated by the slave trade and slavery in the field of music. The repertoire chosen by the great Brazilian artist delighted those present, particularly the song about the island of Gorée. When the Minister-artist began to play the hymn in memory of Gorée, the emotion felt by the public was perceptible. The sustained rhythm of the final song enchanted everyone. The spectators rose to their feet, clapped their hands, and moved in step with the music – an unforgettable moment, which one would have wished to prolong. The enthusiastic comments of the audience, the press and colleagues reflected the success of this concert, during which the presence of Peruvian artist Susana Baca was also acknowledged by Gilberto Gil and the public.

The international symposium (4-5 December) was a major event in the closure of the 2004 Year. This was due in part to the high quality of the presentations as well as the wide range of participants, including philosophers, sociologists, psychiatrists, psychologists, journalists and linguists from Europe, Africa, North and South America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Arab world: Joseph Harris (U.S.A.), Susana Baca (Peru), Rex Nettleford (Jamaica), Sheila Walker (U.S.A.), Christiane Taubira-Delanon (France), Claude Ribbe (France), Antony Holiday (South Africa), Louis Sala-Molins (France), Jean-Claude William (France), Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya (United Kingdom), Aisha Bilkhair Khalifa (United Arab Emirates), Libia Grueso Castelblanca (Colombia), Jean-Michel Deveau (France), Howard Dodson (USA), Carlo Sterlin (Canada), Laennec Hurbon (Haiti), Silvia Serbin (France), Ricardo Pereira (Peru), Viviane Romana (France), Nelly Schmidt (France).

The very instructive debates included lively exchanges, demonstrating how questions about the slave trade and slavery, long denied and concealed, continue to arouse strong feelings. It was within this context that Christiane Taubira-Delannon, Deputy of French Guyana taking part in the symposium, declared: "I am very happy that we remain passionate about this subject ... I should have been dismayed if we had shown indifference and coldness. UNESCO must understand that 2004 is neither a year of closure nor necessarily a single event ... It is a work in



progress that UNESCO has been involved with for the last 10 years. I hope that it will continue its involvement more affirmatively and certainly more convincingly ... There is a huge amount of work to be done in order to learn about the societies before, during and after the slave trade and slavery as well as those new cultures that have emerged from colonization ...".

As quoted by Howard Dodson, Director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and curator of the exhibition *Lest We Forget: The Triumph over Slavery*: "There is a great need to study these periods in school and to speak of them in the media ... My feeling is that if we do not remember slavery we cannot succeed ... If we do not understand the importance and seriousness of that period, we cannot understand what we are today ... One thing is certain; we cannot immure ourselves in "victimization". What I try to do through my books and also the exhibition is to show that slavery has transformed the Africans by creating a stronger breed of men ... When one sees what our ancestors were capable of achieving in the worst possible conditions, one can imagine what is possible in the age in which we live ... So I hope that people will leave here with a desire to get to know their history so as to fulfil themselves and succeed."



Members of the International Scientific Committee for the Slave Route project
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LAUNCHING OF THE 2004 INTERNATIONAL YEAR

It was on 10 January 2004, on the Cape Coast, one of the centres of the slave trade and today a World Heritage site, that the Director-General officially launched the *International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition* in the presence of President Kuofor and Isaac Adumadzie, Regional Minister of the Central Region (Cape Coast), as well as the Ministers of Culture from Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo. The traditional ceremony was placed under the auspices of "Osabarima" Nana Kwesi Atta II, President of the "Gua Tadtional Council". Twenty traditional chiefs were also present. Simultaneously, the Assistant Director-General for Culture and the Head of the UNESCO Office in Haiti launched the *2004 Year* in Havana (Cuba) and in Port-au-Prince (Haiti). Two additional regional launchings also took place in Mauritius (17 February) and in the Bahamas (21 May).

These events received both national and international press coverage, documented by the Office of Public Information who also issued numerous press releases concerning these events.

At the launching in Mauritius, in the presence of the Prime Minister, Mr Paul Bérenger, and the Ministers of Culture from Madagascar, Mozambique, the Seychelles and Tanzania, the Director-General stated: "*whether we are speaking of Tanzania, Madagascar, Mauritius, Comoros or the Seychelles, history will recall that, in successive waves, the slave trade, colonization and migrations have sealed here and forever the fate of diverse cultures and peoples originating from Africa, Europe and Asia*".

The ceremony ended with a visit to the exhibition: "Slavery: resistance and abolition in the New World and the Indian Ocean".



© UNESCO
Launching of the 2004 Year on the Cape Coast

THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION OF 1804

The 2004 Year marked the bicentenary of the proclamation of Haitian independence on the 1st of January 1804 by the former slave Jean-Jacques Dessalines.

The Haitian Revolution was the culmination of a series of insurrections that began in the summer of 1789 in Martinique and continued in Guadeloupe over several years. The colonists of Martinique did not hesitate to call in the English troops for their protection and rescue. Guadeloupe and Guyana experienced a brief abolitionist period from 1794 to 1802 before the re-establishment of slavery by force. In one of the biggest colonies, Saint-Domingue, the largest slave insurrection began in 1791 and developed over a number of years.

From 1796, Toussaint Louverture, the first Black divisional general, became the undisputed leader of the liberated Haitians. Napoleon Bonaparte re-established slavery in the French colonies in 1802 and dispatched tens of thousands of soldiers to Santo Domingo led by General Leclerc. They suffered a total and humiliating defeat.

Arrested on 7 June 1802, Toussaint Louverture was deported to Fort Joux in France where he died on 7 April 1803.

From 1804, as an independent nation, Haiti aroused fear in many slave nations who refused to acknowledge their independence.

This first victorious rising of Black slaves is a symbol of the struggle and constant resistance of slaves against oppression and a key historical factor in the origins of slavery abolition and the emancipation of the Caribbean and Latin America people.

The Haitian Revolution has important consequences for today's struggles against racism, domination and intolerance.



Insurrection in Saint-Domingue
© UNESCO / The Slave Route

23 AUGUST: INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE SLAVE TRADE AND ITS ABOLITION:

23 August was chosen by the 29th session of UNESCO's General Conference as the *International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition*. For it was on the nights of 22 and 23 August 1791 that an insurrection broke out on the island of Saint-Domingue that would culminate, under the leadership of Toussaint Louverture, into the first decisive victory in human history of slaves against their oppressors. The commemoration of 23 August during the 2004 Year has been marked by a variety of events organized in different regions of the world. At UNESCO Headquarters, the exhibition "Textures", loaned by the town of Schoelcher in Martinique, comprising 32 works representing the history of the transatlantic slave trade and created by craftsmen from the town, Abomey (Republic of Benin), was open to the public from the 9th until the 23rd of August. Events co-organized with colleagues from the Human and Social Sciences and Education Sectors and with non-governmental organizations such as the Association réunionnaise communication et culture (ARCC), the Comité Marche du 23 mai 1998 and the Centre d'information, formation, recherche et développement (CIFORDOM), provided a striking illustration of the diversity of artistic expressions deriving from the forced encounters of populations. Artists such as D' de Kabal and Solal Valentin performed Slam (rhythmic words) and read poetry expressing the anger of younger generations and spoke of the suffering experienced by downtrodden communities. One of the high notes of the performance was undoubtedly the concert, "Haitian songs and percussions", given by the group Adjabel, which sung of the hope generated by encounters among cultures and the promise of multi-ethnic societies. A screening of the film *Sankofa*, directed by Haïlé Gerima, on the slave trade, concluded the events of 23 August 2004.

In Panama, the Assistant Director-General for Culture, Mr Mounir Bouchenaki, participating in an awareness-raising meeting discussing slavery and its impact in the world today, drew the attention of the people of Central America to the implications of both the *Slave Route* project and the *2004 Year*. Highlighting the exclusion experienced by African descendants and their communities was identified as one of the main goals of the meeting.

In Haiti, it was the President of the General Conference, H.E. Ambassador Michael Omolewa, who, at the invitation of the Minister of Culture, represented UNESCO on 23 August in Port-au-Prince, on the occasion of the relighting of the eternal flame at the "Neg Mawon" (Unknown Maroon) monument. The monument was created by Haitian artist and architect Albert Mangonès, and has become a symbol of freedom and independence throughout the Caribbean.

The National Commission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for UNESCO devoted two weeks, from 20 August to 2 September 2004, to the commemoration of the Memorial Day by organizing exhibitions and debates in schools and higher education institutions throughout Kinshasa.

The UNESCO Office in Dakar, the Gorée municipal authorities and the specially created *Committee for the organization and commemoration of the struggle against slavery and its abolition* were particularly active in the commemoration of 23 August. This was reflected in the wide range of activities organized (including a concert, music, a memorial tour, a pilgrimage to the Slaves' House, an exhibition vernissage and a film screening) as well as in the mobilization of both partners and the public.



Mr Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, the 23rd of August 2004
© UNESCO, Michel Ravassard

Poster for the exhibition "Textures",
Royal tapestries of Abomey, Benin



**THE TRAVELLING EXHIBITION:
"LEST WE FORGET: THE TRIUMPH OVER SLAVERY"**

The exhibition was produced in three versions (French/English, English/Spanish and English/Portuguese) by the Schomburg Center For Research in Black Culture and the National Library of New York, in close cooperation with UNESCO's *Slave Route* project and in response to the United Nations General Assembly resolution proclaiming 2004 *International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition*. This exhibition presents the cultural, political, economic and social practices of the African slaves, acquired during the dehumanizing period of slavery.

The exhibition is unique in that it focuses less on the "victimization" of the slaves than on the novel means they employed to reshape their destiny and their place in history. Out of these enforced encounters sprang new cultural, religious, linguistic and social expressions, of which many elements remain today in the cultures of the countries concerned. Moreover, the exhibition testifies to the enormous economic impact of the slave trade on the development of Europe and the Americas and highlights the disastrous consequences of this trafficking on the economic, political and social life of Africa. It has already been hosted by a number of countries and will continue to circulate in Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, the American continent and the Indian Ocean beyond 2004:

April-June:	Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic)
May-July:	Nassau (Bahamas)
May-June:	Maputo (Mozambique)
July-September:	Brasilia (Brazil)
July-August:	Dakar (Senegal)
1-20 October:	Geneva (Switzerland)
1-25 October:	Saint Lucia
26 October-19 November:	Stockholm (Sweden)
25 November-15 December:	Paris (France)
10-24 December 2004:	New York (United States)
23 December-7 February 2005:	Port-Louis (Mauritius)
15 November-31 January 2005:	Yaoundé (Cameroon)
25 November-17 December:	Helsinki (Finland)
25 November-20 February 2005:	Johannesburg (South Africa)



UNESCO TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE PRIZE

The UNESCO Toussaint Louverture Prize was proposed to the Director-General of UNESCO in February 2003 by Mr Wesner Emmanuel, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Haiti to UNESCO. He was subsequently supported by his colleagues the Ambassadors and Permanent Delegates of the Philippines and the Republic of the Congo to UNESCO: Mr Hector K. Villarroel, on behalf of the Group of 77 and Mr Antoine Ndinga Oba, President of UNESCO's African Group. This initiative was the subject of 32 C/Resolution 35, Proclamation of 2004 as *International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition*.

The prize bears the name of a former emancipated slave, the first Black divisional general, a hero of Haitian independence, symbol of the struggle against slavery and racial discrimination. The Haitian Revolution of 1804 has a universal significance because it was the first successful slave insurrection, which opened the way to the emancipation of slaves in the Americas and to the freedom movements in Africa.

Designed to reward an outstanding achievement that, in keeping with the spirit and action of Toussaint Louverture, has made a lasting contribution to combating racism in the political, literary and artistic fields, this Prize was only awarded on one occasion in 2004, at the ceremony to mark the closure of the *International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition*. It takes the form of a diploma and a medal struck for this occasion by the Paris Mint, bearing the portrait of Toussaint Louverture.

On 3 December 2004 in the UNESCO Main Hall in Paris, this Prize was presented by the Deputy Director-General, Mr Marcio Barbosa, on behalf of the Director-General to two laureates:

MR ABDIAS DO NASCIMENTO:

Man of the theatre, dramatist, painter and activist, the first Afro-Brazilian to be elected to the Chamber of Deputies, later to become a Senator, with the specific mission of upholding the civil rights of the Afro-Brazilian population, Mr do Nascimento declared himself very moved to be receiving the Toussaint Louverture Prize: "I cannot do other than receive this Prize on behalf of all the Black descendants, who are very numerous in Latin America". He also paid tribute to the resistance of the indigenous peoples and of the Afro-descendants of the Americas in the face of all the genocidal exercises during the period of colonization.

MR AIMÉ CÉSAIRE:

(by videoconference link from Martinique)

Writer, poet, father of the notion of "negritude", in recognition of his commitment and work in the cause of combating domination, racism and intolerance: "We cannot forget our debt to Haiti for our liberation. We owe our liberation very largely to a people that fought for the liberation of South America as a whole ... I am happy that, in thinking of me, you should have had the idea of evoking the memory of Toussaint, for his name is linked to a universal and anti-racist conception of human rights and the rights of the citizen", he declared.

The Prize was received, on his behalf, by Claude Lise, Senator and President of the Conseil général de la Martinique.



COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

One of the strong points of 2004, *International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition*, was the establishment as early as 2003 of a communication strategy, which made it possible to publicize the whole spectrum of activities widely and to prepare the international community for this event. Following the process of consulting Member States, NGOs and the scientific community, a list of all the activities planned at UNESCO Headquarters by the different sectors was also drawn up and sent to all the field offices.

So as to impart a visual identity to the commemoration, an appeal was made to various partners for the creation of a logo. The version selected, devised by a group of young people (Stéphane Rébillon and Elodie Jarret), depicts the links of a chain being broken to release a flight of doves.

Among the information documents produced for this *Year* was a four-minute video clip on slavery, its consequences and its progressive abolition. Produced by UNESCO and directed by John Lawton (English, French, Portuguese and Spanish versions), it was sent to all UNESCO's field offices in VHS and Betacam formats for reproduction and distribution to Member States. It was also shown and distributed at the major events over the course of the *Year 2004*.

The poster for the *Year* was also produced in several languages and given wide distribution. Conceived as an educational tool, it provides an historical outline – set against a background of powerful images – of the slave trade, slavery and the processes of abolition. The Associated Schools network published a poster-calendar mentioning the events scheduled during the *Commemorative Year*. This calendar was sent to the 7,500 Associated Schools in 172 countries.

An illustrated children's colouring book, *The Life of Toussaint Louverture*, in three versions: French/Creole; English/Spanish; English/Creole.



Finally, a brochure including a message from the Director-General, the programme of the commemoration and an outline of the history of the slave trade and the abolition processes, entitled “*Luttes contre l’esclavage/Struggles against Slavery*”, lavishly illustrated from the picture archives of the *Slave Route* project, was published in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish and given wide distribution.

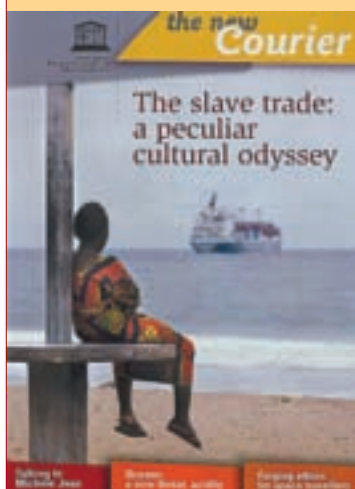
Under this communication strategy, various forms of media were used simultaneously, including the Internet site of the *Year 2004*, which offers a number of advantages in terms of reaching different communities. It is a communication tool that not only ensures the wide distribution of information on this commemorative year but also enables all the other media to be integrated – publications, the logo of the *Year*, posters and the virtual exhibition. As a medium of mass communication, this site was aimed at providing people worldwide with information on the *Slave Route* project and on the activities commemorating the abolition of slavery. Its function was to inform, on a daily basis, Internet users of the activities and events organized worldwide.

For almost ten months, the website on the *Year 2004* was among the ten most visited sites of the Culture Sector, out of more than 200 operational sites. It attracted almost 8,000 visitors per month. The dialogue with Internet users, through their questions and our answers, showed that the history of the slave trade and slavery remain a highly charged subject that deserves to be better known.

The activities organized at UNESCO Headquarters and in the Member States, with the collaboration of the Organization’s field offices, received wide coverage from the national and international press: *Le Soleil* (Dakar, Sénégal); *Cameroon Tribune* (Cameroon); *Le Mauricien* (Mauritius); *Le Monde*, *Cité Black*, *Amina*, *Libération*, *Le Figaro* (France); *El País* (Spain), *O Globo*, *Jornal do Rio* (Brazil), etc.



Cover page of brochure published for 2004
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Cover photo
© Betty Press/Panos Pictures, London

Radios (RFI, *AFRICA N°1*, Média Tropical, RFO, etc.) and television (FR3, television news, etc.) as well as the Web pages of Internet networks, including that of the Organization, (www.unesco.org), reported on the closing day.

The UNESCO Public Information Office played a very large part in making the commemoration of the struggle against slavery and its abolition a special event of the Year 2004: publication of press releases and logistic support for the activities to mark the close of the *Year*. A special issue of the NEW COURIER OF UNESCO on the dialogue between civilizations moreover devoted a dozen pages to the slave trade.

Quotes

KOFI ANNAN

Secretary-General of the United Nations

“Slavery was the first violation of human rights to be fought at the international level; today we must remain vigilant so that it disappears completely. No human being is the property of another.”

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Message on the occasion of
International Year to Commemorate the
Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition,
2004

“The slave trade and slavery constitute one of the darkest chapters in the history of the world. This dehumanizing enterprise, challenging the very basis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and roundly condemned by the international community, in particular at the Durban World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance which labelled it a “crime against humanity”, gives us all cause for thought and requires each and every one of us to exercise due vigilance.”

...

“In celebrating the bicentenary of the first Black republic and commemorating the great abolitionists, we shall forget neither the events which preceded it in Saint-Domingue in 1791 and 1804 and which eventually led to the freeing of the peoples of the Caribbean and Latin America, or the broader and more complex history of the abolition of slavery, a weave of substantial philosophical, political, legal, cultural and social advances and also of tragic setbacks. The triumph of the principles of liberty, equality and the dignity of human rights will thus be highlighted. This major milestone in the history of the liberation of peoples and the emergence of the States of the Americas and the Caribbean should be better known and recognized.”

BONIFACE ALEXANDRE

Haitian Head of State
(23rd August 2004)

“We all have a duty to remember ... The international community has a duty of solidarity towards those countries that were victims of the slave trade and slavery, termed a “crime against humanity” ... Today solidarity means action.”

THABO MBEKI

President of the South African Republic
(Haiti, 1 January 2004)

“Haiti is the first Black republic in the world and the second independent state in the Americas and the Caribbean” ... “We celebrate our African heroes who, in a single-minded struggle for their liberation, made us understand that none but ourselves can defeat those who subject us to tyranny and oppression ... Haitian independence represents their defeat” ... “Today we are engaged in an historic struggle for the victory of the African renaissance because we are inspired by the Haitian revolution.”

MICHAEL OMOLEWA

President of the 32nd session
of the General Conference of UNESCO,
Permanent Delegate of Nigeria to UNESCO

“The history of the slave trade and slavery are part of universal history and challenge us all ... Despite the fact that ten million Blacks, men and women from Africa and elsewhere, were subjected for over 400 years to a shameful trade, we must remain clear-sighted about the present and look to the future.”

Extracts from the International Symposium on

“Issues of Memory: Coming to Terms with the Slave Trade and Slavery”

(4-5 December 2004)

DR CARLO STERLIN

Psychiatrist

“As a clinical practitioner, I am confronted by the pain of mental illness. A high percentage of my patients are the children of the descendants of slaves. I have wondered about the link between their suffering and slavery. Their claims are legitimate but one senses a kind of demand to occupy a place at the great Western banquet table. It is the right to be different and to the cosmopolitan. We are all proud to be the descendants of Toussaint Louverture, but we have continued to function as the aggressors. We have not taken into account that there is a continuity between the slave trade, slavery, colonization, neo-colonialism and all the forms of abuse of Western power ... The work of UNESCO is essential but the Organization must continue to disalienate itself.”

SYLVIA SERBIN

Journalist, author of “Queens of Africa”

“It is remarkable that UNESCO should have organized such a symposium, since one senses an increasing need among the younger generations to hear this negated past being spoken about ... So progress has been made. This symposium was multicultural by virtue of the specialists taking part in it, and we have learned things about other regions that we didn't know.”

■ AISHA BILKHAIR KHALIFA

Work Experience Coordinator
at the Dubai Women's College
(Extract from the paper "African influence
in culture and music in Dubai")

"Zanzibar was one of the main routes taken by the slaves deported from East Africa and Abyssinia (Ethiopia) for the markets of East Arabia, Iraq and Persia. East Africa was for many years a source for the supply of slaves in the Arab world."

■ HOWARD DODSON

Director of the Schomburg Center
for Research in Black Culture, creator
of the exhibition "Lest We Forget:
The Triumph over Slavery"

"There is a great need to study these periods in school and to speak of them in the media ... My feeling is that if we do not remember slavery we cannot succeed ... If we do not understand the importance and seriousness of that period, we cannot understand what we are today."

■ DR SHIHAN DE SILVA JAYASURIYA

Coordinator of the African Diaspora
in Asia (TADIA)

"The Thalassic Network studies slavery across the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean over a period of several centuries, for the focus is still wholly on the transatlantic slave trade. There are crucial differences between these two forms of trade. The demand for slaves coming from Asia was not motivated by purely economic reasons ... Sri Lanka has not yet come to terms with the history of African migration. We may wonder whether the Afro-Asians do not live in an imaginary world ... They seem to belong to the small ethnic minorities."

■ LIBIA GRUESO CASTELBLANCO

Specialist in the processes of integration
of Black communities in Colombia

"We, the Black communities of Colombia, have always lived in a state of resistance and continue in spite of everything to maintain our ethnic and cultural identity. Today, we find ourselves confronted by a dilemma as a result of being dispossessed of our land, being moved to places where we do not have space to maintain our culture and where living conditions are moreover precarious. Through our traditions, we have preserved a harmonious relationship with nature – the sea, the rivers and all the other elements it contains – as a source of life. And it is in this context that, as Afro-Colombians of the Pacific region, we have worked for the development of our cultures. And it is this kind of relationship that has enabled the environment to be preserved in those regions inhabited by Black communities. Nature is for us a "social being". Between the community and the savannah there have grown up relationships governed by codes, messages, rhythms, symbols and time that form part of a cultural vision that does not regard human beings as a species that dominates nature. This is the cosmovision, that is to say, cohesion centred on practices of living together as a collectivity."

**■ PROF. LOUIS SALA-MOLINS**

Philosopher and member of the International Scientific Committee for the *Slave Route* project

“The slave trade (or rather slave trades, since it is high time that reference was made to the trade involving the Muslim world, high time that research started to explore these areas) and the enslavement that preceded, accompanied and resulted from them was indeed a “crime against humanity” (Law of May 2001, Paris; conclusions of September 2001, Durban).”

■ PROF. JEAN-MICHEL DEVEAU

Historian and member of the International Scientific Committee for the *Slave Route* project

“The slave trade and slavery weaving the past of three continents is starting to emerge from the shadows and, as showed by the wealth of contributions to this symposium, is giving rise to debates that are cementing the construction of an exceptionally fruitful history. This history, far from being innocent, stirs all the ingredients of a drama in which millions of men and women seek their roots and identity. UNESCO, through the International Scientific Committee for the Slave Route project and the Associated Schools network, has over the past ten or so years made great efforts to break this silence. This wager has in large measure been successful since these two bodies bring together researchers and teachers from all parts of the world. Every year they organize symposia and encourage cultural initiatives. The international community, on the other hand, retains a low profile, as testified by the limited impact of UNESCO’s decision to proclaim 2004 as a year commemorative of that tragedy”.”

Interviews

The following are the responses of Christiane TAUBIRA, Deputy for French Guyana in the French National Assembly, Howard Dodson, Director of the Schomburg Center in New York, and the singer Susana Baca to questions regarding the International Year, the UNESCO *Slave Trade* Project and the issue of slavery in general.

■ On the International Year 2004

— *What signifies for you the commemoration of the struggle against slavery and its abolition proclaimed by the United Nations?*

C. TAUBIRA: The only official text containing a definition of slavery is the 1926 Convention, adopted by the League of Nations, forerunner of the United Nations. This states that slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised. Since the Second World War, all the texts adopted by the international organization condemn slavery and trafficking in human beings. It was time that the United Nations decided, by a symbolic act, to appeal to the world's conscience. This is the meaning of this *International Year*. It is belated, in view of the importance of the slave trade and slavery, both in terms of the questions it poses to humanity itself, its demons and its ethic and of the influence it has had on the current configuration of the world. Belated but nonetheless welcome.

HOWARD DODSON: The heightened awareness of the transatlantic slave trade in various parts of the Atlantic world during the Commemoration. Numerous exhibitions, forums, conferences and other events marked this occasion.

S. BACA: For us, artists and researchers, the fact of declaring 2004 a Year of Commemoration of 150 years of the abolition of slavery has prompted reflection, among informed circles in our society, on an era in our history and has provided an opportunity to pay tribute to the memory of millions of human beings who were victims of the horrible crime that was slavery ...



Christiane Taubira
© UNESCO, Michel Ravassard

— *In your opinion, what activities and/or initiatives most significantly commemorated this year?*

C. TAUBIRA: I have been particularly struck by the diversity of the initiatives. These have been of varying scope and impact and have for the most part been undertaken by civil society groups. Governments, in general, have not matched up to the event. Among the outstanding achievements has been the work of the Schomburg Center in New York. But mention also needs to be made of the cultural events staged by small associations and of the creative work of artists.

HOWARD DODSON: I'd have to say, from my perspective, the extraordinary success of the UNESCO-sponsored travelling exhibition, *Lest We Forget: The Triumph Over Slavery*, which I and my staff of the Schomburg Center curated. Bilingual versions of it in English, Spanish,



French and Portuguese, traveled to and were exhibited in Europe, Africa, the United States, the Caribbean and Brazil. It was well received in each setting. Large international audiences viewed it at UNESCO headquarters in Paris and United Nations headquarters in New York. The Director General and I opened the traveling exhibit project in Nassau, The Bahamas. The multilingual, virtual exhibition was also made available globally through the Internet.

S. BACA: In our country, Peru, this year was also marked by the process of political change of which you will be aware. In this context, the associations of Afro-Peruvians organized round tables and lectures and launched local initiatives in memory of abolitions ... And for a woman like me, who participates actively in national and international meetings, the conference to mark the closure of this Year at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris was very significant in terms of reflecting on these historical facts ...

— *What follow-up should be given to this International Year?*

C. TAUBIRA: An episode in human history as long, extensive, complex, painful and instructive as the slave trade and its progressive abolition requires at the very least a periodical commemoration that underlines its transcontinental dimension and universal significance. What is needed is a prestigious event every ten years capable of binding human beings together, refreshing their memories and alerting them to their duty to remain vigilant.

HOWARD DODSON: *Lest We Forget*, the traveling exhibition is still travelling and is still very much in demand throughout the Atlantic World. It should continue to travel for at least another two years, as it is a very effective tool for mobilizing public awareness and consciousness.

S. BACA: It is very important that this commemoration should not end in 2004. The information it yields should be preserved and made permanently available. It should be recirculated at national and regional level so as to keep the memory alive through the flow of information on similar initiatives to be carried out or shared – for example, by creating an Internet network or other access media, archives or publications that promote reflection based on the historical situation of each country. In this connection, the book by Olinda Celestino, “Les Afro-andins” is very important for me.

■ On the slave trade and slavery

— *What, in your view, are the main obstacles to breaking the silence on the history of the slave trade and slavery?*

C. TAUBIRA: The only obstacle that seems to me worth considering is the Eurocentric vision of the world. All the other hurdles can be overcome and are inherent in any action. But so long as the part of the world that has profited most from the slave trade and slavery by accumulating capital, developing science and technology, establishing a comfortable predominance in matters of trade, and imposing its stamp in material terms, so long as that part of the world that is called the West and which enjoys a healthy lead in terms of its ability to broadcast the facts, thoughts and opinions about how it should be viewed, does not open itself up to the world that preceded it and surrounds it, inequality and misapprehensions about history will persist.

HOWARD DODSON: Fear, embarrassment and guilt on the part of African and European/American descendants of those who were involved in the slave trade. The controversial nature of the topic continues to keep it out of the classrooms. The public media are also reluctant to tackle it.

S. BACA: The difficulties one encounters in making this long and painful process known are essentially related to the collective ignorance resulting from the “invisibility” imposed by the official history. We should also speak of the scant interest shown by the media in these subjects, and the reticence of peoples in general to admit that the past does not only consist of victories but



© Howard Dodson
Howard Dodson, Director of the Schomburg Center in New York

also of painful processes. The official history has wiped what has happened from our memories, and this buried history is transformed into a fear of facing the truth. It is always like that.

— *How can they be overcome?*

C. TAUBIRA: It is a matter of international power stakes. Resistance will be strong, organized and durable. For the removal of the major obstacle I have just defined presupposes that civilizations are reconciled with the truth, that cultures are recognized as equal in dignity and that prejudices suffered are acknowledged, appreciated and repaired. It amounts to a moral revolution, an economic upheaval, political subversion. The peoples descended from the slave trade and slavery have their role to play. This cannot be one of hand wringing. The only path is one of pride, dignity, the requirement of justice and fraternity.

HOWARD DODSON: Even more aggressive action on the part of educational and cultural institutions as well as the media to lift the silence. In New York City, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture is collaborating with the New York Historical Society to present two exhibitions and public programs in 2005 and 2006 to explore the theme of slavery and the slave trade in New York City.

— *What, in your view, are the new prospects for a better understanding of this tragedy and recognition of this crime against humanity?*

C. TAUBIRA: The International Conference Against Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance held in Durban in 2001 culminated, via pain and misunderstanding, in a Final Declaration recognizing this crime against humanity. The long delay by the UN in ratifying this final declaration is a measure of the reticence, after-thoughts and struggles for influence. In this instance, the strength of the UN is the sum of that of its Member States. The added value of the institution itself seems to count for little. The way the dice are stacked inclines one towards pessimism. It is in this meeting place of States that we discern more clearly, as though a looking glass, the selective conscience and memory that reveal a hateful hierarchy in human suffering. This hierarchy is bound up with cultural and geopolitical considerations. France is the only former slave trade and slave power to have recognized this crime against humanity. This is its grandeur. And yet its leaders drag their heels when it comes to applying the other provisions of the law, notably the reform of school curricula and international action. This is its dishonour.

HOWARD DODSON: Honest, non-judgmental presentations of the facts without attempts to blame contemporaries. While it is important to reveal the economic dimensions of the trade and enslavement, the human dimensions are equally critical. Of greatest significance is to recognize the humanity of the enslaved Africans and to explore the very human, and at times superhuman, ways in which they transcended their conditions during slavery.

S. BACA: It is possible that, by acknowledging the truth, we shall succeed in creating a worldwide movement of vigilance and respect for human rights so that history does not repeated itself ...

■ On the *Slave Route* project

— *What has the impact of this project been on questions of the slave trade and slavery?*

C. TAUBIRA: The *Slave Route* was an ingenious and generous project. It has liberated a phenomenal amount of energy that shame had crushed and ignorance fragmented. It has unlocked minds, rid victims of their complexes and given confidence to millions of people, who have learned to allow for the role of History in the injustice inflicted on them for several generations. It has freed from their enclaves those who operated on the margins of society. It has brought into contact and shaken up closed circles (universities, associations, local councils, citizens). It has righted the pendulum and given new buoyancy to reflection. It has made it possible to voice the unthinkable, the unspeakable line of descent: to proclaim oneself the descendant of ancestors taken into slavery.

HOWARD DODSON: It is likely that more than any other single factor the *Slave Route* project has been the principle catalyst in awakening new and renewed interest in the slave trade and slavery. Whether by stimulating new scholarship and new courses in the academy and the schools or new exhibits, public programs and media discussions of these twin pillars in the making of the modern world, the *Slave Route* project has been a major catalytic force throughout the Atlantic world.

S. BACA: If a way could be found to introduce the UNESCO *Slave Route* project into all layers of society, the impact would be extremely strong and very instructive. For while humanity remembers the major episodes of universal history (essentially European) such as the conquest

of the “New World” and the two European wars, the suffering of peoples taken into slavery has never been uppermost in the collective memory. And yet it was a major catastrophe, like the Jewish holocaust, the religious crusades, the current wars, the exodus of citizens from the Third World towards the developed countries because of their broken economies ... The UNESCO project also invites us to reflect on this reality.

— *What, in your view, are the new priorities or approaches that would enable the project to conform more closely to public expectations?*

C. TAUBIRA: This project has left an indelible mark on consciences. It has changed the representation that ordinary people had of



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UNESCO, previously seen as beyond the reach of the majority. In future, it will fulfil its purpose only if it refocuses its action on undertakings capable of producing a large ripple effect. Without stifling enthusiasm and without curbing the disparity that nourishes inventiveness, it must be able to inscribe in the universal landscape, in eloquent settings and by means of original and significant acts, the cultural, educational, artistic, scientific and material frescoes that testify to the reappropriation of its own history by humanity. Humanity as a whole.

HOWARD DODSON: More of the scholarship that exists needs to be connected into publicly accessible media so that more people around the world can access it. This means more exhibits, forums, radio and television programs and curricula for the schools need to be produced and disseminated in traditional and electronic formats. More scholarship focussed on giving voice to the enslaved African populations needs to be produced and disseminated.

S. BACA: I could for example suggest that there is a need to promote research and assessment of the contribution of African cultures to the world, to share and disseminate such knowledge widely. What traces has the slave left on his or her route, and what has been his or her contribution? What happened in America, in the encounter between this slave and the native population equally exploited and exterminated by the voracity of the colonizers? Make known, again and again, this part of our history ...

The struggle against contemporary forms of slavery

■ UNESCO's approach to countering human traffickings

Trafficking in human beings is generally defined as the illegal trade in human beings by abduction, the threat or use of force, deception, fraud or “sale” for the purposes of sexual exploitation or forced labour. Trafficking is, therefore, a new form of slavery, for the traffickers exercise a right of property over their enslaved victims so as to derive a regular income from their work. This modern form of slavery does not require slave boats, or balls and chains; it is carried out with false passports, false work permits and bribed frontier guards. But the basic problem remains the same: it involves a violation of human rights and human dignity. According to the International Organization for Migrations (IOM), millions of people, mostly women and children, are affected. This phenomenon concerns all countries and contributes to another form of trafficking – the trade in human organs.

Under the project “Fight Human Trafficking in Africa”, UNESCO is attempting to throw light on the reasons behind human trafficking and to help African countries devise appropriate policy responses. The project covers six pilot countries in two African sub-regions: West Africa (Togo, Benin, Nigeria) and Southern Africa (Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa). In the struggle against this phenomenon, UNESCO is placing emphasis, in keeping with its mandate, on a multidisciplinary approach that seeks to encompass the historical, legal, political and socio-cultural dimensions of human trafficking.

In 2004, activities under the project consisted of research in six countries on the factors conducive to human trafficking and the formulation of policy responses to the problem.

These studies have so far shown that, unlike the slave trade which was often the result of raids legalized and even subsidized by the slave States, modern slavery is above all the product of poverty and lack of information.

Socio-cultural factors also enter into this process of dispossession. Thus the traffickers exploit traditional beliefs and practices such as voodoo rituals to enslave their victims. Traffickers also use the ancient slave routes, and relationships of domination deriving from the historical slave trade, to organize the trafficking. Similarly, the gender discrimination that persists in some societies contributes to the specific vulnerability of women.

In view of the multidimensional reality of this phenomenon, UNESCO helps to formulate culturally appropriate responses in the form of both preventive and repressive measures. In the Upper Mekong region, for example, UNESCO is participating in the production and broadcasting of a series containing messages on the dangers of human trafficking on local radios, in languages of minorities, which constitute the most vulnerable social groups. UNESCO is also encouraging the international community to ratify and apply existing normative instruments, with a view to preventing trafficking and protecting victims. The optional protocol to the United Nations Convention Against Organized Transnational Crime, aimed at preventing, suppressing and punishing trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and the International Convention for the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families represent two of the main normative instruments in combating this evil. UNESCO is also engaged in compiling an inventory of positive practices in the fight against trafficking so as to inspire the key actors who oppose it. UNESCO has recently published an analytic study on good practices with regard to countering trafficking in Africa, especially of women and children, which is available online at the project website (www.unesco.org/shs/humantrafficking → *Publications*).

UNESCO will share this information and policy recommendations with the main stakeholders in the fight against human trafficking (local government representatives, religious and community leaders, international organizations, NGOs) at subregional and



national seminars scheduled for September 2005 in West Africa (Benin, Nigeria, Togo) and in Southern Africa (Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa), in cooperation with the UNESCO regional offices (Bamako and Windhoek). These seminars are aimed at evaluating the needs on the ground and testing the reports commissioned by UNESCO

on trafficking in the subregions and the policy recommendations they contain.

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Intersectorality at work in UNESCO

The commemoration of this *International Year* was coordinated within the Culture Sector by the Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue, but the *Year 2004* highlighted the synergy with the other programme sectors – the Social and Human Sciences, Education, Communication and the World Heritage Centre – which all cooperated and initiated various activities in the framework of 2004.

Education Sector

“Breaking the Silence”

The *Year 2004* found a special echo in the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) in the form of a project for the teaching of the transatlantic slave trade entitled “Breaking the Silence”. This project was implemented in association with the *Slave Route*, and benefited from its inception in 1998 from the support of Norway. The main priority of the project was to stress the need to introduce teaching about the transatlantic slave trade (TST) into secondary-school curricula, backed up by twenty-first century educational resources. All the schools in the Network (7,600 establishments in 175 countries) rallied to the cause during the Year, which saw the preparation of innovative teaching materials and the organization of workshops to upgrade professional skills with a view to the improved teaching of the causes and consequences of slavery.

CNN reports on the TST project, a redefined website (www.unesco.org/education/asp), a new booklet, calendars with thematic posters sent to all the Network’s Associated Schools, regular information updates by email, the publication of articles in the ASPnet newsletter and participation in thematic exhibitions in Paris and Geneva are among the indicators that teaching about the slave trade is proceeding well in the 100 schools, in three regions (Europe, Africa and the Americas),

that pioneered the project. Even outside the Network “Slavery, Yesterday and Today” was chosen as the theme of the 2004 edition of the schools telecommunications project “*This is Our Time*”, an annual encounter for some 100 schoolchildren and their teachers, which took place on 26 November and was organized in collaboration with a Netherlands-based NGO *E-ling*.

In 2004, three international meetings on TST took place. The educational project on the teaching of the Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean, a project associated with the TST, held its third seminar on the causes and consequences of the slave trade in the Indian Ocean (8-12 March in Maputo, Mozambique). Following the regional workshops in Reunion and South Africa (2000), historians, experts and network teachers from seven countries of the region, drew up a two-year plan of action for the project.

With a view to the preparation of an International Youth Forum to close the *Year 2004*, the national TST project coordinators, along with teachers and pupils of the three regions involved in this project, consolidated the ideas and proposals that emerged from the three youth forums held at the end of 2003 in Copenhagen (Denmark); Cotonou (Benin) and Bridgetown (Barbados), on the occasion of an international seminar on the transatlantic slave trade held in Oslo (Norway) from 24 to 27 May 2004.

The International Youth Forum was undoubtedly the high point of the *Year* for the TST project. Scheduled from 12 to 16 November 2004 in Trinidad and Tobago under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and the National Commission for UNESCO in Trinidad and Tobago, the Forum brought together experts, teachers and pupils from over twenty countries of the three regions. Apart from the Declaration of the Youth Forum, one of the main results was the finalization of *Race Against Racism*, an international school campaign against racism and modern slavery, which will be launched at the start of 2005.

■ Social and Human Sciences Sector

Countering the aftermath of slavery – the project for a coalition of cities against racism

Following the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Durban, South Africa, 2001), UNESCO drew up and adopted at the 32nd session of the General Conference in 2003, an integrated strategy to combat racism and discrimination (32 C/Resolution 13). It is aimed specifically at increasing knowledge on the evolution of discrimination inherited from the past, notably that linked to the slavery era, by means of research and education.

The following three activities have been carried out under this strategy:

1. A series of activities, including thematic workshops with young people, were organized on the occasion of 21 March, *International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*. With a view to contributing to the commemoration of the struggle against slavery and its abolition, the Social and Human Sciences Sector brought together on that day at UNESCO Headquarters several hundred young people from various backgrounds to reflect on the links between racial prejudice and the heritage of slavery, through discussions and cultural activities – theatre performances, shows and short films

2. A round table on “The Humanism of Human Rights and the Barbarity of the Slave Trade” was organized during the World Human Rights Forum in Nantes (France) from 16 to 19 May 2004. Of the various crimes against humanity, the slave trade is undoubtedly one of the only ones, several centuries after it began, to still have so many consequences in almost all continents: Africa whose inhabitants were the direct victims of this trade in human beings; the Americas (North, Central and South), which were the final destination of the transatlantic “cargoes”; Asia, at least in its middle-eastern part, where numerous captives, the objects of trafficking by Arab traders, disembarked; Europe, at least the western part, which organized and profited from the slave trade across the Atlantic and towards certain islands in the Indian Ocean. Chaired by Mr Doudou Diène, Special Rapporteur on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights, the session

brought together experts and stakeholders in civil society and arrived at the following conclusion: there is a need to break the silence, the taboo on speaking of this forerunner of globalization and on the underlying commercial – and capitalist – motivation. It should be remembered that the fight against slavery constitutes one of the founding episodes in the history of the origins of human rights; we should bear in mind that the slave trade contributed substantially to racism, which continues to perturb human relations nationally and internationally; it should be underlined that the Black Code of 1685 gave a legal basis and an apparent rationality to reprehensible practices; and there is a need to review the history of the resistance of slaves, who were never willing victims, even if harsh treatment did not always allow them to express their desire for freedom.

3. The international coalition of cities against racism is an initiative launched by the Social and Human Sciences Sector in March 2004, aimed at establishing a network of cities interested in exchanging experiences with a view to improving their public policies with regard to combating racism and xenophobia. The fight against racism requires that actors on the ground, including the groups subject to discrimination, should be involved to the extent possible. This is why UNESCO has chosen the city, the main focus of ethnic and cultural interaction, as the ideal location for putting this fight into practice. Moreover, municipal authorities, as genuine local decision-makers, occupy a key position when it comes to promoting measures in this regard. The ultimate aim of this project is to provide local authorities with an operational programme enabling the various commitments signed by cities and governments to be implemented more effectively. In the first instance, coalitions will be created at the regional level (Africa, North and South America, the Caribbean, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific and Europe). The aim is to take account of the specificities and priorities of each region. Through the coordinating role of a “lead city”, each region will have its own programme of action. The signatory cities will undertake to integrate this Plan of Action into their municipal strategies and policies. For the European region, Nuremberg was designated to play this role. On 9 and 10 December 2004, it thus hosted the Fourth European Conference of Cities for Human Rights. On that occasion, UNESCO proposed the official launching, under its aegis, of the *European Coalition of Cities Against Racism*. A Ten-Point Plan of Action, prepared by experts, was discussed and

proposed as one of the measures that could ensure observance of the European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City. Among the points defined in the Plan of Action is a specific commitment to further the collective memory so as to help promote cultural diversity and interculturality within the city.

■ Communication and Information Sector

The safeguarding of slave trade archives

The Slave Trade Archives project was launched in 1999 with the aim of safeguarding and improving access to original documents relating to the transatlantic slave trade and slavery throughout the world.

As part of the “Memory of the World” programme, and in close cooperation with

the International Council on Archives (ICA), a feasibility study was carried out to identify national archives and related institutions in several African, Latin American and Caribbean countries, with a view to upgrading their facilities and services in order to ensure adequate preservation of the original records and to obtain copies in appropriate formats of records pertaining to the slave trade. The project is currently being implemented in 11 countries – Benin, Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana and Senegal in Africa and Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba and Haiti in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the project focuses on enhancing access to knowledge and increasing the usage of slave trade records. These documents include the following: letters and correspondence, property titles and plans, accountancy books, notarial acts and wills, contracts for the sale of slaves, official





registers, licences, church registers, military registers, acts of succession, files concerning legal matters, inventories and publications. Digitization of original documentary sources attesting to this commerce, particularly those at risk of deterioration, will help to establish a collective memory on this dramatic aspect of history. A strategy of access is envisaged. It is centred on the establishment on-line, via the UNESCO website and other sites dedicated to the slave trade, and the publication of a multimedia CD-ROM on the slave trade and acts of resistance to slavery.

In addition to technical training, each country is provided with the equipment and software required to digitize hundreds of documents and catalogues and to establish a sizeable database using CDS-ISIS or other software. These documents are published on the websites of the countries concerned, on UNESCO's site, as well as CD-ROMs containing the catalogues and materials of these sources. The project has succeeded in obtaining an undertaking from certain heritage institutions to examine and establish a summary record of their collections. The growing number of visitors browsing the sites highlights the potential of the archives as well as their precarious state of preservation.

The project has also funded a well-endowed website on the archives of the slave trade, which comprises over 200,000 records and images on slavery and the slave trade (<http://www.unesco.org/webworld/slavetradearchives>).

By setting out information and links to the national archives of the participating countries, the site offers a broad outline of the history of the transatlantic slave trade, presents the different archive collections and the typology of the records, according to the places where they are preserved, and provides access to a bank of images of the digitized archives relating to the transatlantic slave trade.

In close collaboration with the national archives of Cuba, an international meeting on the Slave Route Archives project was held from 22 to 24 November 2004 in Havana (Cuba). The participants reported on the state of progress of the work concerning their national slave trade archives programme. The aim was to harmonize the strategies of the different national programmes so as to create a global synergy in relation to the project and to make recommendations on improving national participation and its extension to other regions and countries. Organized in the framework of 2004, *International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition*, this

meeting was an opportunity for UNESCO to reaffirm its commitment to make universally known through scientific research, the question of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery, its deep-rooted causes and its tragic consequences.

■ World Heritage Centre

Immovable cultural heritage associated with the slave trade: a heritage to be safeguarded and managed

As part of the AFRICA 2009 programme, the 6th Director's seminar was held from 15 to 19 November 2004 in Porto Novo (Benin). This seminar, which was attended by specialists (19 participants in the 6th Regional Course on the management and conservation of the African immovable cultural heritage and 26 directors of African institutions in charge of the conservation of the immovable cultural heritage or their representatives) from Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Zambia, Zimbabwe, was enhanced by the presence of the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee, representatives of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, ICCROM, CRATEREAG, the School of African Heritage, the Programme for Museum Development in Africa, the directors of the Swedish and Norwegian National Heritage Boards, H.E. the Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Benin to UNESCO, lecturers from South Africa and Benin, specialists in the slave trade, and finally the Steering Committee of the AFRICA 2009 programme.

With a view to supporting the initiative of the United Nations and UNESCO, which had proclaimed 2004 *International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition*, the Seminar had as its main aims to:

- Report to the directors on the content and results of the 6th Regional Course;
- Give professionals from sub-Saharan Africa the opportunity of presenting immovable cultural heritage sites linked to the slave trade in their countries, and particularly show how these sites are managed;
- Identify the categories and typologies of sites linked to the slave trade (immovable and intangible);

■ Recommend to decision-makers at all levels the need to take into account these prior requirements constituting major measures to be undertaken in the near future.

The recommendations of the meeting are set out below:

Considering

■ That slavery constitutes a crime against humanity and that despite its abolition it continues to exist in various forms;

■ That the phenomenon of slavery is a delicate subject, that the silence surrounding it is not synonymous with forgetfulness, and that the desire to move forward must be given priority;

■ The existence of different typologies of sites and memorial locations associated with slavery (areas of capture, sites of resistance, land and sea routes, places of ritual, slave markets, places of embarkation, detention and marking, etc.);

■ The invaluable support of financial and operational partners in the AFRICA 2009 programme for the conservation and management of the African immovable cultural heritage associated with the slave trade;

Having regard to

■ The need to inventory, document and protect material and intangible testimonies;

■ The need to reconstitute the history of sites associated with the slave trade with the support of intangible elements;

■ The need to reinterpret the phenomenon of slavery from a genuinely African perspective;

■ The correlation between slavery, colonialism and apartheid as different models of enslavement;

Given

■ The cultural and historical significance of sites and other places of memory linked to the slave trade;

■ The fragility and risk of disappearance of these material testimonies to this dehumanizing act;

1. The Directors recommend the following measures:

To African professionals with responsibility for immovable cultural heritage

■ Inventory, documentation, proposal for national listing and promotion of sites and monuments associated with slavery;

■ Establishment of regional networks with a view to exchanging information on slavery and sites linked to slavery in African countries;

■ Devising of projects that encompass all aspects of the heritage chain, namely: rehabilitation and enhancement of sites, creation of tourist circuits and training of guides; identification, collection and publication of oral and intangible traditions linked to slavery;

■ Raising the awareness of public authorities;

■ Contributing to the inscription of sites linked to slavery on indicative lists;

■ Adoption of the crossborder approach to strategies for the protection and world heritage nomination of sites linked to slavery.

To African governments and territorial collectivities

■ Abolition of all modern forms of slavery;

■ Introduction of an institutional, administrative and legal framework for the national classification and enhancement of routes and itineraries linked to the slave trade;

■ Support for projects for the inventory and documentation of sites associated with slavery and their national classification;

■ Inscription of sites and memorial locations linked to slavery on indicative lists;

■ Initiation of research projects on the slave trade, and coordination, dissemination and highlighting of results;

■ Encouragement and support for heritage professionals in setting up national networks;

■ Consolidation and federation of networks and of regional and subregional efforts;

■ Initial and further training of heritage professionals on questions relating to slavery;

■ Training of professionals in the intangible heritage;

■ Introduction of questions relating to slavery into school and university curricula;

■ Continent-wide debate on the question of slavery;

■ Arousing the interest of the general public, involving civil society and seeking sponsorship;

■ Bilateral and multilateral fundraising for the conservation of sites and places of memory associated with slavery;

■ Ratification, where countries have not done so, of all UNESCO's international conventions for the protection of the cultural heritage;

■ Joining ICCROM, in the case of countries that have not done so.



To international organizations involved in the enhancement and protection of the cultural heritage

- Technical and financial help to African countries to enable them to protect their sites associated with slavery and to prepare to greater effect their dossiers for the inscription of these sites on the World Heritage List;

- Financial and technical support to all parties involved in strengthening the capacities of local institutions, with a view to highlighting proven expertise;

- Pursuit of the UNESCO *Slave Route* project.

2. The Directors likewise call on:

- Customary chiefs and opinion-makers to encourage those holding information to collaborate closely with researchers;

- Politicians to commit themselves strongly to the conservation, management and enhancement of sites.

3. Finally, the Directors request:

- Financial and operational partners to pursue their support for the AFRICA 2009 programme and to maintain the commitment for the final phase 2006-2009;

- That the 2005 French-speaking technical course focus on techniques for the maintenance and restoration of the immovable cultural heritage;

- That the 2005 French-speaking thematic seminar focus on the conservation and enhancement of traditional architecture;

- That the recommendations as a whole of the 6th Seminar of Directors be transmitted to all the partners of the AFRICA 2009 programme and to the governmental authorities of African countries and be progressively implemented.

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Ten Years of the *Slave Route* project (1994-2004)

It was on the proposal of Haiti and the African countries that the UNESCO General Conference approved at its 27th session in 1993 the implementation of the *Slave Route* (27 C/Resolution 3.13). Supported by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at its 56th regular session in Dakar, the project was officially launched in September 1994 in Ouidah (Benin).

The main aims assigned to the project are:

- To break the silence on the slave trade and make known, through multidisciplinary scientific research, its deep-seated causes, the issues it raises and its modalities of operation.
- Throw light on its consequences for the transformation of the world, especially the cultural interactions between the peoples of the continents concerned that this tragedy generated.
- Encourage the intercultural dialogue that continues up to today in the societies affected by this tragedy.

Since its creation, the Slave Route project has been organized around four programmes:

- A programme of scientific research based on a large network of institutions and specialists throughout the world.
- An educational and teaching programme entitled “Breaking the Silence” based on a network of over 7,000 Associated Schools worldwide to encourage the integration of teaching about that tragedy in school curricula.
- A programme for the promotion of living cultures and artistic and spiritual expressions.
- A programme on the identification and preservation of places and of written and oral archives linked to the slave trade and of the development of an associated cultural tourism.

Ten years of implementation of the project have undeniably produced significant results. It has contributed to knowledge of the slave trade, slavery and their consequences. It has among other things furthered the establishment of a network of scientific research, the promotion of cultural tourism linked to the slave trade, the creation of a programme on oral traditions and the production of feasibility study on the creation of museums on slavery.

■ Main achievements

Through its wide range of activities, the *Slave Route* project has had a simultaneous impact at the national, regional, interregional and international level. Without being exhaustive, we should like to refer to some of these achievements.

Adoption of resolutions and declarations

- Proclamation in 1998 by the UNESCO General Conference of 23 August as *International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition*, a day celebrated in most of the Organization’s Member States.
- Adoption in 1995 of a joint UNESCO-WTO programme on the development of cultural tourism linked to the *Slave Route*.
- Adoption by the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban in 2001, of a Declaration recognizing the slave trade and slavery as a “crime against humanity”.
- The proclamation in 2003 by the United Nations General Assembly of the Year 2004 as *International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition*, marking at the same time the bicentenary of the first Black Republic.



Development of networks and research

Setting up and promotion of networks of scientific research on the slave trade and slavery, the most active of which are:

- Land-based and underwater archaeological research (slavery and archaeology).
- Slavery and Afro-American religion.
- The slave trade in the “Nigerian Hinterland” (1650-1900).
- The ideological and legal foundations of the slave trade.
- Diaspora: languages, forms and artistic expressions.
- Slavery, economy and work.
- Marronage and forms of resistance.
- Slavery in the Mediterranean.
- Bantu cultures in the Americas and the Caribbean: languages, religions and society.
- Slavery and interculturality.
- Women and slavery.

Education

- Establishment of UNESCO Chairs in African diaspora studies.
- Mobilization of over 7,500 schools in 170 countries through the UNESCO Network of Associated Schools for a teaching project on the slave trade and the transatlantic commerce entitled “Breaking the Silence”.
- Development of a guide for teachers and revision of school textbooks with a view to facilitating teaching about the slave trade and slavery in schools.

Memory and Heritage

- Collection, compilation and safeguarding of oral traditions.
- Identification and inventory of places of memory.
- Creation of museums of the slave trade and slavery.

Meetings, dialogue and awareness-raising

- Increase of media coverage on the slave trade and slavery.
- Support and promotion of festivals and artistic expressions commemorating the slave trade and slavery.
- Dialogue and debates on the slave trade and slavery.
- Increased awareness of the contributions of the African diaspora.

Publications

- *Sites relating to slavery and slave trade in Senegambia.*
- *Africa between Europe and America.*
- *The abolition of slavery.*
- *The chain and the link.*
- *La Société des Amis des Noirs.*
- *The slave trade from the 15th to the 19th centuries.*
- *Unreason, slavery and law.*
- *Montesquieu, Rousseau, Diderot: from the human race to the ebony wood.*
- *Oral tradition and archives of the slave trade.*
- *The oral sources of the slave trade in Guinea and Senegambia.*
- *Oral tradition and the slave trade in Nigeria, Ghana and Benin.*
- *Oral tradition related to the slave trade and slavery in Central Africa.*

■ New perspectives

The aims have progressively been extended to include other regions and other themes such as the examination of modern forms of slavery, child labour and prostitution.

Today the project is at a turning point. It is therefore essential to strengthen the

momentum and the awareness raised during the first ten years of activity, and more recently during the celebration of 2004 *International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition*. This commemoration was in particular the occasion to launch an external evaluation of the project to assess the progress made so as to respond more fully to the hopes and expectations raised.

In the years to come, the project will strengthen its activities in the regions hitherto little covered: the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean and Asia to gain a better understanding of the trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean slave trade. It will continue to contribute to the implementation of the programme of action adopted at the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Durban, 2001)

The project will focus particularly on oral memory linked to the slave trade and slavery and will pursue actions for the development of cultural tourism, in close cooperation with WTO, aimed at promoting sites, monuments and places of memory attesting to that tragedy. It will contribute to the establishment of museums of slavery and the organization of travelling or virtual exhibitions.

The project will also concern itself with the psychological consequences of slavery, in particular the specific traumatism suffered today by the descendants of the victims.

As part of the educational branch of the project, a start will be made on testing the teaching materials on the slave trade produced by partner universities, in particular the University of the West Indies. Other educational tools will also be developed, notably for the regions, on the teaching of the trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean slave trade. In cooperation with the Education and Communication Sectors, the project will seek to promote and popularize the history of the slave trade and slavery, in particular through the production of films and DVDs, and the creation of a database on the slave trade and slavery.

The organization of meetings and debates between experts will be pursued to encourage exchanges of knowledge on points that remain controversial.

Finally, the project will strengthen studies on the links and interactions between historical slavery and new forms of slavery.

The new lines of approach of the project will be definitively fixed following the evaluation that has just begun, whose results will be known in October 2005.

EVALUATION OF SLAVE ROUTE PROJECT

After ten years of existence, the *Slave Route* project is undergoing an external evaluation to assess the results achieved and to define new approaches in light of the lessons to be drawn from this experience. This evaluation will bear in particular on the following points:

- The impact of the project in the Member States and the international community.
- The effectiveness of the project in terms of the development of knowledge on the slave trade and slavery, the degree to which public opinion has been alerted and mobilized, and finally how far the attitudes and perceptions of those principally concerned have changed.
- The obstacles encountered and the risks created.
- The added value of the intersectoral approach and of its management.

The evaluation, which will be carried out by a firm of external evaluators, will be based on consultations with partners in the different regions of the world and on an analysis of the project documents. A referral group has been set up to guide the evaluators in their work.

The results of the evaluation are due in September 2005.

Memorial tourism and oral tradition

Memorial tourism: Cooperation with the World Tourism Organization (WTO)

The issue of memory attaching to the slave trade and slavery rests on the physical and intangible heritage. From this perspective, a joint UNESCO-WTO programme of cultural tourism on the *Slave Route* was launched for Africa in Accra (Ghana) in April 1995. It was subsequently extended to the Caribbean (St Croix, Virgin Islands, June 1999) and to the Indian Ocean. The aim of this Programme is to identify, restore and promote slave trade sites, buildings and places of memory, which punctuate the slave routes.

The issue at stake, then, in this joint UNESCO-WTO programme is eminently one of memory, encompassing as it does the economic, historical and ethical dimensions of tourism equally. What is involved, in fact, is not only the memory of Africa but that of humanity as a whole; we see the interactions generated by the slave trade in the realms of music, dance, cooking, handicraft, spiritual traditions, etc. Strongly supported by the countries, this programme has achieved a practical result of great importance: the country-by-country survey of sites and places of memory linked to the slave trade. The 41st meeting of the WTO Commission for Africa, which took place in Mahé (Seychelles), accordingly responded positively to its state of progress.

The inventory of sites, launched under the *Slave Route* project and carried out in the countries concerned, reveals that these constitute undoubted tourist assets. But most of these places of memory are in a state of advanced deterioration and measures to protect and restore them have not been taken or remain inadequate. These sites, then, have not had the benefit of any promotion.

Some countries have however shown how investment, protection, restoration and development of places of memory can constitute major tourist assets. The products known as derived are almost wholly absent, and this



Elmina Castle (Ghana)
© Daniel Agyekum, Francis Bordoh

memorial tourism at the national level has yet to be promoted.

The slave trade heritage is both physical and intangible. The collection of data relating to the oral tradition – the intangible heritage relating to the slave trade and slavery – is very important. The collection of oral data in the field enables gaps in the European archives on the slave trade and slavery to be filled, many aspects and practices of the slave trade era to be better understood, many remains, routes and markets to be rediscovered, and various unanswered questions to be answered.

This heritage and with it a part of the history of humanity is in danger of disappearing. It is essential, then, to safeguard it through the collection of data, the publication of research and the production of books, CD-ROMs and data banks.

Memorial tourism can become a vector of regional and interregional integration, generating growth through the development of crafts and painting, the training of guides, the production of post cards and other derived products.

The most important challenge today for the countries concerned is to devise memorial tourism strategies at the national and regional level, with priority being given to the training of guides, making the sites accessible and encouraging local populations (who are concerned first and foremost) to visit the places that are an integral part of their history, the history of Africa and also the history of humanity. Interesting local people in the promotion of memorial tourism involves developing sites and related activities (restaurant facilities, craftwork, painting, etc.) from which they are the first to benefit.

After carrying out an inventory of sites and places, the next major step is the definition by WTO, in collaboration with UNESCO, of tourist routes and circuits. Strongly supported by Mr Francesco Frangialli, Secretary-General of the World Tourist Organization, and Mr Ousmane Ndiaye, representing WTO for Afride, this programme should be pursued and should lead to a *cartography of sites and places of memory*.

Tourism is undoubtedly a factor of development. Memorial tourism, moreover, fosters intercultural dialogue by breaking the silence on the slave trade and slavery.

■ Safeguarding oral memory in the Indian Ocean

Written archives, which reflect the point of view of those who participated in the slave trade and slavery, cannot fully encompass the scale of that tragedy. The collection and analysis of oral memory has thus become essential in order to bring to light and take account of the myriad aspects of this crime against humanity. The *Slave Route* project has in this way carried out a series of research studies on oral tradition linked to the slave trade and slavery in different regions of the world. Thus a programme entitled “Oral memory and slavery in the islands of the South-West Indian Ocean” was launched by the Slave Route project and the UNESCO Chair in Saint-Denis to expand the testimonies on the impact of slavery in this region. Taking account of this oral memory, which has left a strong imprint on the collective unconscious of Creole societies, makes for a better understanding of the question of identity in these islands of the Indian Ocean. The African and Madagascan populations deported to Reunion, Mauritius, the Seychelles and Rodrigues were strangers to one another, having different languages, traditions and social architectures. Through the process of Creolization in which the oral tradition played a central role, these islands managed to create a certain “community of identity” within their respective territories. The oral archives highlight the wealth of this Creole culture, which has resisted to all attempts to suppress it.

Following the impetus given by the launching of the UNESCO programme on

the *Slave Route* project, the National Institute of Education in the Seychelles, the African Cultural Centre in Mauritius, the Association pour le bien-être des Rodriguais et la protection du patrimoine, the National Center for Documentation and Scientific Research (CNDRS) in the Comoros islands and the University of Antananarivo launched study programmes specifically focused on the memory of slavery.

An assessment of this UNESCO programme was made at an international symposium held in Reunion from 25 to 27 May 2004. Over 20 university teachers presented an overview of their work on the problem of “oral memory and slavery” in Madagascar, Seychelles, Rodrigues, Mauritius and Reunion.

The Indian Ocean was in this way the focus of a programme for the collection of memory, but – as noted by a university teacher from Reunion – “this memory has to be restored to people for them to understand the societies in which they live”.

Historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, ethnologists, professors of literature, psychiatric doctors and diplomats as well as those in charge of cultural centres presented their analyses on the basis of work carried out on the memory of slavery and forced or indentured labour in the Indian ocean region. An avenue was opened up towards knowledge of an historic heritage that unfortunately remains too often obscured today.

■ Retracing the history of the “Forgotten Slaves”

On 17 November 1760, a vessel of the French East India Company, *l'Utile*, sailed from Bayonne on the southwest coast of France for the Mascareignes Islands. The ship was wrecked on 31 July 1761 on the Île des Sables (today Tromelin Island) while transporting slaves from Madagascar to the Île-de-France (today Mauritius).

The crew fled on a makeshift craft, leaving 60 slaves on the island. They did not keep their promise to return to rescue them.

Fifteen years later, on 26 November 1776, the Chevalier de Tromelin, Captain of the corvette *La Dauphine*, found eight survivors on the island – seven women and an eight-month-old baby.

How did they survive all those years on a desert island little more than 1 km in area, cut off from the rest of the world? Historical and genealogical research, coupled with land and marine excavations, is planned to throw light on this mystery. The “Forgotten Slaves” project was launched by UNESCO and Naval Archaeology Research Group (GRAN) as part of the *International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition*, 2004 and the *Slave Route* programme.

As presented and discussed at a press conference held at UNESCO Headquarters in April 2004, then at an international symposium on oral memory and slavery held in Reunion in May, the project comprises an important educational component based on a system linking schools by Internet. This programme is designed to carry out historical and archaeological research with the aim of elucidating all aspects of this terrible story, which is emblematic of the slave trade.

It will also provide the basis for a document aimed at the media, the general public and schools to increase their awareness of the problems of slavery.

A team of researchers in Metropolitan France, Reunion and Madagascar has set itself



The Île des Sables, now called Tromelin
© Naval Archaeology Research Group (GRAN)

the task of retracing the itinerary of the slaves and elucidating the circumstances of the extraordinary survival of a few, who remained 15 years on a desert island without any contact with the outside world.

A survey using land-based and underwater archaeology sonar equipment will be carried out in 2006. The operation has already received the support of the local authorities in Reunion, the French Ministry of Defence and Météo France, which maintains a staffed meteorological station in Tromelin and could provide logistical and meteorological support to the persons in charge of this survey during their stay on the island. The Internet site devoted to the project, www.archeo.navale.org will enable this research to be followed live. The project also intends to produce a film, a book and a CD-ROM retracing, through this dramatic story, the history of slavery in the Indian Ocean.

■ Madagascar and Reunion: Two stelae and a garden, symbols of an interwoven story

In 1663, in the period of the slave trade and slavery, two Frenchmen, Louis Payen and Pierre Pau, and ten Madagascans, including three women, left Fort Dauphin to settle on Bourbon Island, today the island of Reunion. They were the island's first inhabitants.

The links between Madagascar and Reunion are thus very strong and to symbolize this common history two stelae and an endemic garden have come into being in Fort-Dauphin, Madagascar. Through the solidity of the rock and the intertwining of the roots, physical expression has been given to this ancient, almost family, link uniting Reunion with the Large Island.

In 2004, *International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition*, these links are more tangible than ever and are strengthened by cultural exchanges, economic exchanges and partnerships. Hence the birth of a project sealing the collective memory of the two islands – the erection in Fort-Dauphin of two stelae to remind the inhabitants of Madagascar and Reunion of their intermingled destinies. “Fort-Dauphin will remain a visible symbol of a common history, fashioned out of suffering with slavery and colonization, and occasionally out of joy when men and women, by coming together, have transcended the systems that enslaved them” – in the words of Sudel Fuma, coordinator of the project and representative of the UNESCO Chair, in his official inaugural address on 6 December 2004.

The two islands are advancing together along the path of development. Speaking at the project presentation, Pierre Vergès, Vice-President of the Reunion Regional Council, noted that the occasion “confirmed the movement towards closer ties between Reunion and Madagascar. We are a single family and the purpose of this symbolic work is that we should never forget. It prompts us to ponder the notion of development in relation to that of human fulfilment”.

It was in this spirit that the project of erecting stelae was born, monuments implanted in the very places of “departure” and arrival: Fort-Dauphin in Madagascar and Le Lazaret in Reunion.

The statues are carved in multi-coloured stone and granite by Dolène Curtis, an



Two stelae and a garden (Fort-Dauphin, Madagascar)
© Bernard Curtis

inhabitant of Reunion, and by the Madagascan artist Rabemananjara. “We wished to pay tribute to the women who created Reunion”, said D. Curtis, who has immortalized in a sculpted stela the first three women inhabitants of Reunion; three Madagascan women deported in 1663.

Thanks to the initiative of the Network of Aromatic and Medicinal Plants of the Indian Ocean, whose aim is to strengthen the links and enhance the exceptional biodiversity of this area and the knowledge of its “infusers”, the two stelae watch over a garden of twelve species of plant, including three Reunion varieties of Madagascan origin.

In the view of Constant Gasstar, Deputy for Madagascar and President of the Association ECODEV, who oversaw the operation on Madagascan territory, this project “symbolizes the rock-solid links between Madagascar and Reunion”. Thus the Mountain House in Reunion, which organizes mountain hikes, proposes to take its participants to Antananarivo in 2005 and to Fort-Dauphin in 2006, in cooperation with the Association ECODEV.

Representing the University of Reunion at the inauguration of the stelae, Yvan Combeau, Director of the Centre for Research and Study on the Societies of the Indian Ocean (CRESOI), said that “history is interlinkages and intermingling” and “this powerful symbol is relevant to development and should not be overlooked. It is an important moment for our societies. Life, feeling and flesh lies behind these stelae. We are very attentive to renewing the links that these stelae embody”.

For this important venture, the respective associations, HISTORUN and ECODEV Madagascar had the support and participation of local and national Madagascan institutions. Three Ministries sponsored the operation and the sculptures were inaugurated by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Despite their limited resources, the local authorities participated actively in the undertaking and the Prefect of the Region covered the cost of a zebu sacrificed on the day of the inauguration.

However, these two undertakings do not constitute an end in themselves; they are rather the first phase in a much larger project outlined in the recommendations of the International Symposium on "Oral Memory and Slavery in the Islands of the South-West Indian Ocean", which took place from 25 to 27 May 2004 in Reunion and was organized jointly by UNESCO as part

of the *Slave Route* activities, the University of Reunion and the Association HISTORUN, with the support of the local communities.

It is indeed the first step in a much larger project for the symbolic reconstruction of the *Slave Route* throughout the Indian Ocean. Implemented by the UNESCO Chair of the University of Reunion, this project intends to recall the different origins of the ancestors who first populated Reunion and whose cultural heritage still survives today through intermixing. Thus the years ahead will see the erection of other stelae on Reunion, on the African coasts and in India.

A whole work of memory has begun. It will inevitably proceed by acknowledgement of the interculturality of the societies of the Indian Ocean and recognition of hitherto hidden ancestors and will help to ease the suffering arising from the lack of a grounding for their identity.

"You will be a free man, my son"

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