



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# Executive Board

Two hundred and seventh session

# 207 EX/40

PARIS, 13 September 2019  
Original: French

## Item 40

### **WORLD DAY FOR AFRICAN AND AFRODESCENDANT CULTURE**

#### **SUMMARY**

This item has been included in the provisional agenda of the 207th session of the Executive Board at the request of Togo.

The present document includes an explanatory note and a draft decision.

Financial implications: Extrabudgetary resources.

Decision required: paragraph 12.



Job: 201912463



## Introduction

1. International cultural cooperation is central to UNESCO's priorities and action, as well as that of the peoples and heads of State and government of the African region.
2. This is reflected in the decisions of high political impact taken by the summits of heads of State, such as the Pan-African Cultural Manifesto of Algiers (1969) and the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance (2006), a veritable normative document that highlights the role of culture in the sustainable development of the continent.
3. By their decisions, the summits of African heads of State and government are in line with UNESCO, whose statements, such as the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) constitute inexhaustible sources of inspiration for their policies and actions.
4. The same applies to activities within the framework of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2013-2022).
5. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that this priority given to culture as a lever of development in Africa remains vulnerable to the multitude of challenges facing countries and populations. It must be constantly nurtured if we are to achieve meaningful results.
6. This is the rationale for the recommendation made by the first Pan-African Congress on "Culture, a Lever for Development in Africa" held in Lomé, Togo, on 17 and 18 November 2011, by the African Network of Cultural Promoters and Entrepreneurs (RAPEC), with the support of the Government of Togo, UNESCO, the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA), and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP Group).
7. The recommendation of Lomé was upheld on 14 February 2012, in Brussels, at ACP headquarters, and on 6 December 2012, in Dakar, by the sixth Africities Summit.
8. Furthermore, the recommendation concerning a world day for African and afrodescendant culture was supported by the African Union (2009), UNESCO's Africa Department (2013) and UNESCO's Africa Group (2013).
9. It is also clear that such a day could not be successful without the strong involvement of African diasporas throughout the world, while bearing in mind that Africa remains the cradle of all humankind.
10. It will be a day of reunion and a forum for the promotion of culture as a real lever for the continent's development.
11. It will offer stakeholders, promoters and humanists an opportunity to celebrate culture in all its forms throughout the world:
  - holding exhibitions of paintings, photographs and various objects of artistic creation;
  - organizing conferences, concerts, theatre plays, book publications, radio and television broadcasts and so forth.

## Proposed draft decision

12. In order to ensure that the celebration of a world day for African and afrodescendant culture has the desired resonance throughout governments and populations in Africa and the rest of the world, we submit for adoption by the Executive Board of UNESCO the following draft decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 207 EX/40,
2. Considering the Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Cooperation adopted in 1966 by the General Conference of UNESCO at its fourteenth session, the Pan-African Cultural Manifesto of Algiers (1969), the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Africa, held in Accra in 1975, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), as well as the activities of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024), proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly,
3. Also considering the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance, adopted on 24 January 2006 in Khartoum, Sudan, by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union,
4. Further considering the proceedings of the first Pan-African Congress conference held on 17 and 18 November 2011 in Lomé, Togo, by the African Network of Cultural Promoters and Entrepreneurs (RAPEC) in cooperation with the Government of Togo, UNESCO, the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP Group) and the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA), in particular the recommendation for the celebration of a world day for African and afrodescendant culture on 24 January of each year,
5. Recognizing that a world day for African and afrodescendant culture would provide humanity with an opportunity to celebrate its common origin and to highlight the role of culture as a lever for development,
6. Invites Member States to celebrate a world day for African and afrodescendant culture on 24 January each year, in memory of the date of the adoption by heads of State and government of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance;
7. Also invites Member States to develop the organization of a world day for African and afrodescendant culture at the discretion of each country, in particular through exhibitions of paintings and drawings, conferences, prizes for excellence and innovation in the field of culture, the organization of concerts and theatre plays, and radio and television broadcasts;
8. Invites the Director-General to support all efforts leading to the proclamation of a world day for African and afrodescendant culture;
9. Recommends that this item be included in the agenda of the 40th session of the General Conference;
10. Also recommends that the General Conference at its 40th session adopt the draft resolution proclaiming 24 January of each year world day for African and afrodescendant culture.