AFRICITIES SUMMIT 5th edition – 2009 – Marrakesh

Special session

"Heritage and development: diversity as an alternative"

Organized by UNESCO World Heritage Centre, backed by the France-UNESCO Convention and in collaboration with the Association of Francophone Mayors (*AIMF)*

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The theme of the 2009 Africities Summit: "African regional and local governments' response to the global crisis: promoting sustainable local development and employment", calls for reflection on the fundamental role of culture in new development strategies. Are alternative models possible? Can cultural characteristics specific to each African community be enhanced and embraced as an integral part of development strategies.

The current financial crisis has challenged the widespread view in the industrialized countries that their development model should be followed by all developing countries. This assumption, which appeared to equate a particular culture (Western culture) with progress, for years marginalized other societies, African societies in particular, which held to different models or followed different paths.

As Abdou Diouf said, the gap between Africa and the rest of the world was rarely and only marginally examined as a possible opposition to a model based on standardization, homogeneity and the accumulation of material wealth.

Today, an approach to development more mindful of cultural diversity is taking root, and may be the key to tackling the social, economic and environmental problems with which confront our societies.

In this regard, culture should be considered the fourth pillar of sustainable development, in addition to the three traditionally recognized elements – social development, economic development and environmental protection. It is a cross-cutting dimension that should be taken into account in any new debate on development.

This session invites decision-makers, at the national and local level, to consider how take advantage of cultural factors in order to formulate development projects that are better suited to the uniqueness of their territories, and to develop new forms of international cooperation.

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The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which was adopted in October 2005 and entered into force in March 2007, led this reflection at the international level by addressing the exchanges between cultures that constitute our universal heritage. It also set forth a number of definitions and fundamental concepts to which the States signatories of the Convention subscribe, such as the overriding principle of respect for human rights.

To date, 104 States (103 States and the European Community) have ratified the 2005 Convention, including 27 African States. Increased mobilization is required: the Convention's legitimacy will be directly proportional to the number of States from all parts of the world that ratify it.

This Convention is part of a comprehensive set of legal instruments, along with two other international conventions representing the pillars of preservation and promotion of cultural diversity: the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003).

The World Heritage Convention is the oldest and most widely subscribed-to UNESCO convention. Ratified by 186 Member States, it boasts 890 properties of outstanding universal value inscribed on the World List.

Today, almost 40 years after the first inscriptions, it is possible to study the composition of these inscriptions and observe, through this List, the changes that have come about in the very concept of heritage. Starting out as a list of the symbolic monumental heritage of nation-states, it gradually opened up to new types of heritage (20th century heritage, vernacular heritage, etc.) and to new categories, including that of cultural landscape introduced in 1992 (in the revised version of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention), which is certainly the most innovative of these categories. It asserts the close relationship between heritage and territory and between natural and cultural heritage.

Seen through the prism of the general trend towards decentralization of authority, the debate on cultural heritage and its diversity is increasingly taken into account by local decision-makers. It is in fact a particularly relevant theme at the level of decision making closest to citizens and strictly related to questions of democratic governance.

Urban and peri-urban areas are perfect melting pots by virtue of their permeability and the presence of populations hailing from different backgrounds. This is a trend which is common to all cities, yet specific to each of them because of the type of interaction it generates.

For several years now, the World Heritage Centre has pioneered reflection on the conservation of "urban historical landscapes": the importance of ongoing methodological research is reflected in the attempt to strike a balance between the conservation of inherited landscape and the constant changes (regarding functional use, social structure, political context and economic development) brought about by the inevitable structural interventions in all cities. A recommendation on "Urban historical landscape" is in the pipeline (possibly for adoption at the 36th session of the General Conference in 2011) and, for its drafting, a workshop on the application of the concept of urban historical landscape to the African context was held in Zanzibar from 30 November to 3 December 2009.

AIMF, co-organizer of the session, has spearheaded a long-running debate on this theme. Addressed in 1995 during its 11th General Assembly on "the city as an instigator of cultural development" and in 2001, at its 21st General Assembly on "enhancing the value of cultural diversity", the topic was again addressed this year on the occasion of the Association's 30th anniversary, through the theme "Cities and dialogue between cultures". One of the priorities which the Association has set itself through its "City, Culture and Heritage" programme is to ensure that cultural policies adopted by AIMF member cities play an important role in the resolution of urban problems.

PROGRAMME

Because of time constraints, the debate at the special session will focus specifically on the question of "cultural heritage" and its link with development.

"Cultural heritage", here is conceived in the broadest possible terms, as the tangible and intangible expressions bearing a particular "meaning" handed down to us by past generations.

The session will be organized into two round tables with the intervention of elected officials, heritage professionals and academics.

The round table participants will briefly address the questions asked.

The discussion with the audience will be the ideal occasion for participants to share their experience and voice recommendations.

Introduction to the Session: Jean-Pierre Elong M'Bassi, CGLUA

Round Table 1: "Can cultural diversity and social cohesion inspire new development models?"

Moderator: Alain Godonou, Director of the School of African Heritage, new Director of the Division of objects and Intangible Heritage, UNESCO

– Mr Sanogo Klessigue, Director of the Department of Cultural Heritage, Mali

– Mr Cheikh Mamadou Abiboulaye Dieye, Deputy Mayor of Saint Louis

– Mr Boubacar Bah, Mayor of the District V of Bamako

– Mr Piero Sardo, President of Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity

Round Table 2: "Cultural heritage and local development – from Yaoundé (2003) to Marrakesh (2009): achievements and outlook"

Moderator: Lazare Eloundou-Assomo, Chief of the Africa Unit, World Heritage Centre

– Ms Bako Rakotomamonjy, CRATerre ENSAG, consultant (Africa 2009) - Ms Arianna Ardesi, World Heritage Centre

– Mr Bani Touré, Professor, University of Bamako - Ms Emmanuelle Robert, World Heritage Centre

– MrJosselin Kongo, Project manager, Grand Bassam

– Mr Philippe Bonnecarrère, Mayor of Albi - Mr Blaise O. Ahanhanzo Glélé, Mayor of Abomey

Conclusions / Recommendations

Round Table 1: "Can cultural diversity and social cohesion inspire new development models?"

Although a culturally homogeneous society has never existed, it is true that the cultural web is progressively becoming more complex as globalization takes hold. To avoid divides that pluralism may generate, mayors must remain "loyal" to their citizens while developing their territories: they must foster dialogue among cultures so that globalization enhances rather than steamrolls local cultures.

– Political decision-makers, through their strategic "vision", must take into account the different elements of tangible and intangible heritage. Above all, they must promote <u>awareness of the elements of heritage</u> specific to the communities present on their territory.

<u>Protecting, conserving, making accessible and enhancing</u> vestiges of the past and sites of memory must be encouraged and implemented by local authorities in conjunction with other levels of authority (the State in particular).

For example, when urban or land development work is being conducted, elected officials have a fundamental role: they must influence urban design professionals by providing insight into the tangible heritage to be safeguarded and the uses and cultural practices linked to the areas under development. Satisfactory urban planning must meet not only technical requirements (roads, grids, etc.) but also social and cultural needs. In this regard, all urban development projects should begin with investigative work to clearly identify the elements, sites and essence of cultural practices in order to define existing elements that must be safeguarded, and to make provision, from as early as the planning phase, for requirements related to cultural behaviour.

– <u>Mediation</u> is an essential tool in policies for the democratization of local and national public life. Aimed at resolving conflict or institutional and social malfunctions, mediation also conveys values of openness to others and sharing.

The success of mediation as a conflict prevention or resolution tool is an indicator of a society that seeks a new way to govern and foster social cohesion. In this process, "cultural heritage" is fundamental: a society becomes aware of its existence through past realities and symbols which embody it, such as palaver in African societies.

Taking cultural diversity into account is a challenge for <u>democratic governance</u>: building <u>cohesive</u> societies requires the development and implementation of policies which ensure empowerment of all groups and individuals, as well as their political participation.

In this regard, customary law and conflict resolution mechanisms, as rediscovered through intangible heritage, can co-exist with State organization and serve to strengthen democratic governance.

– In giving impetus to the development of entrepreneurship, <u>the promotion of cultural industries</u> within a territory is a promising option in cultural and social terms – safeguarding cultural heritage, spurring artistic creation and therefore protecting cultural diversity – and also in economic terms. The fostering of cultural diversity largely depends on the support lent to commercial projects adapted to the cultural context and the constraints of the local economy.

<u>"Cultural" tourism and the craft industry</u> are the most well-known cultural and heritage industry sectors and are certainly those which best illustrate the conflict between authenticity and marketing.[1]

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[1] As already stated, the session will not address questions more closely linked to creative art and its market. We can however state that this domain deserves specific reflection, particularly on the marginal position occupied by Africa.

<u>Other sectors are also booming, such as the food industry</u>, with its emphasis on traditional production methods, local products and alternative marketing channels.

With regard to consumer behaviour and values attached to the management of environmental resources or interaction with our natural environment, cultural factors play a decisive role.

This sector also sparks reflection on the relationship between the cultural diversity of our culinary heritage and environmental sustainability.

With regard to management of resources stemming from the knowledge and know-how of local, rural or indigenous populations, there is much to learn, particularly in terms of small-scale production, with its slight surplus and low energy consumption, as well as land and natural resource conservation methods.

Decision-makers' recent interest in the revitalization of *terroirs* shows the extent to which cultural practices can contribute to regenerating biological or agricultural diversity.

Questions asked:

–   *What linkages are possible between the State, local authorities and communities in the process of awareness and enhancement of the tangible and intangible heritage?*

–   *How to know and enhance all the elements of tangible and intangible heritage of a city or territory? How to take cultural practices into account in land planning operations?*

–   *What role does the mayor play in taking cultural pluralism into account in his/her town? What approach should the "mayor-mediator" take? How to promote social cohesion through cultural mediation and recognition of communities' cultural heritage?*

–   *What is the role of cultural industries in the development of a territory? What type of operations can be developed?*

According to the UNESCO World Report entitled "Investing in cultural diversity and cultural dialogue", in creative art world trade, Africa accounts for less than 1% of exports, even though the continent is very rich in this field.

Round Table 2: "Cultural heritage and local development – from Yaoundé (2003) to Marrakesh (2009): commitments and outlook"

Africities Summits are a unique opportunity to move ahead with the debate on cultural heritage in Africa and its link with sustainable development. This issue was first brought to the attention of African municipal representatives at the Africities Summit 3 in December 2003 in Yaoundé, at a special session organized by the World Heritage Centre. The recommendations to emerge from the session constitute "the Yaoundé initiative for the protection and enhancement of urban heritage and the cultural diversity of African cities". It encourages each stakeholder (municipal and national authorities, professionals and international bodies) to take into account identified resources for the development of the African urban heritage, and at the same time to be aware of the risks related to the loss of cultural heritage and to act to safeguard and enhance it.

The special session entitled "Heritage and territory: stakes of the partnership", organized within the framework of the Africities Summit 4 was a follow-up to the Yaoundé summit: it gave prominence to initiatives taken over the previous three years. While the Yaoundé session focused on the city, the hub of economic, social and cultural activity, the initiatives taken since then, in particular as part of the "Niger-Loire: governance and culture" project and for the preparation of the "Cultural heritage and local development" guide, demonstrate the increasingly decisive role of spheres of influence and partnerships.

In response to the request of African elected officials, the World Heritage Centre, backed by the France-UNESCO Convention (Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Spatial Planning) has pledged to lend long-term support to African local authorities. The round table will underscore the continuity of actions undertaken since 2004, in particular those related to training.

– <u>The need for teaching tools and training</u> in the field of heritage was raised at the Africities Summit 3 (Yaoundé 2003) and reiterated at the Africities Summit 4 (Nairobi 2006).

The book entitled "Cultural heritage and local development: a guide for African local authorities",[2] published and distributed in line with requirements expressed at these Summits, is designed as a decision-making tool. It aims to generate a new momentum and encourage local authorities to use the specific cultural and heritage features of their localities as levers for development.

This guide was also distributed at the AIMF's 22nd General Assembly in Huế in 2007. Once again, a call for teaching tools and training on the subject was made by some 300 mayors and representatives of French-speaking cities and their associations.

The elected officials have underlined the primary importance of training, and various partners (to date, AIMF, PDM, CRATerre – ENSAG (an offshoot of the University of Grenoble School of Architecture), EPA (African Heritage School), Advanced National Institute for Physical Education (INSEP), the University of Bamako and UNESCO) have initiated pilot training courses, the first of which, intended for elected officials of Benin, Togo and Burkina Faso, took place in November 2008 at Porto Novo in Benin; it was organized in conjunction with the 10th Cultural Heritage Directors seminar of the Africa 2009 programme.

As the ten-year Africa 2009 programme for better management and conservation of heritage throughout the African continent comes to an end, and more than 370 professionals are now

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[2]   Co-published by the France-UNESCO Convention and CRATerre ENSAG in 2006. It was written with the support of the African Heritage School (EPA), the African School of Architecture and Urban Planning (EAMAU), and the Partnership for Municipal Development (PDM).

more highly qualified, the contribution of heritage to development may legitimately be extended by mobilizing local authorities to preserve and enhance it. The methodological and human achievements of Africa 2009 can be used for territorial development, through a heritage management capacity-building programme for municipal decision-makers and technicians.

– There is also another fundamental element: <u>constant feedback between training and concrete operational projects, confronting theory with reality in the field and the content of training sessions.</u>

This methodological perspective is implemented in the "Niger-Loire: governance and culture" project that has been under way in Mali for two years now.

Associating local authorities from the north and south, the project provides for operational research initiatives in the cultural field (inventory of river-related heritage, anthropological surveys on waterside dwellers) and in the field of water management (fishing, sand extraction), training of local authorities and pilot sanitation or water access operations. The goal is to contribute to training local authorities through the implementation of demonstrative operations, supplying the training modules with material from data collected in surveys and pilot actions.

– <u>Since the year 2000, the inscription of African sites on the World Heritage List has developed considerably.</u> This is the result both of the World Heritage Centre's efforts to step up the representation of countries of the South on the World Heritage List to achieve better balance (under the Global Strategy) and of capacity-building at the African level with regard to heritage, particularly as a result of the Africa 2009 programme.

But this can also be interpreted from another angle: African cultural heritage, with its specific characteristics, is helping progressively to develop the concept of heritage represented on the List.

In the file preparation process for inscription on the World Heritage List, States continue to be the responsible authorities *vis-à-vis* the World Heritage Committee as signatories of the 1972 Convention. But the involvement of decision-makers at the local level is fundamental: <u>local decision-makers are at the centre of the property management system on their territory</u>, a system which inevitably includes mechanisms for value sharing with the local populations. In this regard, the process of inscription on the World Heritage List is an opportunity both to induce change in the international community's concept of heritage, and to develop heritage management methods at the local level.

– <u>With regard to international cooperation</u>, the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action opened an interesting and constructive debate on better adapting aid to the different national situations and on securing greater ownership of development projects by beneficiary populations.

Culture has not yet been explicitly mentioned as an element to be considered, even though, to ensure that cooperation truly serves the purposes of development, the cultural dimension should be taken into account systematically.

In this regard, <u>local authorities have a special role to play.</u>

By their nature, exchanges between local authorities place people at the centre of partnerships – initially local decision-makers and municipal technical personnel and then the populations themselves: one of the challenges of the external actions of local authorities lies in exchange with and knowledge of others, with open-mindedness and respect for cultural

diversity. Even historically, the first twinning initiatives in post-war Europe aimed to "reconcile peoples".

It is perhaps to raise awareness of the importance of these aspects and their social and economic repercussions, that decentralized cooperation is increasingly being instituted today on questions directly related to culture and heritage.

Questions asked:

– *What capabilities do local authorities require for the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage? What type of training is required for elected officials and municipal technical personnel? What linkages are possible between the national and local level?*

– *How can the cultural dimension be taken into account in specific territorial development projects?*

– *How is African cultural heritage recognized at the international level? Can the particularity of African heritage bring changes to the World Heritage List (and thus feed into the debate in international forums)? What are the challenges faced by local elected officials vested with a "world heritage" responsibility?*

– *What role does decentralized cooperation play with regard to heritage? Is it a cooperation mechanism suited to these issues?*