



© Marco Domino-MINUSMA

## ***Flagship Programme 1: Promoting a culture of peace and non-violence***

### ***Rationale and background***

The future of the continent looks today brighter than ever before according to recent reports published by the African Union Commission and the UN Economic Commission for Africa. Because of the impressive economic growth rate registered by a significant number of African countries over the last decade, Africa is no longer seen as a “hopeless continent” chronically affected by social turmoil, political instability and extreme poverty. The new picture of Africa is now positive, full of hopes for millions of Africans. Yet, while opportunities for a sustainable development are real, many challenges remain. In particular, the risk of major instability and conflict in the coming years is still present.

The Agenda 2063 adopted by African Heads of State and Government in May 2013 on the occasion of the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Organization of African Unity set up a new vision for Africa. In their Solemn Declaration, Heads of State and Government of the African Union, while acknowledging past successes and challenges, laid down vision and ideals to serve as pillars for the continent in the foreseeable future. Agenda 2063 takes account of Africa’s diversity and defines trajectories and addresses issues related to this diversity. It is part of the African Renaissance which calls for changes in attitudes, mind-sets to inculcate the right set of African values which are the foundations for building a prosperous, integrated and peaceful continent. In line with the Agenda 2063, the African Union Commission translated the Agenda 2063 into concrete objectives, milestones, actions and measures and adopted a Strategic Plan (2014-2017) which defines eight priority areas including Peace, Stability and Good Governance.

UNESCO’s Operational Strategy for Africa (2014-2021) on the other hand takes recognition of the above challenges and issues identified by Africans themselves and African continental and regional organizations. The strategy highlights the progress achieved by African countries in terms of building democratic societies and promoting good governance (greater freedom of expression, higher levels of civic participation, and civil society involvement on a larger scale and greater representation of women in decision-making bodies, etc.).

Such progress has been achieved owing to action taken to promote education, raise awareness of democracy, peace and human rights, train community media and stakeholders and sensitize young people. In line with Agenda 2063, UNESCO's strategy advocates for the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence in Africa based on African shared values and the need to implement a sound strategy that will complement the efforts of African governments and regional institutions to consolidate the stability and promote a sustainable development of the continent.

## Why UNESCO?

Since its inception, UNESCO has been working towards a truly global movement for fostering a culture of peace and non-violence worldwide. UNESCO's comparative advantage in this area has been recognized by the United Nations General Assembly who designated UNESCO as the lead agency for many prominent global initiatives for promoting peace, such as the International Year for the Culture of Peace (2000), the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010), and the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022).

As part of the UNESCO's strategy for Africa, this flagship programme developed by UNESCO in close collaboration with its African partners is therefore an attempt to respond to the main challenges of peace and security in Africa. It builds on the UNESCO's Constitution which states "that a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the people of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind". The culture of peace is an expression of UNESCO's fundamental mandate to build the defences of peace in the minds of men and women, and integral part of UNESCO's work and initiatives to promote peace at global, regional and national level. The culture of peace is globally defined as a culture of peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution, education for non-violence, tolerance, acceptance, mutual respect, dialogue and reconciliation. It helps people to cope with social, ethical, cultural, political, environmental and other societal transformations and is closely linked to a '*new humanism*' that puts human beings at the core of all development processes.

The principles of the culture of peace have framed a number of key initiatives recently undertaken in the continent, such as the Pan-African Forum: "Sources and resources for a culture of peace", (Luanda, Angola - March 2013), jointly organized by UNESCO, the African Union and the Angolan Government –with the participation of the AfDB-, which led to the adoption of an "Action Plan for a Culture of Peace in Africa"<sup>1</sup>.

Since this event, several networks are developing -gathering together foundations, research institutions, women and youth organizations for the promotion of a Panafrican Movement for a Culture of Peace- and activities have been implemented in all UNESCO's fields of competence. These include, among others, the formulation -in partnership with ECOWAS- of harmonized orientations on education to human rights, culture of peace, citizenship, democracy, regional integration and sustainable development in schools; the elaboration of a transboundary management framework for the Lake Chad Basin as well as advocacy work for its preservation; the empowerment of young women and men through the promotion of civic education and social entrepreneurship with a view to engaging them in democratic processes, notably in North African countries; the promotion of heritage as a factor of unification, national dialogue and social inclusion, as is being undertaken in Mali; tapping the potential of communication and information to facilitate mutual understanding, respect for cultural diversity and peace, notably through community radios, as in South Africa, where young people were trained to utilize community radio with a view to promoting social inclusion, creating platforms for dialogue and building resilient societies.

---

<sup>1</sup> See more at : [www.unesco.org/africa4peace](http://www.unesco.org/africa4peace)

Taking into account the lessons learned from these initiatives and the evolving context of the continent, this Flagship Programme aims at bringing together and better articulating UNESCO's strategy with respect to relevant African Union frameworks for action, including the African Union's strategic plan to build peace, security and democracy in Africa (2014-2017), the African Youth Charter, the Decade for Youth Development and Youth Empowerment in Africa and its Plan of Action (2009-2018), the African Union Sport Policy Framework for Africa (2008-2018), the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, the African Women's Decade and its Road Map (2010-2020), but also the international campaign "Make Peace Happen" launched in 2010. This flagship programme will leverage, as appropriate, mechanisms for reflection and exchange (regional or sub regional fora) and mobilize civil society organizations, in collaboration with the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities. It includes specific actions affecting young women and men in Africa, building on the experiences of the UNESCO Strategy on African Youth (2009-2013) and aligning with the UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth (2014-2021).

### ***Overall Objective:***

Address the root causes of conflicts in Africa and strengthen the capacity to prevent and resolve conflicts peacefully in particular using African local values and endogenous practices of a culture of peace.

### ***Specific Objectives:***

- Strengthen peace and non-violence through education, advocacy and media including ICTs and social networks
- Develop the use of heritage and contemporary creativity as tools for building peace through dialogue
- Strengthen social cohesion and contribute to the African Renaissance through the introduction of the General History of Africa into formal and non-formal education settings
- Promote scientific and cultural cooperation for the management of natural transboundary resources
- Empower and engaging young people, women and men for democratic consolidation, community development and a culture of peace

### ***Main actions:***

- Scale up education for a culture of peace by mainstreaming peace, human rights and global citizenship education in particular in the following areas: curriculum, teacher education, teaching materials and learning environments
- Promote knowledge and capacity for protecting and sustainably managing the ocean and coasts through the development of appropriate management tools for cross-border cooperation frameworks with a particular focus on the main hydrological basins in Africa and for the sustainable use of ecosystems shared by states

- Strengthen capacities of Member States to design and implement multi-stakeholder and inclusive public youth policies and engage young women and men in community building and democratic processes
- Introduce the General History of Africa into the curriculum of formal and non-formal education systems
- Promote elements of the African intangible heritage for reconciliation, social cohesion and peace
- Facilitate pluralistic media institutions empower youth through enhanced media and information literacy competencies
- Support community radios to become spaces for intercultural, intergenerational dialogue and social cohesion
- Raise awareness of youth for peace and dialogue through social media

### ***Expected Results:***

1. Education to peace, citizenship, democracy and human rights is integrated into formal and non-formal teaching and learning systems and reinforce mutual understanding and social cohesion
2. General History of Africa is introduced and taught from primary to university levels and knowledge on Africa, the slave trade and slavery and on the cultural interactions generated, as well as the contribution of Africa and its Diaspora to modern societies improved through heritage and contemporary creativity as transformative tools to enhance dialogue and peace.
3. Elements of the African intangible heritage and contemporary creativity are used to highlight the cultural practices of Africa and its diaspora in promoting reconciliation, social cohesion and peace.
4. Cross-border cooperation frameworks, providing for agreed and appropriate management tools, are established for the main hydrological basins in Africa and for the sustainable use of ecosystems shared by States. Special attention will be paid to establish joint initiatives among indigenous and scientific knowledge holders to co-produce knowledge to meet the challenges of global climate change.
5. UNESCO-supported community radios transformed into spaces promoting intercultural/intergenerational dialogue and social cohesion. Young Africans' awareness raised in furtherance of dialogue and peace by the social media and mobile phone networks.
6. The empowerment, civic engagement and democratic participation of young African women and men are promoted through inclusive youth policies and youth-led programmes on a culture of peace.
7. Regional organizations, Member States and civil society in Africa mobilized for the culture of peace and supporting the African Union's "Make Peace Happen" campaign.