

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

Libreville, 18 – 20 November 2003

DECLARATION OF LIBREVILLE

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On

Intercultural dialogue and the culture of peace

We, men and women of culture, men and women of the media, university experts, politicians, writers, poets, traditional and spiritual leaders of Central Africa, the Great Lakes Region and other places, meeting in Libreville, Gabon, from 19 to 20 November 2003, on the occasion of the **International Conference on Intercultural Dialogue and the Culture of Peace in Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region,**

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Mindful of the Declaration on the Promotion, amongst young people, of the ideals of peace, mutual respect and comprehension among peoples, proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on 7 December 1996,

Inspired by the World Declaration on Education for All,

Considering the Convention on the Protection of Immaterial Cultural Heritage and UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity,

Restating the conclusions of the African Conference on African Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation Principles, held in Addis Ababa from 8 to 12 November 1999,

Guided by the report of the 9th Summit of Francophone States on the dialogue of cultures,

Referring to the seminar, “UNESCO and NEPAD: from vision to action”, held in Ouagadougou in March 2003,

Deeply worried about the intrastate and interstate armed conflicts Africa has quite permanently been the theatre of - conflicts which have just kept sinking it into the abyss of underdevelopment through the massive destruction of human lives -, the ill effects of development efforts as well as the degradation of the environment;

Considering that power in a modern State must be premised on a project aiming to the welfare of the nation, in compliance with the rule of law, the respect of the dignity and rights of man and peoples,

DECLARE, in a spirit of intercultural dialogue and the culture of peace, the urgent need for taking the following steps and action:

1. Mobilizing university experts, creators (artists and writers), traditional authorities, politicians, men and women of the media, for conducting, together, reflections (conferences, discussions, screening of documentary films on themes dictated by the circumstances), activities entirely devoted to intercultural dialogue and the culture of peace, in each African country, each year, on the eve of National Days celebrations;
2. Recognizing and enhancing the traditional institutions, mechanisms, values of conflict prevention and resolution (Bashingantahe in Burundi, Graca in Rwanda) as they are part of the material and immaterial heritage of the peoples of Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region;

3. Setting up mechanisms for building an effective synergy between the various initiatives taken by traditional authorities, university experts, creators and policy-makers;
4. Using local or regional languages as a vehicle for such traditional values as tolerance, the respect of the other and minorities, justice, accountability, hospitality, forgiveness, the respect of human dignity, as a structural and strategic variable of the culture of peace;
5. Promoting 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;
6. Instituting an Omar Bongo Ondimba Prize for intercultural dialogue and the culture of peace, under the aegis of both UNESCO and the Gabonese State, to be awarded to individuals, territorial authorities, or institutions with a record of pertinent and outstanding deeds in the relevant area and in a given period of time;
7. The need for encouraging and sustaining conducive initiatives for encounters and exchanges among communities, such as cultural festivals, training activities in the culture of peace, peace and tolerance days, all of which are meant to create common symbolic referents;
8. Creating, within Omar Bongo Ondimba University, an institute of intercultural studies and research and of education for peace in Africa;
9. Building the capacities of the African Languages Academy;
10. Developing an African code of ethics;

11. Expanding public fora and establishing other fora for eliminating aggressivity modelled on “kinship and joking”;
12. Resuming the Festival of Negro Arts;
13. Developing teaching manuals on intercultural dialogue and the culture of peace in the most commonly spoken languages of the sub-region;
14. Encouraging the systematic study of epics and other great founding texts of the region like the studies on the Mandingue epic;
15. Re-dynamizing the International Centre for Bantu Civilizations (CICIBA) and completing the construction of its regional headquarters;
16. Institutionalizing the Writers Forum in a biennial format,;
17. Expanding 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’;
18. Building the capacities of institutions whose mission is to foster interculturality and African integration (NEPAD, FESPAM, FESTPCI, MASSA, etc.);
19. Instituting Panafrican Days for the purpose of observing the duty to remember;

20. Making the Dakar Action Plan on Education for All accessible to a large audience. This is to be carried out, in the field, by universities, UNESCO and its partners;
21. Mainstreaming elements of the culture of peace and intercultural dialogue into training modules for journalists and media professionals.

Done in Libreville, on 20 November 2003

The International Conference
on
Intercultural Dialogue and the Culture of Peace