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THE INTERNATIONAL INDENTURED LABOUR ROUTE PROJECT

SUMMARY

This item has been included in the provisional agenda of the 195th session of the Executive Board at the request of the Government of Mauritius.

The corresponding explanatory note together with a draft decision is attached.

Action expected of the Executive Board: decision in paragraph 16.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Background

Ignorance or concealment of major historical events constitutes an obstacle to mutual understanding, reconciliation and cooperation among peoples. The International Labour Route Project centered around Aapravasi Ghat in Mauritius symbolizes the story of more than 462,000 Indentured Labour, the vast majority from India who were recruited to work on the sugar plantations in Mauritius, after the abolition of Slavery. Subsequently, Aapravasi Ghat became one of the oldest surviving entry and transit point associated with indenture. More than 2.2 million indentured labour were mobilized mostly from India to more than 26 countries in various parts of the world making it one of the greatest mass movement of the diaspora worldwide. The International Indentured Labour Route Project will complement the Slave Route Project since both relate to the movement of a mass of people across continents. These movements based on intercultural exchanges have been instrumental in forging most of the modern societies of today. This process of Indentured Labour deserves to be studied in a more systematic, scientific and global manner. Ignorance of such major historical events constitutes a barrier to mutual understanding and cooperation among peoples. This project will *inter alia*:

- contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics of the movement of millions of peoples and cultures in that age;
- highlight the global transformations and culture interactions that has resulted from this history; and
- contribute to a culture of peace by promoting reflection on culture pluralism, intercultural dialogue, sustainable development and peace.

Development of an international database on Indentured Labour

1. As suggested by the World Heritage Committee in its Decision 30 COM 8B.33, one of the objectives of the project is to constitute a corpus of professionals in various fields such as history, anthropology, archaeology, heritage, etc. in order to elaborate an international database on Indentured Labour accessible worldwide which would disseminate information about such a major historical event and build a greater understanding and cooperation among peoples.

2. This database will, *inter alia*:

- give access to digital copies of archival documents on Indentured Labour;
- provide access to a bibliography and articles of scholars on Indentured Labour;
- create a photograph library on Indentured Labour; and
- allow for the creation of a catalogue on Heritage sites related to indenture.

3. The database will be accessible through a website which will highlight, among others the following:

- latest news/research on Indentured Labour;
- interaction between scholars and those interested in Indentured Labour; and
- information on Indentured Labour worldwide with a general overview for each country.

4. This project will play a significant role in securing international recognition of the role played by Indentured Labour which has shaped modern societies. This is important because Indentured Labour is under-researched and hardly known as part of colonial history. The project aims to unite and connect people, to foster research on indenture, disseminate information on Indentured

Labour as an international phenomenon and to set up collaborative programmes that will promote the history of Indentured Labour worldwide.

Establishment of an International Scientific Committee

5. It is proposed that an International Scientific Committee be established which would advise UNESCO on the implementation of the project and whose terms of reference would be elaborated and submitted to the Executive Board at its 196th session along with a detailed plan of action.

The way forward

6. It is proposed that a secretariat of the International Indentured Labour Route Project be established. Institutionally, the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (AGTF) in Mauritius under the aegis of the Ministry of Arts and Culture is ideally suited to lead this project as this institution has been entrusted through its Act to, *inter alia*:

- conduct research and document the indenture experience in Mauritius and in other countries where the system existed; and
- set up national and international links with other countries.

7. The project therefore, would be based on a holistic and inclusive approach and would develop a broad spectrum of activities relevant to various fields of UNESCO's mandate and activities including the following:

- development of research on unknown aspects of this history;
- promotion of intangible, cultural and artistic expressions across continents till today;
- preservation and Promotion of important sites and places of memory; and
- preservation of written archives and oral traditions.

8. Thus, the project would be a catalyst for cooperation in the field of development, research, intercultural education and the deconstruction against racism, promotion of cultural expressions and heritage material born out of this history and would have a lasting impact.

9. In order to brainstorm and to take this proposal forward, the AGTF organized a four-day *International Scientific Conference on New Perspectives on Indentured Labour (1825-1925)* from 5 to 7 December 2011. Some 45 participants including 31 international scholars from Australia, Canada, Fiji, France, Holland, India, Mozambique, Reunion Island, South Africa, Suriname, United Kingdom and United States of America presented academic papers and exchanged ideas on a wide range of subjects on various aspects of Indentured Labour and indentured workers during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, their conditions and their economic and cultural contributions to the modern world.

10. After a four-day fruitful deliberations, the resolutions presented included several recommendations such as:

- the establishment of an International Indentured Labour Route (IILRP); and
- the first undertaking of the International Scientific Committee which would be the development of the Indentured Labour Global Database Initiative (ILGDI).

11. It is clear that Mauritius as the first and largest recipient of Indentured Labour in the nineteenth century and being the country with the largest proportion of descendants of Indentured

Labour today is ideally suited to lead the project. Mauritius as initiator of the project and as the only country hosting a World Heritage Site linked to Indentured Labour (Aapravasi Ghat) would host the Secretariat of the project at the AGTF under the aegis of UNESCO and would link the project with other Member States on the Indentured Route.

12. Among other activities planned in the context of the Commemoration of the 180th Anniversary of the Arrival of Indentured Labour in Mauritius, an international conference/workshop is being hosted by the Ministry of Arts and Culture, Mauritius from 3 to 5 November 2014 in collaboration with the AGTF on the theme of the project. The objective is to discuss on the way forward for the implementation of the project and its financing with the assistance of UNESCO and Member States.

Financial and budgetary implications

13. Activities foreseen through the establishment of Secretariat for the International Indentured Labour Route Project as well as costing for other activities is estimated to be US \$486,400. A breakdown of the cost is found in the Annex.

14. A first international conference on the subject has already been planned by Mauritius and will be held from 3 to 5 November 2014. The Government of Mauritius has already earmarked an amount of MRU 2.5 million (around \$83,500) as a support to the project.

15. Efforts will be made at international and regional levels to encourage State Parties especially those associated with Indentured Labour to contribute to the project through voluntary contributions during implementation stage. Regional and international organizations will also be invited to assist.

Proposed decision

16. In the light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following decision:

The Executive Board:

1. Recalling Decision 30 COM 8B.33 of the World Heritage Committee and bearing in mind the importance of an Intentional Indentured Labour Route Project, which would be complimentary to the Slave Route Project,
2. Acknowledging the need to create a corpus of professionals in various fields such as history, anthropology, archaeology and heritage in order to elaborate an international database on Indentured Labour, accessible worldwide, to disseminate information about such a major historical event and build greater understanding and cooperation among peoples,
3. Welcomes the establishment of a secretariat of the International Indentured Labour Route Project through the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and to be funded by the Government of Mauritius and notes the proposed establishment of an International Scientific Committee whose terms of reference would be elaborated along with a detailed Plan of Action to be regularly monitored and underlines that this should not have any direct or indirect financial implications for the Organization;
4. Further notes that the Memory of the World International Advisory Committee meeting in July 2015 will take a decision on the inclusion of the Indentured Immigration Records in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.

Recap of budget 2014-2016

Year	MUR	USD	Funded by Govt	Funded by AGTF	
2014	MUR 2,500,000	\$ 83,500	MUR 2,500,000		ANNEX 1
2015	MUR 5,705,000	\$ 190,200	MUR 2,500,000	MUR 1,345,500	ANNEX 2
2016	MUR 6,380,000	\$ 212,700	MUR 2,500,000	MUR 1,345,500	ANNEX 3
TOTAL	MUR 14,585,000	\$ 486,400	MUR 7,500,000	MUR 2,691,000	

Note:

- Note 1 The total cost of the project over the years 2014 to 2016 is MUR 14,585,000 (US \$486,400) excluding Scientific Committee as indicated at Annex 3. Government of Mauritius and AGTF (Mauritius) will contribute a total amount of MUR 10,191,000 (US \$339,700).
- Note 2 For the year 2014, the Government of Mauritius will fund the total amount of MUR 2.5m (US \$83,500). For the years 2015 and 2016, the Government of Mauritius will fund MRU 2.5m for each year (i.e. a total amount of US \$250,000 for the three years). Furthermore, the AGTF (Mauritius) will also meet the cost relating to local secretariat to the tune of MRU 1,345,000 (US \$44,833) yearly for the years 2015 and 2016 respectively (i.e a total amount of US \$89,666/-).
- Note 3 The remaining amount of US \$146,700 and cost relating to the Scientific Committee for the years 2015 and 2016 would be sought from the Participation Fund of UNESCO and other contributors.

Cost estimate for functioning of Secretariat for the Indenture Labour Route Project (ILR) - Year 2015 *

SN	Item	No.	Details	Monthly	Months	Year 2015	
						AGTF Contribution	ILR Project Budget
1. Staffing							
1	Consultant / Project Manager on contract on a full time basis	1	Monthly salary including housing allowance and car allowance = MUR 120,000 Qty = 12 months + 1 month end of year bonus + 2 months gratuity + 1 month local leave reimbursed	MUR 120,000	16		MUR 1,920,000
2	Research Assistant full time	2	Monthly salary including transport = MUR 25,000 Qty = 12 months + 1 month end of year bonus	MUR 25,000	13	MUR 650,000	
3	Research Assistant part time	3	Monthly salary including transport = MUR 25,000 Qty = 12 months + 1 month end of year bonus Part time estimated at half salary	MUR 11,500	13	MUR 448,500	
4	Secretary full time on a full time basis	1	Monthly salary including transport = MUR 19,000 Qty = 12 months + 1 month end of year bonus	MUR 19,000	13	MUR 247,000	
SUB TOTAL 1						MUR 1,345,500	MUR 1,920,000
2. Logistics							
1	Stationery		including toner, paper, sundries	MUR 10,000	12		MUR 120,000
2	Postage		including international postage for official matters	MUR 10,000	12		MUR 120,000
3	Website and online platform for sharing of research		design and hosting for year 2015 hosting and technical assistance for year 2016				MUR 100,000
4	Publications		including brochures, e-newsletter, books, etc				MUR 500,000
SUB TOTAL 2						0	MUR 840,000
TOTAL						MUR 1,345,500	MUR 2,760,000
GRAND TOTAL						MUR 4,105,500	

* For period November and December 2014, the AGTF will start preparatory arrangements for the Secretariat such as launching of tenders for website and ensure follow-up on Conference to be held in November 2014

Cost estimate for functioning of Secretariat for the Indenture Labour Route Project (ILR) - Year 2016

SN	Item	No.	Details	Monthly	Months	Year 2016	
						AGTF Contribution	ILR Project Budget
1. Staffing							
1	Consultant / Project Manager on contract on a full time basis	1	Monthly salary including housing allowance and car allowance = MUR 120,000 Qty = 12 months + 1 month end of year bonus + 2 months gratuity + 1 month local leave reimbursed	MUR 120,000	16		MUR 1,920,000
2	Research Assistant full time	2	Monthly salary including transport = MUR 25,000 Qty = 12 months + 1 month end of year bonus	MUR 25,000	13	MUR 650,000	
3	Research Assistant part time	3	Monthly salary including transport = MUR 25,000 Qty = 12 months + 1 month end of year bonus Part time estimated at half salary	MUR 11,500	13	MUR 448,500	
4	Secretary full time on a full time basis	1	Monthly salary including transport = MUR 19,000 Qty = 12 months + 1 month end of year bonus	MUR 19,000	13	MUR 247,000	
SUB TOTAL 1						MUR 1,345,500	MUR 1,920,000
2. Logistics							
1	Stationery		including toner, paper, sundries	MUR 10,000	12		MUR 120,000
2	Postage		including international postage for official matters	MUR 10,000	12		MUR 120,000
3	Website and online platform for sharing of research		design and hosting for year 2015 hosting and technical assistance for year 2016				MUR 75,000
4	Publications		including brochures, e-newsletter, books, etc				MUR 1,500,000
SUB TOTAL 2						0	MUR 1,815,000
TOTAL						MUR 1,345,500	MUR 3,735,000
GRAND TOTAL							MUR 5,080,500