

REGIONAL MEETING OF AFRICAN NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO TO DELIBERATE ON UNESCO'S GLOBAL PRIORITY AFRICA PROGRAMME 11th – 14th SEPTEMBER 2022, ACCRA

Press Information

The Ghana Commission for UNESCO under the auspices of the Government of Ghana hosts a regional meeting of African UNESCO National Commissions on UNESCO's Global Priority Africa Flagship programme from 11th – 14th September 2022, at the Tang Palace Hotel in Accra Ghana.

The goal of this important dialogue is to bring together the National Commissions, as key stakeholders of the Global Priority Africa programme to deliberate upon Africa's collective actions towards a renewed implementation agenda.

UNESCO has two global Priorities – Africa and Gender Equality.

Africa and Gender Equality are inextricably linked to all UNESCO's Programmes and efforts to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UNESCO has since 1984 defined the African continent as a priority in the implementation of its mandate by providing responses to the continent's developmental challenges. Currently, key challenges are in the domains of population growth, youth unemployment, and inclusive development; Education and knowledge sharing; Climate Change and environment; Africa's Cultural Renaissance, Heritage, and History; and peace, governance, and democracy among others.

UNESCO's support to Africa under its Global Priority Africa Programme is geared towards 'an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, and representing a dynamic force in the global arena' - an objective which also aligns with the broad continental vision of the Africa Union – 'The Africa We Want', Vision 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The implementation of actions regarding Global Priority Africa in all UNESCO's Programmes is guided by a framework known as "The Operational Strategy for Priority Africa".

The current Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029 has been developed based on consultations with Member States, including the UNESCO Africa Group, programme sectors at Headquarters, field offices in Africa and the Bureau of Strategic Planning. It also considered the recommendations of the evaluation of the previous Strategy 2014-2021 conducted by the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) of UNESCO.

This Operational Strategy aims at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations' Agenda 2030 and the African Union's Agenda 2063 "The Africa We Want", in UNESCO's fields of competence.

In Agenda 2063, the African Union renews its vision for **"An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena"**.

To achieve this pan-African vision, Africa will need to address innovatively the major challenges it faces, while seizing the opportunities they present.

The Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029 has five Flagship Programmes:

Flagship Programme 1

Campus Africa: Reinforcing Higher Education in Africa (Education)

Overall goal:

The overall objective of Campus Africa is to build integrated, inclusive, and quality tertiary education systems and institutions, for the development of inclusive and equitable societies on the continent. This includes the following:

- Enhance the research capacity of African tertiary institutions and increase research outcomes with effective networking;
- Improve the availability and quality of data on tertiary education in Africa to inform evidence-based decision-making.
- Improve access to higher education and TVET for all in Africa, and promote equal opportunities for learners of all backgrounds, including vulnerable and marginalized groups, in pursuing learning opportunities and individual development;
- Promote recognition of qualifications backed up by mutually-recognized quality assurance mechanism

Flagship Programme 2

“The General History of Africa (GHA) as a catalyst for achieving Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda” (Education-Social and Human Sciences-Culture)

Overall Strategic Objective:

The overall long-term strategic objective of this flagship program is to promote inclusive African societies which are just, democratic, respectful of human rights and the rule of law.

Strategic objectives include :

- Accelerating the transformation of the continent’s educational systems with a view to attaining the seven aspirations of the Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda.

- Deepening scientific production on the history of Africa to update the pioneering work (GHA) completed in 1999.
- Making the awareness of the GHA narratives widely accessible to all African populations and diasporas.

Flagship Programme 3

“Fostering cultural heritage and capacity development” (Culture)

Main objectives:

- To support African Member States in capacity building on World Heritage, particularly for the purposes of nominations and removal of sites from the List of World Heritage in Danger.
- Support African Member States in the fight against illicit trafficking in cultural property under the 1970 Convention and in facilitating the return and restitution of cultural property under the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation (ICPRCP), as well as in the promotion of museums.

The long-term goal of this program is to empower local communities, especially women, to protect Africa's rich cultural heritage.

Flagship Programme 4

“Harnessing new and emerging technologies for sustainable development in Africa, including through the implementation of the recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence” (SHS-SC-CI)

Main objectives:

- Improve the capacity of African countries in the adoption and implementation of artificial intelligence (AI).

- Improve the capacity of all AI stakeholders in Africa to propose AI solutions that are ethical, and to assess the impact of AI on individuals, societies and the environment.
- Promote the ability of individuals in Africa to take control of their personal data, manage it, and improve data governance.
- Build multiple partnerships to support the ethical application of AI.
- Use AI to address environmental challenges in Africa.
- Strengthen gender equality in the design and use of AI systems.
- Contribute to building inclusive knowledge societies in Africa through the integration of Open Educational Resources (OER).
- Foster digital skills and competencies and bridge the cognitive and digital divide.

Flagship Programme 5

“Enhance Open Science, reinforce capacity building in Basic and Applied Sciences and Scientific Research to strengthen innovation and technology development and use in Ocean Science, climate change resilience and water resource management in Africa” (SC-IOC)

Main Objectives:

- Harnessing science to inform the management of natural resources and the development of sustainable ocean economy.
- Preventing risks and enhancing resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change and disasters.
- Developing national capabilities in science, technology and Innovation and education for sustainable development.
- Enhancing adaptive capacity to the multiple intersecting challenges of water-energy-food-ecosystem (WEFE).

- Fostering open science through enhanced access to scientific information and knowledge, knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age.
- Developing ethical standards, norms, and frameworks for action to meet the challenges of innovative technologies and digital transformation.
- Harnessing the potential of the African Diaspora to enhance the STI systems and capacities of Africa.

Prior to the operationalization of this Strategy, the operational strategy for Priority Africa (2014-2021) guided all UNESCO actions in favour of Priority Africa, in particular action under the following flagship programmes.

Flagship Programme 1 (2014 – 2021)

Strengthening education systems for sustainable development in Africa:

- Enhancing teacher education in Africa

It contributed to increasing qualified teachers through international cooperation and innovation in developing countries;

- The Better Education for Africa's Rise project II (Bear II)

It promoted and transformed the TVET landscape by empowering young people in five beneficiary Eastern African countries to access decent employment and self-employment;

- Left Behind: Girls Education in Africa

What would their lives be like if they only had 5 years of schooling? UIS Statistics to find out what needs to change.

Flagship Programme 2 (2014 – 2021)

Fostering science for the sustainable management of Africa's natural resources and disaster risk reduction

- Biosphere and Heritage of Lake Chad (BIOPALT) project

Both economically and ecologically of vital importance, it provided livelihoods to more than 40 million people while its diverse ecosystems sheltered a high diversity of wildlife;

- Indigenous Knowledge and Climate Change in Africa

Transdisciplinary research between the pastoral communities and climate scientists to strengthen local capacities and engage with national policy-makers;

- MAB Programme and Great apes conservation

Ensured the long-term survival of chimpanzees, orangutans, gorillas, and bonobos and their habitats;

- Central Africa World Heritage Forest Initiative - CAWHFI

Protecting the natural heritage in Central Africa for a better representativity of Congo Basin on the World Heritage List

Flagship Programme 3 (2014 – 2021)

Harnessing the Power of Culture for Sustainable Development and Peace in a context of regional integration

- Reconstruction of Timbuktu mausoleums

Local communities, backed by UNESCO, restored these places of pilgrimage, the oldest of which dates back to the 13th century;

- 10 Creative Cities

stimulated cultural industries and promoted citizen and cultural participation for sustainable development;



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- DigitELLES Senegal benefits You Are Next funding initiative

Strengthening 20 women's digital skills in the music industry;

Flagship Programme 4 (2014 – 2021)

Promoting an Environment Conducive to Freedom of Expression and Media Development

- Legal Standards on Freedom of Expression, Toolkit for the Judiciary in Africa

Highlighted the crucial interdependence to grant and protect a fundamental human right;

- Launching of a MOOC for the judiciary in Africa on Freedom of Expression

Strengthened the capacities and the knowledge of judiciary actors in order to reinforce the regional legal framework on issues of free speech;

- African justice professionals talk about the course on freedom of expression

Raised awareness on the safety of journalists and civil society's role in the judiciary systems.

Flagship Programme 5 (2014 – 2021)

Promoting a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence

- General History of Africa

Since 1964, the collection gives an African perspective, free of the racial prejudice of colonization, to the continent's past over more than three million years;

- The Slave Route Project

Fostered peoples rapprochement through the remembrance of five-hundred years of transatlantic slavery, slave trade, and their legacies;

- International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024)

Secured the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights of people of African Descent, and their full and equal participation in society.

Flagship Programme 6 (2014 – 2021)

Harnessing STI and Knowledge for the Sustainable Socio-Economic Development in Africa

- Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024)

Infrastructure Development, Technical Skills, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and Enabling Environment;

- Trends in STI governance in Africa

Findings of UNESCO Science Report Towards 2030;

- Global Observatory of STI Policy Instruments (GO-SPIN)

Description and analysis of Botswana, Malawi, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe STI systems.