

**Report of the E-event  
for the celebration of Africa Day  
and the Launch of the Report of the Biennale of Luanda**

The celebrations started at noon, with a welcome address by **Mr Firmin Edouard Matoko**, Assistant Director-General of the Sector for Priority Africa and External Relations, to the participants who had joined through weblink.

**H.E. Ms Phyllis Kandie**, Chairperson of the Africa Group and Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Kenya to UNESCO then took the floor on behalf of the Africa Group. She thanked the different actors involved in organizing the Africa Day celebrations and the launch of the Biennale of Luanda report. She also congratulated UNESCO, on behalf of the Africa Group, on the strategic implementation of actions enabling the African continent to be transformed by its citizens. H.E. Ms Kandie stressed the need for solidarity and multilateralism, and expressed that this was more necessary than ever, as the world continues to battle against the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Ms Audrey Azoulay**, Director-General of UNESCO, began her address by paying tribute to the Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Congo, Prof. Manda Kizabi who recently passed away. The Director-General continued by stressing the potential dangers that the COVID-19 pandemic poses to the gains made in previous decades, especially in education and human development in Africa. Citing lessons from the Ebola epidemic, Ms Azoulay mentioned that UNESCO has succeeded in supporting affected countries by finding alternative solutions to ensure access to education, despite the low levels of connectivity; she indicated that with COVID-19, this support would be intensified. She proceeded by highlighting the serious losses expected to affect the cultural sector, institutions and actors during the ongoing pandemic, the effects of which will further exacerbate challenges in Africa, where cultural practitioners are already facing serious hardships in their efforts to make decent incomes from their cultural activities. She referred to UNESCO's support in mobilizing artists, musicians, performers, World Heritage sites managers and other cultural stakeholders through global social media campaigns and informed that during the celebration of the Africa Day, a unique movement known as RESILIART would be launched by the Culture Sector and Communication and Information Sector.

The celebration continued with the launch of the report of the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition of the Biennale of Luanda for a Culture of Peace.

Mr Firmin Edouard Matoko took the floor, giving an overview of the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition of the Biennale of Luanda, thanking the Angolan government for hosting the event. He continued with the festivities by commending the African Union Commission for engaging with UNESCO and the Angolan government in the organization of the Biennale. Mr Matoko then welcomed H.E. Mrs Amira Elfadil, Commissioner for Social Affairs at the African Union Commission to speak on behalf of the Commission.

**H.E. Mrs. Amira Elfadil Mohammed Elfadil** began her speech by thanking UNESCO for the role that the organization is playing in supporting the development of the African continent. She recalled that this Africa Day also celebrates the 57<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the African Union and drew a parallel between the initiatives of the African Union and that of the Biennale of Luanda for the Culture of Peace. In her view, the report of the Biennale should be used as a valuable tool for raising awareness and advocacy to build sustainable peace. She promised to present the report in the upcoming meeting of the Ministers of Culture on 27<sup>th</sup> of May. The report, she says, is an example of actions that can be undertaken on the continent in the context of the Silencing the Guns initiative and in particular in the context of the efforts to minimize losses in Africa, caused by the COVID-19 crisis.

**Ms. Maria da Piedade de Jesus**, Secretary of State for Culture at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and the Environment of Angola praised the tripartite collaboration between Angola, UNESCO and the African Union Commission in the organization of the Biennale. She reiterated the importance of paying attention to the evolving pandemic as work begins on planning, creating and organizing the second edition of the Biennale of Luanda. She explained that this was necessary to ensure that the next forum provides space for discussions on the situation in the country, taking into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. da Piedade de Jesus suggested that special attention should be paid to education and communication for development in the second edition of the Biennale.

The launch proceeded with presentation of the report by **Mr Enzo Fazzino**, Head of the UNESCO Libreville Office and UNESCO Representative to Gabon and International Coordinator of the 1st Edition of the Biennale of Luanda for the Culture of Peace. In his presentation, Mr Fazzino recalled the context of the creation of the Biennale of Luanda, claiming that the concept of peace is what links UNESCO to Africa. He continued by explaining that the concept of Biennale of Luanda was inspired by the African Union Charter, which advocates that

culture is the surest way for Africa to increase its share of world production; it is also an important in the efforts to achieve the core program of the African Union's Agenda 2063 "Silencing the guns". For him, it is the youth that appears to be the solution for the continent in order to put an end to the emergence of physical, moral and social violence.

**Ms. Zulmira Rodrigues**, Chief of Section for Cooperation with African Regional Organizations at the UNESCO's Priority Africa and External Relations sector and Coordinator of the Forum of Ideas of the 1st Edition of the Biennale for the Culture of Peace presented the outline of the 250 pages long report. Describing the structure of the document as a reflection and a true account of the multiple ways that peace is being promoted on the continent, she explained that the report provides the opportunity for those who were not present, to gain insights into the best practices shared and discussed at the Biennale. And for those who attended, the report would in her view, enable the participants to relive the various forums and cultural events that took place in Luanda and help them translate it into concrete actions in the pursuit of peace and prosperity in Africa.

The third part of the launch continued with testimonies by Ambassadors and Permanent Delegates to UNESCO who attended and supported the Biennale of Luanda.

Taking the floor once again, Mr Matoko invited some Ambassadors to share their views and experiences on the Biennale of Luanda

**H. E. Mr Samir Addahre**, the Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Kingdom of Morocco to UNESCO , informed that his country was both involved as official carrier of the Biennale of Luanda via its airline company, Royal Air Maroc, but also as a participant through the installation of a stand at the São Miguel fortress and a Moroccan village, in one of the main arteries of the city overlooking the Bay of Luanda. Consequently, even though the ambassador was unable to attend the Biennale, he said that he was impressed by what happened there, and that he was proud of his country's commitment to the values of culture, peace and solidarity with the African continent. In his view, the Moroccan model had shown that it was possible to avoid the sentiments of despair, where the focus was on resolving difficulties and transforming anxiety into confidence. He concluded by saying that for the development of the continent, it is imperative to continue to move forward not reluctantly but enthusiastically, with the idea of joining forces in a co-construction spirit.

Highlighting the fact that his President participated not only in his capacity of Head of State but also as the African Union Champion for Culture, **H.E. Mr Oumar Keita**, the Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Mali spoke of

the need to respond to acts of violence with more culture, history and dialogue. In his view, the Biennale of Luanda, through its themes, was a space for cultural diversity among peoples as a driving force for peace and development.

In his address, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Italy to UNESCO, **H.E. Mr Massimo Riccardo**, expressed his country's enthusiasm for participating in the Biennale of Luanda, which he said, enabled them to act with UNESCO through values that are very dear to them. He stressed the need to continue working in the spirit of the Biennale of Luanda, particularly in the context of the pandemic where there is an urgency to combat its negative impact on the continent.

**H.E. Ms Rachel Annick Ogoula Akiko**, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Gabonese Republic at UNESCO, stated that the Biennale of Luanda was a successful opportunity that has enabled the African people to appropriate the concept of the Culture of Peace. She emphasized that the strong presence of young people, especially women, as strategic actors in the Biennale contributed highly to the promotion of a Culture of Peace on the continent. In her view, their presence and stance showed a strong determination and commitment to promote peace on the continent.

Having stressed the quality of the debates and presentations during the forums of the Biennale of Luanda, during his speech, the Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Azerbaijan to UNESCO, **H.E. Mr Anar Karimov** referred to the importance of the Culture of Peace for Azerbaijan as a prerequisite for ensuring sustainable development. Through the Baku Process, via the promotion of intercultural dialogue, his country supports the same ambitions and aspirations as those of the Biennale. He congratulated and thanked UNESCO's Sector for Priority Africa and External Relations for the opportunity to bring together the Biennale with the Baku process.

The Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the People's Republic of China to UNESCO, **H.E. Mr Yang Shen**, said that in his view, the released report perfectly illustrated the spirit of the first edition of the Biennale of Luanda. For him, it demonstrates the international alliance that has taken place for the promotion of peace and development through UNESCO's fields of competence. He emphasized the willingness of the Chinese Government to assist the countries most affected by the pandemic and calls on the peoples of the world to fight against COVID-19.

After the testimonies, **H.E. Mr Henok Teferra Shawl**, the Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to UNESCO took the floor and expressed his enthusiasm for being able to celebrate the

Africa Day on this manner. For him, it is important to bring African solutions to African challenges, and the Biennale of Luanda for a Culture of Peace represented this aspiration. He continued by stating that the ongoing pandemic requires unity, so he called on the international community to show solidarity. He concluded by thanking UNESCO's Sector for Priority Africa and External Relations for enabling Africa to meet the challenges in the field of education, science, culture and communication.

**H.E. Ms Phyllis Kandie**, Chairperson of the Africa Group, closed the launch of the report by stressing once again the importance of peace for the achievement of the African Union's Agenda 2063. She congratulated the government of Angola and UNESCO for this initiative and called on all other governments to follow the same path.

She concluded by reminding everyone of the sessions in the afternoon, inviting all to join the debates on RESILIART as well as the evening concert.

*Links to the electronic versions of the report:*

EN : <https://bit.ly/2zbiDNO>

FR : <https://bit.ly/3cJ7KzQ>

PT : <https://bit.ly/3dK4ipR>