

Declaration of the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Africa.

Accra, 27 October - 6 November 1975

- ◆ We, representing the Governments of the African Member States of UNESCO, meeting at Accra from 27 October to 6 November 1975 on the occasion of the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Africa, organized by UNESCO with the co-operation of the Organization of African Unity,
- ◆ Recalling that under colonial domination, African countries found themselves in identical political, economic, social and cultural positions;
 - ◆ that on the cultural level, domination led to the depersonalization of some of the peoples of Africa, falsified their history, systemically denigrated and opposed African values and attempted to replace African languages progressively and officially by those of the colonial powers;
 - ◆ that colonialisation encouraged the formation of an élite, too frequently absorbed and assimilated into the foreign culture, and that a deep division appeared between this élite and the African people at large,
- ◆ Convinced that African unity is grounded, first and foremost, in history;
 - ◆ that complete independence is the prime condition for the flourishing of culture in the service of the people,
- ◆ Declare that the assertion of cultural identity expresses a reality common to all the peoples of Africa;
 - ◆ that cultural identity serves as a foundation for the independence and the construction of modern African nations;
 - ◆ that African culture remains a decisive weapon in struggles for liberation and in the continuing fight against colonialism, racism and apartheid;
 - ◆ that it is a basic manifestation of the feeling of unity and solidarity inspiring contemporary Africa;
 - ◆ that it represents a guarantee in international relationships and the prerequisite for the establishment of a new, more equitable and more humane world order, based on the right to national self-determination and unconditional recognition of the equality and dignity of all cultures;
 - ◆ that the full enjoyment and promotion of human rights can be ensured only in the framework of genuine political, economic and cultural independence;
 - ◆ that development must aim primarily at enriching human life by providing a harmonious balance of values;
- ◆ Affirm the will of the African States:
 - ◆ to embark resolutely on the search for patterns of development which confirm to their particular genius, so as to meet the needs and legitimate aspirations of their peoples and safeguard the authenticity of their values;
 - ◆ in so doing, to enable the African men, women and young people of our time to develop harmoniously and play an active part in the life of the nation and help them join in the main stream of world affairs;
 - ◆ hence to give to culture the decisive position which it should rightfully occupy in the

process of global development, of which man is both the agent and the end;

- ◆ Declare that cultural authenticity and technical progress, in the reciprocity and complementarity of their effects, are the surest guarantee of cultural development and of the advent of new societies linking up with the lofty tradition of African humanism;
 - ◆ that it is therefore necessary in this connexion to bring about a change in attitudes and the rejection of cultural patterns which are ill-fitted to express the cultural reality of present-day Africa;
 - ◆ that it is also necessary to make effective use of scientific and technological advances and the mass media so as to strengthen cultural identity and the safeguarding of authenticity, and so as to foster a harmonious relationship between man, his environment and his society;
 - ◆ that it is urgent to define educational systems which incorporate African values of civilization, ensure that young people will be rooted in African culture and enlist the active participation of all social forces, in a context of lifelong education;
 - ◆ that it is no less urgent to take resolute steps for promotion of the African languages - which are irreplaceable tools of social communication, auxiliaries and vehicles of cultural heritages in their most authentic form and sure guarantees for their essentially popular nature - and to draw up a systematic inventory of cultural heritages, especially in the historical, linguistic and artistic spheres;
- ◆ Affirm that African cultural diversity, the expression of a self-same universality, is a factor of equilibrium and creative fertility, serving the cause of social mobilization and national integration;
 - ◆ that the wealth of the cultural heritage shared by all the peoples of Africa, which is the historical basis of African personality, is the surest guarantee of African unity;
 - ◆ that African cultural creativity has never ceased to enrich the cultural heritage of mankind and to enhance Africa's presence in the world;
 - ◆ that African cultures, in their turn, remain receptive to outside contributions and are alert to the major trends at work in the modern world;
 - ◆ that cultural co-operation among free and equal partners fosters mutual enrichment of cultures in a spirit of respect for each, and can be a determining factor in the promotion of international understanding and world peace;
- ◆ Recognize accordingly the responsibilities incumbent on African States with regard to the definition of national cultural policies, which must be geared to the policies decided on in the political, economic and social fields;
- ◆ Affirm our determination to implement or intensify our cultural policies for this purpose, bearing in mind the interaction which takes place between them and the policies followed in regard to, inter alia, education, science and technology, communication and the environment;
- ◆ Undertake to be guided accordingly in considering the recommendations made by this Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Africa, which represents a milestone in the history of African culture;
- ◆ Pay tribute to UNESCO's activities to further the cultural development of Africa; and
- ◆ Welcome the draft Cultural Charter which the Organization of African Unity is proposing to draw up.