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Organización
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Организация
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

**Regional Conference on the Pedagogical Use
of the
General History of Africa in African Schools**

Tripoli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, 10-17 June 2010

Conference Outline

I. Historical background

In March 2009, UNESCO initiated the second phase of the *General History of Africa* (GHA), entitled “Pedagogical Use of the *General History of Africa*”. The first phase, completed in 1999, consisted in preparing, drafting and publishing the *General History of Africa* in eight volumes, the main edition being in English, French and Arabic. Furthermore, 12 studies and other documents on specific issues and themes were published in this context, as was an abridged version of the work in English, French, Kiswahili, Hausa and Fulfulde.

In 1964, the African States had requested UNESCO’s assistance in rewriting the history of the continent. The purpose of that undertaking was to enable Africa to reclaim ownership of its history while providing a better understanding of the contribution of the continent to the overall progress of humanity. This tremendous undertaking was completed in 1999 after 35 years of intellectual and scientific cooperation drawing on the contributions of 350 experts from Africa and the rest of the world. It is regarded as one of UNESCO’s major contributions to building knowledge of Africa and its historiography.

In order to implement one of the objectives set by the initiators of the undertaking – the development for use in African schools of educational tools based on the volumes of the *General History of Africa* – and thereby address the various requests that it had received on the subject from African Member States, UNESCO developed the project entitled “**Pedagogical Use of the *General History of Africa***”, for which US \$2 million in funding were received from the Government of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

The main objective of the project is to contribute to renewing history education in the countries of the African Union with a view to promoting regional integration. This will involve, in particular, developing three core components for primary and secondary schools in Africa, producing a historical atlas, an educational DVD and training tools for history teachers, and strengthening pre-service and in-service teacher training for a renewed approach to history education. The project is also designed to promote use of the volumes of the *General History of Africa* and to harmonize teaching of the GHA at university level throughout the continent. Lastly, it is designed to reorganize and update the *General History of Africa* website in order to post online the content of all eight volumes, the teaching materials produced and any relevant literature and thus facilitate, in particular, free access to all these digital resources.

The project is being implemented as part of the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015), which places emphasis on the links between education and culture and the quality of educational content. It was developed on the basis of recommendations made at various Expert meetings held by UNESCO (Dakar (1986), Nairobi (1989), Tripoli (1999), Dakar (2001)) and the studies initiated by the Organization (Dramani-Issifou (1999), Kipré (2002)), before and after the end of the first phase of the project, to consider ways and means of using the volumes for educational purposes.

II. Objectives of the Conference

The objective of the **Regional Conference on the Pedagogical Use of the *General History of Africa***, the first of a series of three meetings, is to define the framework, terms and conditions for the development of core components for African primary and secondary schools and of teaching support materials.

The Conference will specifically provide participants with the opportunity to:

- assess the current state of history education in general, and of the teaching of African history in particular;
- define the main themes to be addressed and broad outlines for the development of core components for primary and secondary schools;

- formulate broad outlines for the compilation of teaching guides and other educational materials designed to assist history teachers in achieving the cognitive targets;
- devise a strategy to produce and disseminate the content thus developed;
- identify the challenges posed by the integration of the core components into the curricula of African countries;
- designate groups of authors who will be tasked with drafting the core components and with producing a historical atlas and educational DVD;
- establish a forum for discussion and thus facilitate the exchange of ideas and experience among the focal points designated by the African Ministers of Education, history education experts and policy decision-makers at regional and sub-regional levels.

III. Organization of the discussions

The Conference discussions will be held in plenary sessions, workshops and other meetings. The broad outlines of specific issues that will be addressed in greater detail in the workshops will be considered by the plenary sessions, to which the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the select working groups will be reported. The various themes of the Conference will be examined in the workshops, which will formulate recommendations that will then be discussed during the plenary sessions. Some meetings, with restricted participation, will also be held proactively to address particular issues and thus suggest possible solutions for subsequent discussions in enlarged meetings of the Scientific Committee.

The provisional programme of the Conference is annexed hereto.

IV. Participants' profile

The Conference will be attended by 150 people from different backgrounds, including historians, history education specialists, specialists in the teaching of history, archaeologists, anthropologists, experts in education, psychology, curriculum and educational material development, and educational policy, policy decision-makers, eminent specialists contributing to the first phase (1964-1999) of the *General History of Africa*, representatives of African regional and sub-regional Organizations, representatives of publishing companies, professional and civil society Organizations and the media. Participants will include:

(i) *Members and observers of the project's Scientific Committee*

UNESCO has entrusted intellectual and scientific responsibility for the project to 10 members, representing the five geographical regions of the continent, while the Association of African Historians (AHA), a strategic partner of UNESCO in the implementation of the project, is an observer to the Committee;

(ii) *Focal points of the project within the African Ministries of Education*

These persons are designated by African Ministers of Education, at the request of the Director-General of UNESCO, to monitor the national implementation of the project;

(iii) *Experts*

Experts are selected by the project's Scientific Committee, in cooperation with UNESCO, AHA, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), the National Commissions for UNESCO and other partners;

- (iv) *Eminent specialists in African history and stakeholders in the first phase of the General History of Africa*

Consist namely of experts in African history or related subjects who took part in drafting the *General History of Africa* or were members of the International Scientific Committee for the Drafting of a General History of Africa (first phase: 1964-1999) or have contributed to intellectual and scientific production on Africa;

- (v) *Representatives of African regional and sub-regional political organizations, include:*

- Representatives of the African Union and its bodies, such as the Conference of African Ministers of Education (COMEDAF) and the Regional Economic Communities, among others;
- A representative of the Forum of African Parliamentarians for Education (FAPED);

- (vi) *Representatives of the Africa Group at UNESCO*

Comprising of representatives of the group of Ambassadors, Permanent Delegates of African States to UNESCO;

- (vii) *Representatives of African professional and civil society organizations, such as ADEA, Pan-African teachers' associations, the Pan African Youth Federation, and others;*

- (viii) *Representatives of African publishing companies (electronic and print), media (print and broadcast) and experts in new information and communication technologies (ICTs).*

V. Working documents

The following documents will be prepared as a basis for the discussions to be held in plenary sessions and in the workshops.

1. Conceptual framework for the pedagogical use of the *General History of Africa*

The purpose of this document is to clarify the various issues, aspects and main thrusts of the project in relation to African integration, among other matters. From this standpoint, it examines the main challenges faced in the various components of the project and justifies the approach taken under the project to meet those challenges.

2. State-of-the-art report on history teaching in Africa

This document assesses the current state of history teaching in general, and of African history in particular, in the countries of the African continent, on the basis of the responses received to the questionnaire sent by UNESCO to the African Ministries of Education.

3. Content Review of the volumes of the *General History of Africa*

This is the report of the review of the eight volumes of the *General History of Africa* undertaken by UNESCO in close cooperation with AHA. It contains a synopsis and a critical assessment of each volume and suggests themes that may be selected for inclusion in the core components.