

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE AND THE CULTURE OF PEACE
IN CENTRAL AFRICA AND THE GREAT LAKES REGION**

Libreville, 18-20 November 2003

GENERAL REPORT

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1. INTRODUCTION

Under the patronage of the President of the Republic, Head of State, His Excellency El Hadj Omar BONGO ONDIMBA, the **International Conference on Intercultural Dialogue and the Culture of Peace in Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region** was held in Libreville from 18 to 20 November 2003.

This encounter was principally initiated by both UNESCO and the Government of the Gabonese Republic, in partnership with the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* together with its specialized agencies (*Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie*, *Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie*), the French UNESCO Commission, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Omar Bongo Ondimba University and the International Center for Bantu Civilizations (CICIBA).

The work of the Conference was conducted in plenary sessions for the keynote presentations of the agreed themes, and in panels for sub-themes presentations.

The list of conference participants is appended to this report.

2. CONDUCT OF WORK

2.1. Opening ceremony

The opening ceremony took place in the morning of 18 November 2003. It was punctuated with six speeches, including the speeches, respectively, of the Representative of the *Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie*, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Bangui, the ECCAS

Secretary-General, the Gabonese Minister for National Education, the President of the UNESCO General Conference, and the Vice-President of the Gabonese Republic.

2.1.1. Speeches

The Representative of the *Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie*, Professor Aloyse-Raymond NDIAYE, started presenting the apologies of Madam Gendreau MASSALOUX, Rector of the *Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie*, absent.

Having recalled that University, through its teaching methods and research, must further cultural cooperation and cohabitation, Mr NDIAYE pointed out that protecting the rights of men and women and preventing crimes against humanity constitute today's major challenge.

He congratulated the timely initiative of holding a Forum of Writers during this International Conference of Libreville.

According to the speaker, what characterizes the man or woman of letters is that they care about telling the truth, and what characterizes university beside research institutions is the possibility of linking pedagogy and research together. Conversely, what characterizes the academic is his/her commitment to dedicate himself/herself to his/her discipline. Such commitment is what gives a meaning to life.

Finally, Professor NDIAYE advocated resorting to the continent's culture and history in the search for solutions to problems, while stressing the need for University to be at the service of cultural security, justice and peace.

In his speech, the Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Bangui, General Lamine CISSE, referred to the imperative need for unity, democracy, peace and dialogue in Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region.

He emphasized the necessity to resort to dialogue to prevent conflicts, since dialogue is both the starting and the arrival point of any civilization. This implies possessing the capacity to listen to each other as well as searching for a commonly shared ideal.

He went on to underline that democracy and development require a culture of peace, and that the rule of law lies in the steady reference to a known legal order. Freedom and authority being the pillars of such rule of law, the state cannot be dispensed with a free press. To that extent, intercultural dialogue along with the culture of peace must generate a democratic culture, not least interreligious dialogue.

For his part, The Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States, General Louis-Sylvain GOMA, pointed out that men and women must be at the heart of development. He recognized the primacy of peace over development, which is only its derivative.

He stated that one mission of the Economic Community of Central African States is to promote peace, stability and security in Central Africa, and that he, accordingly, subscribes totally to the Conference objectives.

He underscored the necessity to train people to the culture of peace and stressed the notion that objective differences between men, that is, differences stemming from natural living conditions, should not necessarily generate complexes and conflicts.

The ECCAS Secretary-General expressed the wish that UNESCO should strengthen the capacities of specialized institutions and associations to enable them to carry out the mission of educating people to the culture of peace.

He concluded by pointing out that we will not be able to build the African Union as long as Central Africa remains a permanent theatre of violence.

In his address, the Minister for National Education, President of Gabon's National UNESCO Commission, Professor ONA ONDO, first welcomed the Conference participants on behalf of the highest authorities of his country and the people of Gabon.

He next praised the holding of this Conference, jointly initiated by UNESCO and the Government of Gabon with support from other specialized international and national organizations.

Professor ONA ONDO recalled that “both intercultural dialogue and the culture of peace have become the spur of actions and policies which are at work to bring about a more unified, albeit diversified, world; a world where the respect as well as the defence of dignity would become compelling standards”.

The Minister emphasized the fact that the Conference themes meet the concerns of the President of the Republic, His Excellency El Hadj Omar BONGO ONDIMBA, who has been resolutely committed to the preservation of peace, the pacific settlement of conflicts, and the promotion of cultural diversity. He paid a deserved homage to His Excellency El Hadj Omar BONGO ONDIMBA who has contributed, through his noble actions for peace, to bringing relief to the continent for the throes of war and has thus provided the populations of sister nations with real hopes of peace, reconciliation and reconstruction. Professor ONA ONDO pointed out that education is a determining factor in the process of promoting intercultural dialogue and the culture of peace. It is crucial that, beside its traditional function of transmission and acquisition of knowledges, education should be focused on the learning and transmission of values that might profitably awaken the youth's mind, most particularly to peace, tolerance, the respect of human rights, the acceptance of differences.

In his remarks, His Excellency Michael ABIOLA OMOLEWA, President of the UNESCO General Conference, first expressed his sincere thanks to the organizers for inviting him to attend this Conference.

He went on to define the scope of the Conference which he presented as an opportunity to reflect on the ways and means of establishing the culture of peace with the support of the education sector and the media.

In his opening address, the Vice-President of the Republic, His Excellency Didjob DIVUNGI DI NDINGE, started welcoming the participants on behalf of the President of the Republic, Head of State, His Excellency El Hadj Omar BONGO ONDIMBA.

He next greeted UNESCO's timely initiative to stage, in Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region, this international Conference on cultural dialogue and the culture of peace for the benefit of this subregion's peoples who have been bruised by repeated crises and numerous conflicts.

His Excellency Didjob DIVUNGI DI NDINGE, Vice-President of the Republic, reminded the participants that the President of the Gabonese Republic is convinced that Africa, currently faced with numerous challenges, must in the first place fight for peace, both within and outside our respective countries' boundaries; and that this is the price to be paid to achieve sustainable development and viable progress, not least for our continent.

He also noted that peace is never taken for granted, nor is it lost irremediably. He pointed out that one objective of the Conference and its follow-up should be the dissemination of information linking peace with the recognition or the respect of the other, two core values which undeniably form the basis of the dialogue between peoples.

Aware also that Africa has all assets in hand for meeting the challenges facing it, the Vice-President of the Republic recalled that the President of the Republic, Head of State, His Excellency Omar BONGO ONDIMBA, created the International Center for Bantu Civilizations (CICIBA) to foster intercultural dialogue and the culture of

peace. He seized this opportunity to call for the strengthening of the partnership between CICIBA and UNESCO in the promotion of intercultural dialogue and peace.

Finally, he declared open the International Conference on intercultural dialogue and the culture of peace in Central Africa and the Great Lakes region.

After the opening ceremony, the Bureau of the Conference was elected as follows:

- Chairman: **His Excellency Daniel ONA ONDO**
Minister for National Education, President of Gabon's National UNESCO Commission - *Gabon*;
- 1st Vice-Chair: **His Excellency Pierre AMOUGHE MBA**
Minister for Culture, Arts and Popular Education – *Gabon*;
- 2nd Vice-Chair: **Mr. Pancrace NDABATINYE**
President of the National Council of Bashigantahe-*Burundi*;
- 3rd Vice-Chair: **Madam Béatrice EPAYE**
President of the International Council of Festivals Organization, Folklore and Traditional Arts and Crafts – Central African Republic;
- 4th Vice-Chair: **Professor Nestor MPEYE NYANGO**
Rector of the University of Kinshasa – *Democratic Republic of Congo*;
- General Rapporteur: **Professor Jérôme KWENZI MIKALA**
Vice-Rector of Omar Bongo Ondimba University – *Gabon*;
- Deputy General Rapporteur: **Madam Yolande MUKAGASANA**
Writer – Rwanda;
- Secretary-General: **Mr. Jean-Marie Vianney BOUYOU**
Secretary-General of the Gabonese National UNESCO Commission – Gabon.

2.2. Plenary work

The afternoon was dedicated to the introductory presentations to the five panels and the reading of messages.

2.2.1. Introductory presentations

2.2.1.1 PANEL 1

This panel's theme was: **The role of traditional and spiritual leaders in conflict prevention and resolution in the societies of Central Africa and the Great Lakes region.**

The introductory paper of this panel, submitted by Madam Katérina STENOU, Director of the UNESCO Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue Division, was read by Mr Lupwishi MBUYAMBA (UNESCO-Maputo).

The following are the highlights of this presentation:

- The Conference is taking place during Ramadan which, for Muslims, symbolizes the values of sharing, solidarity, brotherhood, tolerance, dialogue, peace and reconciliation;
- The role and know-how of traditional and spiritual leaders is taken on board in the prevention and resolution of conflicts;
- The importance of articulating traditional and modern skills while building a synergy between traditional chiefs, university experts and policy-makers;
- The provision of coping mechanisms for pre- and post-conflict situations;

- Anyway, “ the willingness to live together” is indispensable in the search for a solution to conflicts opposing men.

Professor Philippe NTAHOMBAYE presented the preparatory workshop to this panel 1 which had been held in Bujumbura on 18 and 19 September 2003.

This workshop had highlighted the mechanisms of two traditional institutions likely to provide solutions for preventing and resolving conflicts, namely ‘Bashingantahe’ (the wise) in Burundi and ‘Gacaca’ in Rwanda, both of which are recognized by the political authorities.

Since these institutions’ guiding principle is the search for truth, their members are chosen based on the standard of moral and intellectual integrity. Their number is set according to a careful combination (men and women) which permits a gender-based representativeness.

2.2.1.2. PANEL 2

This panel’s theme was dedicated to: *The reception of the notion of culture of peace by the societies of Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region.*

In his presentation, Mr Lat-Soucabé M’BOW first extended his appreciation to UNESCO for imagining the idea of holding this Conference in which it involved other partners such as the *Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie*, which is equally highly concerned about achieving lasting peace in the region.

On behalf of Madam Michèle Gendreau MASSALOUX, Rector of the *Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie*, he also thanked all the eminent academic personalities for their accepting to take part in this panel.

He next defined the concept of culture of peace as a set of values, attitudes and behaviors that reject violence.

Mr Lat-Soucabé M'BOW introduced each sub-theme and each presentation pertaining to the panel, laying particular emphasis on the fact that the values of the culture of peace are recognized by the societies of Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region.

He remarked that those who are victims of conflicts and arbitrariness are mostly to be found among the 'voiceless'.

He also deplored the non-respect of rights and liberties, ethnic infighting, the lack of a safe horizon for building the future, and expressed his pleasure at the revival of such ideas as dialogue, national reconciliation, the process of unification of the national territory, and regional cooperation.

Finally, he expressed the wish that the momentum gathered by reconciliation in Congo be equally present in the Great Lakes countries.

2.2.1.3 PANEL 3

This panel's theme was: ***Interculturality***

In his introductory presentation, Professor Jérôme T. KWENZI-MIKALA indicated that this panel had been set the objective of both defining African interculturality and showing that the development thereof can be conducive to the rapprochement of peoples. The 'intercultural' and 'interculturality' concepts form the new dimension in which African cultural identities should be inventoried, rethought and redefined in multidisciplinary approaches.

The intercultural may be studied in both its planetary reality and its relation to politics, economics, education and training.

Mr KWENZI MIKALA insisted that interculturality is closely connected with the very existence of cultural diversity and, therefore, of culturality.

He expressed the wish that the States of Central Africa should break with everything that might drive citizens to intolerance, aggressiveness and all forms that go against solidarity and the values of humanism.

The traditional values of conviviality, solidarity, sharing, hospitality, brotherhood and friendship, the acceptance of differences and, therefore, the recognition of otherness should all become the pillars of a new African socio-political order.

He also called upon decision-makers to contribute towards promoting the culture of peace - through the mainstreaming into school curricula and teaching manuals of the culture of dialogue with a view to preventing and resolving conflicts - hospitality, tolerance, and solidarity, which are fundamental values of the culture of peace and have enabled African societies to survive.

He finally suggested proposing both institutional and educational strategies aimed at promoting the culture of peace, tolerance, justice, democracy, intercultural dialogue and cooperation within the social groups of the respective countries, and the setting-up of a structure designed to manage the research pertaining to these.

2.2.1.4. PANEL 4

This panel mainly dealt with : *Education to citizenship*.

These are the highlights of Mrs Janine D'ARTOIS's presentation:

- The themes of citizenship and education are part of the 'learning to live together' perspective,
- Civic education, an instrument at the service of 'living together', is a training for the man and the citizen,
- Education to conscious and active citizenship can make the diversity of cultures a positive factor for mutual understanding among individuals and human groups,
- Education to citizenship shall be promoted in curricula as well as through the development of school manuals,
- Education to the culture of peace must be premised on the conscience that peace is possible and can be built.

2.2.1.5. PANEL 5

This panel was about: **The role of the media in the promotion of the culture of peace and development in conflict and post-conflict zones.**

In his introductory presentation to the panel, Mr Tassew TESFAYE emphasized the role of telematics in modern communication.

He expressed his regret that the media often convey ethnocentric ideologies rather than those which are favourable to intercultural dialogue and the culture of peace.

Mr Tassew TESFAYE concluded by emphasizing that promoting the culture of peace is primarily promoting social change, and the media must take an overriding part in this respect.

2.2.2. Messages

Two messages were read to the participants.

The message from the UNESCO General Director, read by Madam Jacqueline LEMOINE (UNESCO – Kinshasa). The highlights were as follows:

- The 16 November marks the international day of tolerance. It was on 16 November 1995, date of the 50th anniversary of the Organization, that UNESCO Member States adopted a policy statement on tolerance. This is neither a concession nor complacency, but rather the very basis of the respect and appreciation of the wealth and diversity of our cultures, modes of expression, and the way we express our character as human beings;

- By marking its acknowledgement of the principle of tolerance, the universal rights of the individual as well as the fundamental liberties of the other, UNESCO was thus entering into a commitment with the international community as a whole.

The message of Mr Hans D'ORVILLE, Director of the UNESCO Strategic Planning Office, was read by Mr Frederick RUSSEL (UNESCO – Paris). While advocating dialogue between civilizations, he insisted on the fact that peace must be predicated on the moral and intellectual solidarity of humankind and that education intrinsically bears the capacity to give free rein to dialogue.

Following all the messages, Mr Makhily GASSAMA, UNESCO sub-regional Representative in Libreville, took the floor, first, to thank all the partners having

participated in the organization and contributed to the financing of the Conference; he went on to present the philosophy behind both the organization of panels and the partnership, within the framework of this international Conference - which the organizers have wanted to be original and effective in terms of the high level and diversity of the participants and the principle of partnership put in place.

He also remarked that the dimensions of human development are education, tolerance, democracy, justice, all of which lead to the respect of cultural diversity.

The adjournment of the plenary work on the first day was preceded by the screening of the film *IBIKA*, which traces the major phases of the conflict in Burundi from independence to nowadays. It also recounts the various attempts made to solve this conflict politically, and illustrates clearly that the lack of dialogue and of a joint project for all social groups composing Burundi is the leading cause for the crisis which has recently torn this country.

2.3. Writers Forum and work in panel

2.3.1. Writers Forum

In the evening of 19-20 November, fifteen African writers attended a Forum staged by both UNESCO and the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*, on the occasion of the International Conference on Intercultural Dialogue and the Culture of Peace in Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region.

This Forum's theme was: “ **Literature and Peace: Writing in a Crisis-riven Africa** ”. The discussion was moderated by a talented journalist: Alain FOKA of Radio France Internationale (RFI).

At the conclusion of the debate, the Forum arrived at two conceptions of the writer's role:

First of all, the writer is an artist who must care about the aesthetic character of his/her works.

The writer is also a citizen who cannot turn away from the urgencies of History.

2.3.2 Work in panel

2.3.2.1. PANEL 1

Panel 1, which was sponsored by UNESCO and dealt with “ the role of traditional and spiritual leaders in conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms in societies of Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region”, recorded fourteen presentations on the following sub-themes:

- the traditional and community system as a means to prevent and solve conflicts: the role of traditional powers;
- University experts in the face of cultural mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution: mainstreaming traditional practices;
- Policy-makers in the face of conflict prevention and resolution: a synergy between traditional chiefs, university experts and policy-makers.

Two strong points stood out from the whole of these high-level contributions: on the one hand, an agreement was reached on what has to be done to enhance the

traditional conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms, and, on the other hand, the question of how and with what means it has to be done.

2.3.2.2. *PANEL 2*

Sponsored by the *Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie*, this panel was about “the reception of the notion of culture of peace by societies of Central Africa and the Great Lakes region”.

Ten first-rate presentations were made in the three workshops, the sub-themes of which are :

- The socio-economic consequences of conflicts;
- The philosophical, ethical, political and cultural dimensions of the culture of peace;
- The requirements of a new regional public order;

The ensuing discussion yielded the following conclusions:

- The need for academic research in human and social sciences to engage in promoting cultural values through school education;
- The identification of social actors along with their respective responsibilities in current crises;
- Establishment of foundations for peace and culture, and institution of national peace days with a view to creating symbolic referents that are shared at both country and sub-region level.

2.3.2.3. *PANEL 3*

This panel, proposed by Omar BONGO University in partnership with UNESCO, dealt with the theme of interculturality subdivided into four sub-themes:

- Geo-cultural conflicts in Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region;
- Multicultural and federative traditions in Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region;
- Geographic delimitations and identity conflicts in Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region;
- Oral poetics, aesthetics and multilingualism in Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region;

The following are the highlights of the discussions that ensued:

- The negation of cultural diversity in post-colonial states, despite the proclamation of national unity;
- States of Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region have difficulty establishing effective political checks and balances;
- The inventory of shared values as well as that of elements capable of averting conflicts;
- The harmonious articulation of peoples' interculturality with state structures;

- The setting-up of institutional frameworks that are conducive to inter-identity dialogue like the Festival of Cultures of Libreville.

2.3.2.4. PANEL 4

On the initiative of the French national UNESCO Commission, this panel addressed the issue of education to citizenship. This theme had been proposed from the perspective of ‘learning to live together’, with a view to being totally in line with the main theme of this international Conference, and with reference to the report of the International Commission for the 21st century.

The panel’s work consisted in identifying and exploring, based on the work of experts or experiments carried out in Africa and Europe, every avenue and mainstay towards a framework for reflection aimed at encouraging the emergence of new educational policies that might create the conditions for a conscious and active citizenship, and make cultural diversity a positive factor for mutual comprehension between the existing initiatives and between all human groups, for the latter are the only guarantors of peace.

The following sub-themes were addressed by specialists through fourteen presentations:

- Citizenship and education;
- Citizenship and learning to live in society;
- Citizenship and cultural diversity: the European experience;
- Quality education for promoting peace and human rights, and for fostering mutual understanding and dialogue.

2.3.2.5. *PANEL 5*

Sponsored by UNESCO, this panel dealt with the role of the media in the promotion of the culture of peace and development in conflict and post-conflict zones.

Seven papers were read during this panel. The place and role of the media in conflict zones was raised during the ensuing discussions; reportedly, the participants unanimously pointed to the lack of institutional support and structural deficiency in post-conflict countries.

The following sub-themes were dealt with and discussed:

- Democratic legislation for the media;
- The safety of journalists;
- Ethics and the training of journalists;
- Non-biased media in conflict zones.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of the panel work, participants, observers and the media unanimously hailed the very excellent intellectual level of the presentations and exchanges, which resulted, among other things, in the following recommendations:

PANEL 1

Fully aware of the grave risk for populations to become caught up in a narrow conception of cultural identity, a conception which is often exploited and exacerbated by politicians;

Mindful that UNESCO, while refuting the apparent inevitability of the theory of the ineluctable clash of cultures and civilizations, acknowledges that it is in the bosom of culture itself that a solution to conflicts, which are blamed on the different cultures, has to be sought,

Cognizant that the issue of traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution is linked to the systems of values and is intrinsically in keeping with the overall goals of protecting and promoting cultural diversity as laid down by UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity,

Observing that, within the framework of the International Decade for the Native populations of the World, proclaimed in 1994 by the United Nations General Assembly, the question of enhancing the native populations' traditional institutions has figured prominently in the United Nations' research programs,

Noting that a few African countries, including Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, have recently been hotbeds of interethnic conflicts characterized by an instrumentation of ethnicity as well as religious and political sentiments,

The International Conference on Intercultural Dialogue and the Culture of Peace in Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region, held in Libreville from 18 to 20 November 2003,

Recommends

to States, UNESCO and their partners:

- The staging of a colloquium on the role of traditional chiefs in conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms in post-war countries (DRC, Angola, Rwanda, Republic of Congo, Central African Republic);
- The establishment of mechanisms for building an effective synergy between the various initiatives taken by traditional authorities, academic experts and policy-makers;
- The support and promotion of the tools of mediation as well as the method of operation of traditional prevention and resolution mechanisms for low-intensity conflicts that have proved to be effective; bearing in mind that high-intensity conflicts, which rather correspond to the struggle for state power, that is, rebellions and civil wars, are totally out of the traditional power's control;
- Vesting the traditional authority with a constitutional status and specific competences, like in Chad, Niger and Rwanda, for improving its expression;
- The initiation by UNESCO of a research program on traditional power and the way of getting it firmly entrenched in the rule of law institutions;
- The teaching of the history of traditional societies, traditional law, conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms with a view to creating favourable conditions for the culture of peace;
- The ownership by Universities and academics of the mechanisms for conflict mediation and resolution within the framework of NEPAD;

- The use of the dynamics of alliances between traditional chiefdoms, both inside and beyond borders, in order to improve the cultural dialogue capacity;

- The utilization of such traditional values as abstinence, faithfulness, and self-denial in order to stem the spread of the AIDS pandemic.

PANEL 2

Viewing that, over the past few decades, the regional geopolitical context has been characterized by a high degree of conflictuality and wholesale breaches of human integrity and dignity,

Regretting that the conflictuality and crises in the region originate in struggles for seizing or retaining political power,

Considering that these conflicting interests have territorial implications, as evidenced by such phenomena as the forced resettlements of populations and the proliferation of refugee camps,

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Recommends

That States, UNESCO and their partners should:

- treat the psychological after-effects of violences in the region through the provision of appropriate care based on programs which, justifiably, must accumulate cultural resources from the groups of victims;

- promote the teaching of interculturality through education, making use of classical or novel information and communication methods, exchanges and encounters, all supported by cultural and sporting events intended for the younger generations;

- promote and sustain enabling initiatives for encounters and exchanges among communities like cultural festivals, training activities in culture of peace, peace and tolerance days, which are significant means of creating common symbolic referents.

PANEL 3

Acknowledging that the intercultural approach is relevant to the study of conducts, practices, representations, beliefs, events and phenomena observed in the context of an encounter of cultures;

Noting that the social, political and economic changes, as well as the constraints resulting thereof, in the name of globalization, increase exchanges, including conflicts, between individuals, cultural groups, between social and/or religious institutions, as well as between nations;

Mindful that the coexistence of tribes and the merger of ethnic communities are the best course of action under a federative option;

Considering the pacifying virtualities of poetics as an effective tool against sheer brutality in the relationships between peoples and cultures;

Considering language as a modality of inter-ethnic and intercultural link;

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Recommends

States, UNESCO and their partners to:

- Expand public fora and establish other fora for eliminating aggressivity modelled on “kinship and joking”;
- Introduce interculturality modules into curricula;
- Encourage the introduction of national languages in primary and secondary education, and African languages in higher education;
- Provide for teaching modules on citizenship, democracy and the culture of peace in curricula;
- Develop teaching manuals on peace in the most commonly spoken languages of the sub-region.

PANEL 4

Considering that the establishment of UNESCO and its ever-increasing universalization, thanks to the adhesion of nearly all the states of the planet, testify to the need for making dialogue a determining factor of peace and, consequently, of mutual comprehension between individuals and between human groups,

Observing that education, which, at some points in time, has contributed to the expression of a certain nationalism, is at last opening up to the world, to its unity in

diversity and to equality among human beings, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Noting that growing numbers of young people have access to education and new developments in knowledges, sciences and technologies,

Bearing in mind the importance of and urgent need for providing the youth with means to access active citizenship through education,

Considering the interest in establishing a framework for reflection that would propel the emergence of new educational policies founded on tolerance and the respect of the other,

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Recommends

States, UNESCO and their partners to:

- Develop a sub-regional vision on education to citizenship and the translation of such vision into activities, for instance the development of a methodology for the training of teachers and the production of manuals as part of the CEMAC education policy;

- Mainstream the activities carried out in favour of education to citizenship into National Action Plans of Education For ALL (NAP/EFA);

- Introduce education to citizenship in curricula, either as an ad hoc discipline or as a transdisciplinary approach;

- Develop and disseminate teaching manuals on education to citizenship;
- Expand the role of the media in promoting education to citizenship.

PANEL 5

Conscious of the role of the media in promoting the culture of peace and development in both conflict and post-conflict zones,

Considering the crucial part UNESCO has had, since the implementation of the new communication strategy adopted by its General Conference in 1989, in protecting the freedom of speech and the freedom of information,

Considering that the various action plans formulated at regional seminars have provided a model framework for UNESCO's action which aims to create a favourable environment for the media based on democratic principles,

Fully aware of the negative role of both bellicose propaganda and incitement to hatred in triggering and aggravating conflicts,

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Recommends

States, UNESCO and their partners to pursue the following goals:

- Expand the number of places available in regionally-based training centres for media professionals;

- Set up additional training centres to be run by media professionals themselves;
- Create the newsagent's house, from an intercultural point of view, with support from UNESCO;
- Build the media's structural capabilities, especially in terms of equipment;
- Develop local communication, in the form of both community-based radios and multimedia;
- Ensure mobility and security for media professionals in conflict zones;
- Upgrade the assistance to independent media in conflict and post-conflict zones.

Writers Forum

Considering that African literature has been the subject of several international meetings since the 1950s,

Being aware that despite having a certain appearance of homogeneity, African literature has kept crackling under the pressure of history over the past five decades,

Considering that writers of the first generation had been in the heart of the struggles for independence and participated, for better or for worse, in the setting-up of post-colonial political systems,

Trusting that, as men and women of culture, writers can contribute to understanding better and overcoming conflicts with their trail of horror,

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Recommends

States, UNESCO and their partners :

- the Institutionalization, in a biennial format, of the Writers Forum;
- the expansion of the support of States, UNESCO and Francophonie institutions to the development of publishing facilities and book industries, most particularly by implementing the *Agreement on the importation of educational, scientific or cultural objects*, known as the ‘Florence Agreement’ and the *Protocol to the Florence Agreement*, known as the ‘Nairobi Protocol’.

Done at Libreville on 20 November 2003