On the Occasion of the Celebration of the International Day of Monuments and Sites

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON:

«PROTECTING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH A PARTICIPATORY AND INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE TO MEET THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS»

«Together for an Effective Local Africa»

Concept note

**ISESCO Headquarters, Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco
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CONCEPT NOTE

Paragraph 38 of the Quito Declaration (2016) – The New Urban Agenda

«We commit ourselves to the sustainable leveraging of natural and cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, in cities and human settlements, as appropriate, through integrated urban and territorial policies and adequate investments at the national, subnational and local levels, to safeguard and promote cultural infrastructures and sites, museums, indigenous cultures and languages, as well as traditional knowledge and the arts, highlighting the role that these play in rehabilitating and revitalizing urban areas and in strengthening social participation and the exercise of citizenship.».

CONTEXT

In addition to its many natural resources, the African Continent has one of the richest Cultural Heritage in the world. A richness that draws on the depth of its history as the cradle of Humanity and manifests itself in the diversity and abundance of the works and lifestyles of the many communities that populate it. This rich and precious Heritage, both historical and current, is however little known, poorly appreciated, and therefore little valued.

As emphasized by UNESCO, **"Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations"**. It is the set of tangible assets (monuments, sites, architectural works, engravings, various instruments   ...) and intangibles (songs, dances, music, different forms of oral and written expressions or cultural practices ...) that have a historical, artistic or scientific character.

The many civilizations that have succeeded each other on the Continent have left important legacies in terms of knowledge, know-how, know-being, religious practices, customs, architectural constructions that have been enriched over time and that we find traces of in nature but mainly in the works and the daily life of current African populations.

Cultural Heritage, a Lever for Sustainable Development

At a time of globalization, liberalization and technological change, the Cultural Heritage issue is no longer simply a fact of culture and identity. It is no longer a mere opportunity to attract the attention of some curious tourists. It is a real opportunity for Sustainable Development in its three dimensions (social, economic and environmental) for countries that have been able to put in place efficient and effective public policies and strategies for the Protection, the Promotion and Enhancement of their Heritage, just like countries of other Continents, such as America, Europe or Asia.

Indeed, the cultural economy today employs nearly 30 million people worldwide generating a total turnover of 2.250 billion dollars according to the first Global Panorama of the Cultural and Creative Economy published in 2015. Cultural industries are growing rapidly. It is difficult to count the number of fairs, exhibitions, cultural and musical evenings, festivals that are organized around the world today and that generate significant revenues for both the public and private sector, allowing the creation of job opportunities and contribute significantly to the income and growth of the country. Unfortunately, Africa ranks last among the top five regions of the world in this area and contributes only very little.

In the new 2030 Global Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), culture occupies a cross-cutting role according to UNESCO. The Protection and Promotion of Cultural Heritage participate and contribute to the realization and implementation of almost all the SDGs, in particular:

- *SDG 8:* "Promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all", especially the Target 8.9 "by 2030 design and implementation of policies to promote sustainable tourism which creates jobs, promotes local culture and products" ;

- *SDG 11:* "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable", especially the Target 11.4 "Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage".

Moreover, the Protection of Monuments and World Cultural Heritage sites are subject of several International Legal Instruments adopted and implemented in particular by UNESCO and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), including: 1954 Convention for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict and its two Protocols, 1972 Convention for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage, 2003 Convention for the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2005 on the safeguarding of Cultural diversity expressions, the UNESCO Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2023), the New Urban Agenda, adopted in Quito in

2016 (Quito Declaration on Cities and Human Settlements for All), the Climate Agenda (Paris Agreement), the existence of a multitude of Historic Sites and Monuments protected by UNESCO in Africa, African Union Vision 2063 "*The Africa We Want*" with a Strong Identity, Common Heritage and Shared Values and Ethics, the Code of Ethics of the International Organization of Tourism (UNWTO), and so on….

A Little-known, Poorly Valued, Unprotected and Threatened Cultural Heritage in Africa

Among the 1052 World Heritage Sites listed by UNESCO until 2016, barely 90 are in Africa at a time when there are almost 500 in the European continent alone. This is explained by the lack of interest in Cultural Heritage in many African States, resulting in forms of governance and management that do not allow to ensure a real appreciation and promotion of this rich Heritage.

The fragility of cultural policies in Africa is even a serious threat to the protection of this wealth. It also worsens the impact of other various factors that threaten Cultural Heritage, including natural degradations due to erosion and climate, illicit trade in cultural property, acts of vandalism, terrorism and religious fundamentalism, etc.…

Similarly, the many socio-political crises that affect African states would also constitute, according to Experts in the cultural world, another major threat to African Cultural Heritage. Indeed, in most African countries that have experienced major crises in recent years, many Cultural Heritages have been lost either by pure destruction or by simple disappearance in particular in Mali, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya to name but a few.

Issues on the Protection and Promotion of Cultural Heritage and Sites of Africa

The protection and promotion of Cultural Heritage Sites is therefore a crucial issue for sustainable development in Africa, because it is a question of preserving against various forms of threat, a precious heritage and an identity that must be passed on to future generations. It is also an opportunity for socio-economic development that could significantly strengthen the dynamics of development and progress on the Continent and give Africa a better place on the international scene.

Therefore, the reflection on the issue of protection and promotion of cultural heritage in Africa is essential. Indeed, it raises important questions, especially that of the knowledge of this heritage, the preservation and enhancement of African history and identity, the identity of all African peoples throughout history. It is also an opportunity to look at Public Governance in Africa to see the place it gives to the cultural dimension and cultural

heritage. Above all, it is an opportunity to question Cultural Heritage management methods in Africa at different scales (international, continental, national and local) and to see the role, interactions and synergies between the various actors involved and the various engaged stakeholders.

Local Governments, a Key Actor in the Governance and Management of African Cultural Heritage

Based on the roles and responsibilities of the Local Governments in terms of public governance and territorial and local development, United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa) considers that these entities have a crucial role to play in the management of cultural heritage in Africa. Not only do they shelter this heritage, but also they benefit especially from the proximity with the sites as well as with the populations that contribute to the production or direct animation of this heritage. This proximity link could be an efficiency factor in the governance of cultural heritage. Thus, it is important to strengthen the involvement of Local Governments in the management of Cultural Heritage in African countries.

A whole road map is necessary to:

- Create a favorable, open and inclusive environment for participatory governance in the management, protection and enhancement of Cultural Heritage;

- Inform and sensitize local elected officials on the place and importance of cultural heritage as a socio-cultural wealth but also an opportunity for sustainable development for their territories and localities;

- Capacity building and training of local elected officials and local government officials in the Governance of Cultural Heritage;

- Provide the African Local Governments with the tools and information needed to better protect and enhance their Cultural Heritage;

- Continue advocacy with States to support and assist the Local Governments in the management of Cultural Heritage and the transfer of resources necessary for this purpose.

It is in this context, on the occasion of the celebration of the International Day of Monuments and Sites, celebrated on 18 April of each year by ICOMOS, in the field of the implementation of the Global Agendas on Sustainable Development, in the framework of the implementation of the Partnership between ISESCO and UCLG-Africa, and the implementation of ALGA Training offer on Cultural Heritage, that these Institutions, with support of the Moroccan Ministry of Culture and Communication, organize this

International Conference with the theme "**Protecting the Cultural Heritage Through a Participatory and Inclusive Governance to Meet the Sustainable Development Goals**".

1. The main objective

The main objective of this Conference is, on one hand, to celebrate the International Day, and on the other hand, to sensitize the different Actors and Stakeholders concerned by the Cultural Heritage issue, on the need to move towards participatory and inclusive approaches to the Governance and Management of the Cultural Heritage in Africa, while also involving the African Local Governments in a spirit of subsidiarity with a view to better Protection, Enhancement and Promotion of Cultural Heritage in this Continent.

2. Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this Conference are:

- To celebrate the International Day of Monuments and Sites;

- To inform about the context and the challenges of the protection and the valorization of the Cultural Heritage in Africa;

- To present the various national, continental and international instruments and mechanisms for the Protection and Enhancement of Cultural Heritage in Africa;

- To identify the different actors and levels of governance concerned with the protection of Cultural Heritage;

- To sensitize the different Actors of Public Governance on the importance of the Cultural Heritage of Africa at the local level;

- To create a framework for exchange between the different actors and stakeholders involved in the Governance and the Management of African Cultural Heritage;

- To reflect and exchange on an African roadmap for better Protection, Enhancement and Promotion of Cultural Heritage in Africa.

3. The Main Aspects to be discussed

1) Main Actors and Stakeholders in the Protection, Safeguarding and Enhancement of the Cultural Heritage;

2) The legal, institutional and operational modalities for the protection, the safeguarding and the valorization of the Cultural Heritage;

3) The modalities of support and capacity building targeting the African Local Governments.

4. Proceedings of the Conference

The International Conference will be organized around the following main axes: An official opening, two (2) Plenary Sessions, two (2) Parallel Thematic Sessions and an exhibition.

5. Participants

The Conference is organized for the following target audiences: International Organizations (ISESCO, UNESCO, ICOMOS-Morocco, PNUD), Ministerial departments responsible for and/or involved in the Governance and Management of Cultural Heritage, The Associations of Local Governments in Africa, Cities with Historic Sites in Africa classified by UNESCO, African Cities Capitals of Islamic Culture classified by ISESCO, Moroccan cities with historic Sites, the Mediterranean Network of Medinas and Heritage Development (RMM & DP), Local Elected Representatives, the different Components of Civil Society engaged and / or involved in the theme, Partners, Universities and Training Institutes, …

6. Partners

ISESCO, UCLG Africa and its African Local Government Academy, UNESCO – Rabat Office, ICOMOS- Morocco, UCLG, the UNDP, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Culture of Morocco, the Association of Moroccan Regions (Association des Régions du Maroc) (ARM), the Moroccan Association of Presidents of Communal Councils (AMPCC), National Associations of African Local Governments, the Mediterranean Network of Medinas and Heritage Development (RMM&DP), and various components of the Civil society./.