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联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Regional Conference on “Renovating History Teaching in Africa”: the Pedagogical Use of the *General History of Africa*

10-16 June 2010, Tripoli, Libya

General Report

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1. Participants

The regional conference organized by UNESCO on the Pedagogical Use of the *General History of Africa* was held in Tripoli, Libya from 12 to 16 June 2010. There were 116 participants from 46 African countries, and from France, Brazil, Lebanon and the United States, including:

- The focal points officially appointed by their Ministries of Education;
- Experts selected by UNESCO: historians, teachers, educationalists, education specialists;
- Editors and suppliers of electronic content;
- Representatives of pan-African professional organizations;
- Journalists invited by UNESCO.

In addition to the project team and a colleague from BPI (Mr Ian Denison), two members of the inter-sectoral coordination group for the project (Ms Ana Lisa Santana de Afonso from the Africa Department and Ms Noro Andriamisezo Ingarao from the Education Sector) were present, the other members being unable to attend.

(See the list of participants included in Annex 1)

2. Opening session

Mr A. M. El-Fakhery, the Libyan Minister of Education and Scientific Research, opened the Conference. Welcoming all the participants, he underlined the importance of the initiative on the pedagogical use of the *GHA*, particularly in the light of its contribution to African integration. The opening address was followed by speeches from Mr Nouréini Tidjani-Serpos, Assistant Director-General for Africa, Mr Djibril Tamsir Niane, Editor of volume IV and member of the former Scientific Committee of the *General History of Africa*, and Mr Elikia M'Bokolo, President of the Scientific Committee for the Pedagogical Use of the *General History of Africa*.

Mr Nouréini Tidjani-Serpos thanked the Libyan authorities on behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO for their continuous contribution to the project, their warm welcome and the logistical support provided for the organization of the conference. He said that the Tripoli meeting was one of a series of meetings scheduled by the Organization for the next two years. The project was indeed about making history in Africa more African and aimed at regional integration through education.

Professor Djibril Tamsir Niane spoke of the work of the former International Scientific Committee of the *General History of Africa*, which had last met in Tripoli in 1999, and recalled the process which had led to the completion and publishing of the *General History of Africa* in eight volumes, with a main edition in English, Arabic and French and an abridged version in English, French, Swahili, Hausa and Peul.

He saluted the memory of those authors and editors of volumes who had passed away and paid special tribute to their contributions. Underscoring the unifying themes that the *GHA*

contained, he noted that the challenge of the project was to build a sense of African citizenship through the teaching of a common history.

Professor Elikia M'Bokolo, President of the Scientific Committee for the *Pedagogical Use of the GHA*, stated that the project was a response to African demand and that it entailed the pedagogical adaptation of the *GHA* while taking into account the current state of knowledge in the field. He underlined the fact that the teaching of history met with two constraints: the pan-African ideal and continental nationalism on the one hand; and the expressions of territorial nationalism on the other. He pointed to the important challenges that lay before the Scientific Committee and other partners of the project in order to reconcile those two currents and to convince African countries to embark on the teaching of a common history.

Following those speeches, the agenda was adopted and the bureau of the conference was elected. **Professor Elikia M'Bokolo** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) was designated chairperson of the plenary sessions and professors **Sifiso Ndlovu** (South Africa) and **Tayeb Chenntouf** (Algeria) as rapporteurs for the plenaries.

3. Presentation of working documents and debates

In the first plenary session following the opening, **Mr Moussa Iye**, Chief of UNESCO's Intercultural Dialogue Section and Project Coordinator, presented the organization of work, which would proceed in three stages:

- *plenary sessions* on 12 and 13 June (morning) devoted to consideration of working documents and discussion of objectives and methods for the pedagogical use of the *GHA*;
- *Five thematic workshops* on 13 (afternoon) and 14 June devoted to detailed discussion of common content and the elaboration of teachers' guides;
- *plenary sessions* on 15 and 16 June devoted to examining the presentation of the outcomes of the thematic workshops and of the five sub-regional workshops (West, East, North, South and Central Africa) to take into account regional and national specificities.

Mr Moussa Iye enumerated the objectives and expected results of the conference and presented the working documents, namely the conceptual framework, the content review of the *General History of Africa*, and the evaluation report on history teaching in Africa. He retraced the history of the *GHA* from its inception to the publishing of its volumes and evoked the reasons behind the launch of the new project on the pedagogical use of the *GHA*. He detailed the branches of the project thus: (a) development of contents for three common history textbooks for primary and secondary level in Africa; (b) production of a historical atlas, an educational DVD and teaching tools and guides for history teachers; (c) reinforcement of initial and in-service training of teachers to renew the teaching of history; (d) harmonization of the teaching of African history in higher education across the continent; and lastly, (e) reorganization and update of the *GHA* website to put online the contents of all eight volumes, the educational materials to be produced and any other relevant literature with a view to facilitating free universal access to those digital resources.

He underlined the importance of the involvement of the African Union (AU) from the very start of the project and through its various bodies, such as the Summit of Heads of State and the Conference of Ministers of Education.

Mr Mamadou N'Doye, Vice-President of the Scientific Committee, presented the conceptual framework of the project which he had prepared. He outlined the general directions, purposes, goals and objectives, and the pedagogical principles that must determine the choice of content and the didactic transposition of academic knowledge into learning for pupils and students at all levels of education systems in line with African integration. He

recalled that, in its different documents, the African Union had clearly defined the framework and path for such regional integration. That being so, he analysed the main challenges facing the various components of the project and justified the approach adopted to meet those challenges.

He pointed out that didactic transposition must take into account the extreme variety of education systems in Africa. It must also draw on psycho-pedagogical progression (Dakar workshop) by combining the familiar, the chronology and fundamental themes whereas, at primary level, teaching must provide pupils with an overall view of the history of Africa.

The aims of history teaching must help to develop the critical thinking that was necessary for the exercise of African citizenship. With that in mind, initial training of teachers was essential. It must endow teachers with basic pedagogical competencies and a mastery of history contents. He drew a distinction between programmes and curricula and stressed the importance of the facts of civilization and the psycho-pedagogical approach.

The consideration of working documents continued: **Professor Zakari Dramani-Issifou** presented the evaluation report on the current state of history teaching in Africa. He pointed out that the evaluation was based on a detailed questionnaire sent to all Ministries of Education in Africa. Forty-four of the 53 Ministries answered the questionnaire, which made it possible to collect information on the different education systems, the organization of the teaching of history, specifically African history, the main topics covered, and the production of textbooks among other things.

He explained why a questionnaire was chosen for the purpose of the evaluation, recalling that evaluation studies conducted in relation to the *GHA* had been general and did not include precise, quantitative or exhaustive statistics for the entire continent. The information in those studies was often limited to observations, rough estimates or surveys concerning only a group of countries. The questionnaire therefore enabled data to be collected directly from the professionals concerned so that it was possible to make reliable comparisons.

Mr Dramani Issifou described the various components of the questionnaire and the main conclusions of its evaluation based on the replies received. In most cases, the replies were positive as to the need to renew history teaching, but came with specific requests for assistance in improving the system. They also contained interesting information about the wide range of situations and opinions, and certain points of convergence and similarities.

Professor Doulaye Konaté, President of the Association of African Historians (AHA), presented the review of the content of the *General History of Africa* commissioned by UNESCO to assess the information contained therein, determine relevant themes that might be treated in the context of educational use and, lastly, identify points requiring revision or updating. He had coordinated the content review of the eight volumes in the collection carried out by a team of 16 historians (two per volume).

He underscored the particular interest of the preface, written by UNESCO's former Director-General Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, and of the first volume, on methodology. After recalling the reasons for the launch of the *General History of Africa* and the various stages in producing such a monumental work, he then listed the strong points and weaknesses of each of the other volumes of the *GHA*, analysing the various chapters. He presented the main recommendations made by the reviewers for each of the volumes thus examined in the light of progress in current historical research for the educational use of the content in the project. He informed the participants that, in addition to the reports on each individual volume, a general report of over 100 pages had been produced by the coordinator of the content review that would be of considerable use to the writers of the common content and teacher's guides. Since it would be of considerable use not only for the drafters of the common content and guides but also for teachers, he asked for the report to be distributed to participants as soon as possible once it had been translated into English.

In addition to the aforementioned speakers, who provided highly useful information and steered the discussions on the purposes of the conference in the right direction, three other presentations were made during the plenary meetings:

- Presentation by **Mohamed Miloudi** of the African virtual campus project launched by UNESCO. A history course module prepared in Dakar by Professor Djibril Tamsir Niane and Professor Abdoul Sow was displayed to illustrate what the initiative might offer to the project on the pedagogical use of the *GHA*;
- presentation by the researcher **Jean-Philippe Corvo** of a digital creation project showing the potential of the new technologies in developing educational and game material that might be used with the project, such as maps, friezes, illustrations and digital animated material on African history;
- presentation by **Mariana Blanco Rincon** and **Valter Silvério**, consultants, of the Brazilian project on the pedagogical use of the *GHA*. The project, implemented by the Brazilian Ministry of Education in conjunction with the UNESCO Office in Brasilia, is intended to apply Law No. 10.639 of 2003 on the teaching of African history in Brazil. In addition to the translation of the *GHA* into Portuguese and the publication of an authenticated version, it provides for a series of activities to facilitate the inclusion of African history in Brazilian curricula.

The project provides opportunities for cooperation with our own project which will be explored very shortly.

4. Summary of the debates in plenary

The very valuable discussions that followed these presentations confirmed the relevance and timeliness of a project of this type in the present context in Africa.

However, the diversity of education systems and approaches to history education in Africa raises doubts as to the achievement of the objectives set for the project, namely, the preparation of common content and its inclusion in curricula in all States members of the African Union. Given this analysis of the situation, the Project Coordinator and the President and Vice-President of the Scientific Committee emphasized that that was precisely where the greatest challenge for the project lay. They reminded participants of how the pioneers of the first phase of the project (that is, the drafting of a general history of Africa from the African perspective) had managed to overcome difficulties that were equally formidable, and urged them to be just as daring and creative in rising to the new challenge. With Africa finding new opportunities to build its future on the basis of a shared history taught to the younger generations, the goal was more realistic than ever.

The incisive, critical questions raised by the audience after the first and second plenary sessions were really about complex questions of historiography which concern the impact of the General History of Africa (GHA) throughout the world. These are the debates permeating all the eight volumes published thus far. Complex questions were raised about the meaning of History as a discipline after the Project Coordinator, Ali Moussa Iye, had delivered his address on the Pedagogical use of the *General History of Africa*.

Most of the speakers who responded to this valuable presentation defined History in teleological terms, as the relationship between the past, the present and the future was emphasized. But some stressed the relationship between the past and the present: they were of the view that History is the “representation of the past in the present”. It is inextricably bound up with the historian’s values, and these are influenced by one’s political view of the world or ideology. In this regard, History has meaning in the present and hence ideological agenda.

In fact the ideological agendas of partisan, western based historians who readily dismissed with contempt the idea that Africa has a rich History when compared to other continents, were highlighted throughout the conference.

The idea that Africa had no history prior to the advent of colonialism was robustly challenged by the majority of those attending the conference. They emphasized the fact that this opposition was highly visible during the course of the anti-colonial struggle for independence on the continent.

By the late 1950s a demand for decolonized African history written from African perspectives emerged. It was therefore not by accident that the authors of the *General History of Africa* championed a historical narrative that elevated the African perspective representing a view from within the African society, to the centre of the analytical framework they adopted. To liberate and decolonize the history of the continent from imperial subjugation, the authors of the series questioned the privileged status, wide dissemination and universal claims of western knowledge.

Some of the speakers argued that we, as Africans, also have to shoulder some of the blame regarding marketing, distribution and accessibility of the published volumes of the *General History of Africa (GHA)*.

Actually some of the participants confirmed the fact that they have never seen a single volume of the *General History of Africa* during their lives working as professional historians and history teachers.

After the presentation of the conceptual framework by the Vice-President of the Scientific Committee, several speakers noted that if the renovation of history education was to be achieved, there needs to be an appreciation of shared values and ties that bind African people. The promotion of African identity and responsible citizenship therefore becomes essential. This can be achieved by using the *General History of Africa* to promote democratic values, social justice, peace and fundamental human rights throughout the continent.

Speakers also voiced the opinion that though it was correct for the proposed conceptual objectives to champion history from the viewpoint of African solidarity and integration, we should not lose sight of the fact that tensions between different countries abound and there exists regional differences as each African country evolved according to specific historical processes that cannot be reversed. As a result, our driving historical force and motto should be about "Cultural Unity in Diversity" and this should include fostering linkages with the ever expanding African Diaspora. Also problems of ethnicity, racism, prejudices, conflicts and class differences still exist in the continent.

But it is important to stress the point that while African states were different, they had a number of things in common: affinity in language groups, cosmologies, and art forms. Population movements transcended ethnic boundaries, necessitated by factors such as nomadism, state expansion, drought and pestilence. Such movements, cooperation and integration were possible because the infrastructure existed, for example, routes, rivers and pack animals, and the states created no human barriers to communication. So extensive was the interaction pattern that international trade such as that across the Sahara developed to connect West Africa to the North and the wider world. In short, and in support of the proposed conceptual framework, most of the participants argued that the African continent was linked by extensive regional trade networks during pre-colonial times.

The majority of the speakers at the conference during the valuable debates about the evaluation of the history teaching in Africa championed the view that through the curriculum, history education at secondary school should promote high knowledge and high skills. In this regard they recommended that history education should facilitate and develop learners' critical faculties. Learners should have the necessary skills to be able to pose correct questions to the teachers; to impose rational order on conflicting voluminous historical

evidence; to understand why historical developments occur; to conceptualize the very important role of time and chronology in a historical narrative; to be made aware of the role of cause and effect in history; to be able to recognize the difference between fact and opinion; to identify bias in historical interpretation; and most importantly, to be able to formulate their own arguments in a logical manner. Most speakers argued that in order to improve the quality of life and free the potential of each citizen, history education should be provided to all regardless of one's class, ethnic background and race. It must target those who are enrolled in technical colleges; the non-formal education sector; adult education and literacy sector.

Speakers expressed the opinion that history education in the school classroom should not be restricted to the written word because maps, photographs, cartoons, drama, role play, performance, songs and poetry can also be used to teach content in the eight published volumes of the *General History of Africa*. This can be done in order to encourage learners to empathize with people living in past eras. The teacher, who should be open to critical questioning, has to strive to work together with the learner in assimilating indeterminate historical knowledge. In this regard the use of multi-media and the internet, CD-ROMs, animation, video games that focuses on historical events were also recommended bearing in mind the mindboggling costs and the problems of access. In short, history education must embrace the digital world and later, one of the plenary sessions provided the conference audience with specific example about the possibility of presenting selected content from the *General History of Africa* series in a digital format.

These recommendations necessitate well structured teacher training programmes, including refresher courses every three to five years in order to maintain credibility, quality and efficiency. Pedagogical issues about harmonization of teacher training courses throughout the continent were raised – including accreditation, the standardization of qualifications and history education throughout the continent whereby well regulated quality control is essential. Most of the speakers noted that these recommendations might be hampered by apparent differences because of the fact that African countries developed at different times, some are rich and some are poor, some are well developed, some are not.

The discussion on the harmonization of teacher training, qualifications and enhancement of skills required for the effective teaching of the content based on the *General History of Africa* series touched on what constitutes a good history teacher and a bad history teacher. A good history teacher was defined as highly qualified, with sympathetic and informed understanding for humanity and the human condition (human qualities), good teaching, methodological and conceptual skills. What was noteworthy about this profile was that equal weight was given to teaching, human qualities, methodological and conceptual skills. Further qualities listed under the category of teaching included: articulation, scholarship, lucid expression, the ability to expose students to arguments that are contrary to one's perspectives and ideological preferences; willingness to modify or even abandon preconceived notions in the light of overwhelming historical evidence to the contrary; the literary skills to present findings in elegant, accessible prose; the ability to develop clear and logical arguments to the learners. Methodological and conceptual skills include: ability to weigh evidence judiciously and synthesize relevant material for the learners; the possession of analytical and critical skills; and thorough research skills.

Listed under the category of bad history teacher are the following attributes: verbosity, lack of ability to express any conclusion coherently, ruthless promotion of a particular interpretation without acknowledging other lines of argument, promoting the notion of history as propaganda instead of history as problem solving and as a debate, an argument in pursuit of what really happened and why.

One of the major recommendations raised by various speakers during the plenary sessions alluded to the fact that history education at secondary schools was too important to be left to historians alone. Multidisciplinary approaches should be fostered and encouraged. The conference recommended that disciplines such as historical archaeology, historical linguistics and social anthropology must be utilized to teach history inside the classroom and

outside – promoting fieldwork and research. This was also identified as one of the strengths of the *General History of Africa*. But a word of caution was raised by various speakers that we should guard against the tendency by some anthropologists to see African cultures as timeless entities represented by fairly static models of distinct societies and long-term cultures. This also touches on the question of methodology which therefore calls for the centrality of using oral traditions in teaching African history. All these issues are covered in Volume 1 of the series, but much has happened since 1980 and several research methodologies were not developed thirty years ago and so do not appear in this volume and also other volumes defining the series.

In terms of content review, apparent gaps were identified by those commissioned by UNESCO to undertake a systematic review of the content. It was not surprising that most of the speakers at the conference agreed that this matter was of utmost importance and has to be prioritized. The updating of some chapters and volumes of the series is crucial because most of the content is outdated.

The participants also noted that some of the volumes and chapters that inform the series are littered with “insensitive”, outdated language, including pejorative terms. Periodization was also identified as another major problem that the *General History of Africa* has tackled.

Furthermore, in terms of content review, the conference recommended that in order to highlight forces of reconciliation, solidarity and communality the following should be encouraged: further emphasis should be put on liberation movements in Africa, the role of women in history, labour history and youth in history as part of the revision and updating of the series. This also included the study of environmental history, and furthermore, the history of medicine, epidemics and disease in order for us to avoid historical sociological approaches as we unpack the ravages of AIDS and other diseases during the twenty-first century.

In addition, the conference noted that none of the volumes in the UNESCO *General History of Africa* mention gender and the reason for this is understandable. In the early 1970s when this series was conceived, only a few scholars were beginning to think systematically about the significance of gender history. The anti-colonial struggle and liberation programme nationalist movements in the 1950s and 1960s contributed to a climate of agitation and questioning of social relations, especially of oppression and subordination and in the process provided space for those who articulated feminist ideas.

Another important point highlighted during the conference when issues on the review of the contents were discussed was the fact that certain regions were under-represented in the content informing the *General History of Africa* series. These regions include Central Africa, East Africa, the Indian Ocean Islands and Southern Africa – regions which are extremely rich in African history. Recommendations from the conference attendees were that this flaw has to be addressed. Most of the deliberations and recommendations were articulated during breakaway sessions based on various regions of the continent.

Although it is very difficult to reflect all the views expressed in the plenary meetings and workshops, the following conclusions may nonetheless be drawn from the discussions:

- There is insufficient awareness – and, in particular, availability – of the *General History of Africa* in many African countries, as demonstrated by the review;
- Women’s history and the history of Africans outside Africa (Diasporas) are not sufficiently taken into account in the GHA;
- the project should contribute to developing a common African consciousness that transcends the sub-Saharan Africa/North Africa divide since the Sahara, far from being a barrier, has, on the contrary, always been a setting for life circulation and exchange;

- In addition to the scientific and political validation of the contents to be developed, it is also important to carry out educational validation, drawing on the expertise of teachers and educators;
- Common contents and guides should be sufficiently flexible to adapt to sub-regional and national contexts;
- The question of the languages to be used for these contents – in particular African languages – has prompted considerable discussion, foreshadowing the challenges that African countries will eventually face, as these contents are integrated into educational curricula. In this regard, the use and place of oral tradition in historical narrative will also depend on the answer to this question;
- Emphasis is placed on the importance of renewing and strengthening African history education at university. The current status also needs to be assessed;
- Teacher-training quality, often poor, must be improved in many countries;
- History education from early childhood is considered important and, once again, requires a contextual approach. The same applies to technical education, which should also incorporate this common history education;
- Common questions relating to the chronology and historical vocabulary used are still relevant and call for appropriate answers in the context of the project. The suggested working method is based on the following concentric circles: the country, the region, the continent and the world;
- It has been stressed that the introduction of such an approach to African history requires political consensus among States on the contents to be developed;
- beyond the issue of history education, the challenge ahead is to reform social sciences and education systems as a whole;
- The conference should produce clear and compelling recommendations to African States to encourage their involvement in the process of renewing African history education.

5. Workshop activities

To enable in-depth discussions to take place on important agenda items, participants were offered two types of workshops:

- *Five thematic workshops*, including four workshops to discuss common contents and support materials to be developed for the four different primary and secondary school age groups and one workshop to discuss the NTIC and strategies for the publication and dissemination of the *GHA* and the educational materials thus developed;
- *Five sub-regional workshops* to identify sub-regional and national specificities that should be taken into account and to consider possibilities of adapting the educational materials to be developed to these contexts.

The participants, divided according to their profile between the different workshops, including 25 to 30 persons, were able to exchange views freely and to reply to the specific questions raised within each workshop. A moderator for organizing the discussions and a Rapporteur (two for some workshops) to report on exchanges were designated in each workshop. The conclusions of the workshops were presented and discussed in plenary by all the participants. The reports of the thematic workshops are annexed hereto.

The sub-regional workshops gave rise to extensive discussions on the relevance of the five sub-regions referred to by the African Union for historical purposes. The project challenge also became apparent in this context: how can the continental approach promoted by the project – and which is its unique feature – based on teaching common contents to all African pupils be reconciled with the need to take into account sub-regional and even national specificities, so as to ensure that such education is closer to the pupils? Highlighting the difficulty of clearly identifying these specificities without reverting to colonial categories and recognizing that the *GHA* already took into account sub-regional specificities to some extent, participants agreed on the relevance of a continental approach.

Thematic workshop No. 1: pupils aged less than 10 years

Moderator: Lily Mafela

Rapporteur: Shermain Mannah

Workshop No. 1 considered the challenges involved in teaching history to young and very young children, which are all the greater since, in most countries, history is taught only from the third grade of primary school. Emphasis was placed on the need to provide an introduction to history from that age. Several themes were identified in that connection:

- African identity through language and religion;
- Family, genealogy, multiple identities;
- The environment: the village, local history;
- Africa and the world: the country, the continent;
- Responsibilities and rights: African social values, accountability charter, multilingualism.

The workshop recommended:

- harmonizing contents across Africa;
- taking into account children’s abilities;
- Training teachers;
- translating the *GHA* into African languages.

During the discussions, several speakers observed that the themes addressed concerned civic education rather than history.

Thematic workshop No. 2: pupils aged 10 to 12 years

Moderator: Mamadou Ndoye

Rapporteur: Dorothy Makunda

The workshop participants identified eight main themes that should be addressed in the common contents developed for the age group:

- Africa and the origins of humanity;
- African civilizations;
- The great empires;
- Slavery and the slave trade;
- Colonization;

- The new States;
- Pan-Africanism and African unity;
- Africa and the rest of the world.

The workshop recommended taking pupils' abilities into account and reflecting on a new chronology that might facilitate understanding. The teacher's guide should be consistent with the school textbook, reflect the themes identified and include field activities for pupils such as visits, in order to promote interest in an "African vision of Africa".

Workshop No. 3: Pupils aged 13 to 16 years

Moderator: Florida Karani

Rapporteur: Theboho Tsilane

The themes recommended for the age group incorporated sub regional specificities illustrating African diversity. Those included:

- The empires;
- The Sahara;
- The Berbers;
- The Fatimid Empire;
- Economic activities;
- Madagascar;
- Slavery and the slave trade;
- Zulu, Swahili, Nile Valley, Ethiopian and Maghreb cultures;
- Colonization;
- Post-colonial Africa.

Concerning the teacher's guide, it was recommended to avoid the traditional method and, instead, to use atlases, pictures, newspapers, visits to museums and sites and role-playing. Attention was also drawn to the role of oral tradition.

Workshop No. 4: pupils aged 17 to 19 years

Moderator: Doulaye Konaté

Rapporteurs: Chakir Akki & Abdoul Sow

It was considered that this age group was sufficiently mature to appreciate a more comprehensive and detailed approach to African history. Accordingly, no less than 17 themes were identified for which contents should be developed, while overlapping to a large extent with the themes proposed by the other workshops. Additional themes should include sources and methods and Africa's relation with other regions and civilizations. The importance of a detailed treatment of African religions that were either overlooked or dismissed as pagan was also emphasized.

Concerning the teacher's guide, it was recommended that guidelines should be developed rather than instructions, in order to leave teachers room for manoeuvre. Furthermore, in-service training in African history should be provided, incorporating *GHA*.

The workshop also recommended the preparation of a glossary of frequently used concepts and terms with a view to their "decolonization".

Workshops No. 5 and 6: Publishers and NICT

Moderator: Jean Michel Mabeko-Tali

Rapporteur: Pierre Martial Belinga Ze

This workshop was mainly made up of independent African publishers; publishers representing publishers' networks (GRAED, APNET and the Maghreb Publishers' Union); State representatives; a publisher of African descent working with the Caribbean, Africa and Europe; the representative of a historically and culturally themed internet site; historians; teachers; researchers and UNESCO representatives.

Concerning partnerships with African publishers, the participants in the workshop recommended:

- implementing the global engineering of this project through: A survey of the situation regarding school books in Africa, national policies (complete and partial monopolies, liberalization), publishers and publishers' networks; greater awareness of publishers (African, migrants and people of African descent), of their practices, skills and capacities; and increased recourse to these publishers;
- the creation of a *GHA* label for educational, recreational and cultural products and materials developed in connection with the project, so as to give them a quality guarantee and to provide additional credibility and publicity.

Concerning the use of NICT in the project, they recommended:

- prior consideration of information and communication technology with reference to the educational philosophy of the project; the diversity of education actors; the state of NICT in Africa and the fast-changing problems of the digital divide, social inequalities, and the non-formal dimension of education that is crucial to certain countries;
- giving priority to open technologies whenever possible (free software, free websites, free downloads, etc.);
- taking into account technological advances under way on the continent which make the transfer of information by broadband an available educational and teaching product choice;
- linking NICT with older technologies (e.g. radio and television).

6. Meetings of the project's Scientific Committee

Within the conference framework, the project's scientific committee held four meetings:

- Preparatory meeting before the start of the conference to discuss its organization and to define the role of committee members in the various plenary sessions and workshops;
- Two meetings during the conference to address the needs of the situation, define strategies with the press, the planned meeting with the Director-General of UNESCO, and the speeches during the closing session.

A debriefing meeting after the close of the conference was held to discuss the conduct of the conference, review the selection of editorial boards for the common content and teacher's guides, and define the conference follow-up activities.

In view of the need to select good editorial boards for content and the urgency of alerting the African Union to the importance of participating in the project, the Scientific Committee

decided to hold an extraordinary meeting in Addis Ababa in September 2010 to achieve these two goals that are crucial for the continuation of the project. An account of these meetings is to be prepared by the Rapporteur of the Scientific Committee, **Ms Lilly Mafela**.

7. Closing Session

The closing session is marked by the speeches of Professor Ngawabi Mulunge Bhebe (Zimbabwe), who is a member of the Executive Board of UNESCO, the Vice-President of the Scientific Committee for the pedagogical use of the *GHA*, the Director-General of UNESCO and the Libyan Government's Minister of Education and Scientific Research.

Professor Ngawabi Bhebe, who is one of the contributors to the *GHA*, recalled all the efforts of political resistance, intellectual emancipation and struggle against prejudice which had led to the development of the *GHA*.

That salutary rewriting of African history had brought about the recognition of Africa's significant contribution to the progress of humanity. Addressing the Director-General of UNESCO, he stressed that her presence at the ceremony was a strong indication of her special interest in and personal support for the project for the renovation of African history. The project provided UNESCO and its new Director-General in particular, with a golden opportunity to use it as a pilot project for inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary cooperation, as requested by Member States. He repeated to the Director-General the appeal he had made to her during the previous session of the Executive Board to award the project the autonomy which it required in order to be completed successfully and to meet the requirements of inter-sectoral cooperation.

Presenting an initial summary of the work of the conference, **Mr Ndoye**, Vice-President of the Scientific Committee, highlighted the importance which the participants attached to the continued updating of the *GHA* in terms of additions and corrections to be made in view of recent discoveries and the progress of knowledge. He underlined the need for a linguistic and conceptual "decolonization" by means of a critical analysis of ideological presuppositions and epistemological and epistemic paradigms that encouraged an alienating view towards Africa. He also pointed out the need to develop a publishing strategy which would strengthen the entire publishing chain (publishing, production, promotion, distribution, accessibility, usage) while providing African publishers with a captive market. He mentioned the opportunities afforded by the use of new technologies to facilitate learning through animated images, diagrams, illustrations, reconstructions of historical scenes, and the recreation of historical environments and figures.

Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, warmly thanked the Government of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for its generous contribution to the publication of the *GHA* and the project for its pedagogical use. She highlighted the particular importance she attached to the project which covered two of the Organization's main priorities: Africa and education. She added that the project was perfectly consistent with the objectives of the Second Decade of Education for Africa launched by the African Union, which emphasized quality education and the strengthening of the link between education and culture. Giving an historical overview of the project up to the launch of the second phase on pedagogical use, she paid tribute to all who had contributed to the achievement of that colossal work, in the forefront of whom was the International Scientific Committee. Recognizing the importance of African history to humanity, she recalled the scientific, intellectual and methodological contributions of the project, which had enlisted outstanding specialists and contributed greatly to the dialogue between civilizations and the regions of the world. She urged the participants to continue that work of exchange and questioning and to make that mass of knowledge accessible to African students. She indicated that through the project and the modern pedagogical tools it would use, UNESCO would make a constructive and lasting contribution to the overhaul of history teaching and the efforts to speed up the regional integration process in Africa.

The Director-General emphasized that the project had particular resonance in 2010, International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures for which UNESCO had been designated lead agency, as it contributed to the promotion of mutual awareness of cultural diversity. In that regard, she explained that the High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures, which she had set up in that connection, counted among its members several eminent African personalities: Souleymane Cisse, Mohamed Ibrahim, Monseigneur Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya who embodied African wisdom.

Ms Bokova indicated that she had taken due note of the call made by Mr Ndoye, Vice-President of the Scientific Committee, and Professor Bhebe, member of the Executive Board, to strengthen the capacities and resources of the secretariat responsible for the implementation of the project.

The Minister of Education and Scientific Research of the Libyan government, **Mr A. M. El-Fakhery**, stressed the renewed interest and readiness of his country to support the project for pedagogical use of the *GHA* which contributed to the fulfilment of one of his government's greatest wishes: regional integration in Africa in every field. He also took note of the Scientific Committee's call to promote and support the project in contacts with the African Union's authorities.

He promised that his government would duly advocate the project at the African Union in order that it could be listed on the agenda of the next Summit of Heads of State and at the COMEDAF. Mr El-Fakhery thanked the Director-General, the Scientific Committee and the participants for their efforts to further the implementation of that important project.

The closing ceremony ended with the reading of a vote of thanks addressed by the participants to the Libyan Government for its financial contribution to the project, its logistical support and its warm welcoming of the participants, which had greatly facilitated the success of the regional conference.