



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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

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

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للترربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

History, Memory and the Rapprochement of Cultures

The United Nations General Assembly, at its 63rd session, has proclaimed 2010 *International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures* (Resolution 63/22) and designated UNESCO to play a leading role in the celebration of the Year. The goal of the Year will be to celebrate the world's cultural diversity, to contribute to the strengthening of intercultural dialogue and to pursue efforts in sensitizing all concerned partners.

Indeed, through its interdisciplinary approach and its remarkable contribution to the redefinition of the concepts of culture, cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, UNESCO actively participates to the reflection on finding a better way to live together in the light of the threats and fears fostered by globalisation.

**International Year of the Rapprochement of Cultures:
History, Memory and the Rapprochement of Cultures**

Rapprochement of Cultures

During this session, we will explore a case of rapprochement of cultures between Africa, the Americas and Europe through the tragedy of the slave trade. The forced migration of enslaved populations and the transfer of their knowledge, know-how, arts and religion have been an essential factor in the construction of new cultures in the "new world". Ties have



© UNESCO/Jogar Capoeira

developed between Amerindian, African and European cultures, ties that have generated an extraordinary cultural diversity. This paradox form of dialogue shows how cultures are capable of exchanging even in circumstances as tragic as the one of the human trade and slavery.

The objectives of this session are to reflect upon the existing links between rapprochement and cultures in the light of these forced cultural interactions generated by the trade and slavery.

The Caribbean-Americas case

In the Caribbean-Americas case particularly evoked here, the defined programme for the Slave Route Project, and notably the work of participating researchers shed light on the questions that face today's

multicultural and multiethnic societies. This process seems essential, not only for a better comprehension of the birth of intercultural relations in the specific context of human trade and slavery, but also of the dynamics of cultural transformation that affect our modern societies.

International Year of the Rapprochement of Cultures: History, Memory and the Rapprochement of Cultures

UNESCO's Contribution:

Taking into account the mandate of UNESCO as a specialized United Nations agency to promote mutual understanding between peoples through education, science, culture and communication, the agency has capitalized its vast experience in the development of concepts such as intercultural dialogue, through numerous programmes including the Routes of dialogue (Silk Roads, the Routes of al-Andalus, Iron Roads in Africa, Slave Route, Mediterranean Programme, Plan Arabia, Caucasus Project, etc) and the General and Regional Histories.

The resulting acquired experience in this field provides UNESCO with an established legitimacy and a particular responsibility to lead an intellectual reflection on the rapprochement of cultures.

This meeting/conference has a double purpose:

- Emphasizing the factors, conditions and processes that have facilitated great exchange between cultures and peoples, source of innovations and social transformations.
- Studying the tragic historical facts that have marked human history, and discussing possibilities to appease and overcome these painful memories, with the objective of encouraging the rapprochement of cultures.



© UNESCO/National Commission of the Dominican Republic

More information:

Contact: Edmond Moukala, CLT/CPD/DIA
(tel: 83619; e.moukala@unesco.org)

Website: www.unesco.org/culture/slaveroute