“Pedagogical Use of the General History of Africa”
Project

Elaboration of the common pedagogical content
for use in African schools

Meeting between the Scientific Committee and the
drafting teams

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
16 – 19 April 2012

Outline of the Meeting
I. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The project is subsequent to the elaboration of the General History of Africa (GHA), which UNESCO launched in 1964 in response to the newly independent African Member States’ wish to re-own their history and show the contribution of African cultures and societies to the general progress of Humanity.

Conducted by an International Scientific Committee (SC) of thirty-nine members (two-thirds of which were African), three hundred and fifty specialists contributed to the drafting and publication of the General History of Africa in eight volumes, with a main edition in English, French and Arabic. Moreover, a series of twelve studies and documents dealing with related issues and themes was published in this respect; an abridged version of the GHA was also published in English, French, Kiswahili, Hawsa, and Fufulde. This monumental work was completed in 1999.

Pursuant to the Scientific Committee’s recommendation that pedagogical tools be developed on the basis of the Volumes of the General History of Africa, in particular for teaching history in African schools, UNESCO has launched a second phase titled, “the Pedagogical Use of the General History of Africa”.

This second phase falls within the framework of the Action Plan of the Second Decade for Education in Africa (2006-2015) which lays emphasis on strengthening the links between education and culture and improving the quality of pedagogical contents. It was devised on the basis of the recommendations made by several experts’ meetings organized by UNESCO before and after the completion of the first phase of the General History of Africa.

II. PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

The project’s main objective is to contribute to the renovation of history education in Africa by:

- developing three core components for primary and secondary education in Africa;
- producing a historical atlas, a glossary, an educational DVD, training tools and guides for history teachers;
- enhancing initial and in-service teacher training for a new approach to history education;
- promoting the use and harmonizing of the GHA in higher education institutions throughout the continent.

In implementing the second phase, UNESCO acted as under the first phase, by establishing in February 2009 a Scientific Committee comprising eleven members from the five regions of the continent and the African Union Commission, to which it entrusted the intellectual and scientific responsibility for the project. The Association of African Historians, a strategic project partner, is also represented on the committee.

After the second phase was launched, UNESCO held a regional conference in Tripoli, Libya from 12 to 16 June 2010 on the pedagogical use of the General History of Africa in African schools. The conference was attended by 117 experts from all over Africa and its Diaspora, including the focal points designated by African Ministers of Education within their Ministries. Participants identified the topics that should be taught to African pupils and selected three age groups that should be the targets for the development of common contents, namely, pupils under 12 years, pupils between 13 and 16 years and pupils between 17 and 19 years old. The Scientific Committee then selected the 30 team members responsible for drafting the common contents for each age group and the accompanying teacher’s guides.

Against this backdrop, UNESCO, in cooperation with the Zimbabwean Government which provided financial assistance and logistics, organized in Harare (Zimbabwe), in September
2011, the first Consultation meeting of the Scientific Committee and the Drafting team members. Bringing together around sixty experts, this meeting enabled participants to agree on the methodology to be followed, the teams’ working methods and to set up a work plan for the elaboration of the common contents and teachers’ guides and set forth a timetable for its implementation. The meeting was preceded by a workshop on the revision of concepts, paradigms, and categorizations used in the social and human sciences. During this meeting, three Coordinators were selected by the Scientific Committee to ensure the coordination of the Drafting teams.

UNESCO then organized in its Headquarters, on 17 and 18 October 2011, a meeting which brought together the coordinators of the Drafting teams and the Bureau of the Scientific Committee. This meeting was the occasion to specify the role of the Coordinators and to define how their work would be conducted within each team and between the three teams. It also set up specific tasks for the Coordinators vis-à-vis the Scientific Committee, and reviewed the timetable for the implementation of the recommendations formulated during the Harare meeting.

It is in order to continue the implementation of the project according to the orientation set in this regard that UNESCO is organizing this second meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 16 to 19 April 2012, between the Scientific Committee and the Drafting teams.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

The objectives of the meeting are to:

- **Take stock of the progress of the Drafting teams’ work:** what are the learning units that were developed? What were the main difficulties met by the teams during this work? What are the lessons learnt from this phase of the work in terms of procedure?

- **Review the work undertaken by the drafting teams:** How was work distributed to the members of the drafting teams? Does the work done correspond to what was asked in terms of structure? In terms of quality? Are there weaknesses? If so, where do they reside? How to remedy these shortcomings & weaknesses? What reasonable deadlines should be set for the next steps?

- **Prepare the 2nd phase of the work:** Define the content and procedure for the elaboration of the teacher’s guides; How shall we proceed? Who will do what? What will be the timeframe? How should the work be assessed? What should the school textbooks consist of? How should they be developed? By who? What will be the timeframe? How should they be validated? What should the glossary consist of? How should it look? How should it be developed? How should it be validated? Set realistic deadlines for the development of the teacher’s guides, the school textbooks and the glossary.
IV. EXPECTED RESULTS

1. Assessment of the current situation of the drafting teams;
2. Assessment of the work undertaken by the drafting teams;
3. Necessary corrections made to the learning units (LU);
4. Clear guidance provided for the elaboration of the 2nd drafts of the LU;
5. Realistic timeframe set up for the submission of the 2nd drafts;
6. Clear guidance provided for the development of the teacher’s guides;
7. Clear guidance provided for the development of the school textbooks and the glossary;
8. Designing a realistic work plan for the development of the teacher’s guides, glossary and school textbooks, specifying the expected results at each stage, the activities that should produce those results, the players who should carry out those activities, the monitoring managers and the lead times.

V. ORGANIZATION OF THE DISCUSSIONS

At this meeting, discussions will be held in plenary meetings and in group work for the drafting teams. The plenary will give guidance on specific issues that will be discussed in the group meetings, whose conclusions and recommendations will be reported to the plenary. The group meetings, for their part, will afford an opportunity for detailed discussion of the various topics selected and to make recommendations that will subsequently be discussed in the plenary meetings.

The provisional programme for the conference is annexed hereto.

VI. PARTICIPANTS’ PROFILE

The meeting will be attended by approximately 35 participants from different backgrounds, including historians, history education experts, specialists in the teaching of history, archaeologists, anthropologists, experts in education, psychology, curriculum and educational material development, education policies, history teacher trainers and representatives of African regional and professional organizations. They will include:

(i) Members and observers of the Scientific Committee

(ii) Members of the Drafting teams

(iii) Experts invited by UNESCO on account of their expertise in very specific fields

(iv) Representatives of African regional organizations including representatives of the African Union.

(v) Representatives of African professional and civil society organizations such as the Association of African Historians (AAH), the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), the Pan African Universities (PAU), and others.
VII. WORKING DOCUMENTS

The documents which will serve as basis for the discussions to be held in plenary meetings and in the workshops include the following:

1. The report of the Paris Meeting (UNESCO Headquarters, 17-18 October 2011) between the Bureau of the Scientific Committee and the Coordinators of the Drafting teams

2. The learning Units developed by the three Drafting teams
For each of the three targeted age group, this document compiles the 9 learning units developed by the corresponding Drafting team.

3. Concept paper on the revision of concepts and paradigms used in social sciences on Africa
The purpose of this document is to identify problematic concepts, paradigms and categorizations that must be redefined or replaced when the core components and teacher guides are being drafted. It also endeavors to suggest avenues for revising the conceptual framework applied to Africa and for formulating new concepts, taking specific African features into account and taking up the challenges raised by sustainable development in Africa more effectively.

4. Proposal of contents for the glossary