



## **UNESCO Slave Route Project: Resistance, Liberty, Heritage**

### **Meeting of the International Scientific Committee (ISC)**

**Cabo Verde, October 26-29, 2015**

#### **Final Report**

By

Joel Quirk (Australia), Jane Landers (USA) : Rapporteurs

**October 26, 2015**

#### **Opening Plenary Session**

The meeting of the committee was opened by Dr Manuel M De Pina, President of the municipality of Ribeira Grande de Santiago, who emphasized the important contribution of Cabo Verde to the development of historical patterns of enslavement linking Africa, Europe and the Americas, with 92,000 enslaved Africans having been transported to Cabo Verde during the formative stages of the development of the slave plantation complex.

This was followed by remarks from Dr Ali Moussa, Chief of the History and Memory for Dialogue Section of UNESCO, who commended the local organizers of the meeting and also thanked the international support provided by the Dakar office, amongst others, for helping to put the meeting together. As part of a series of general remarks regarding the history of the Slave Route Project, Dr Ali Moussa highlighted the need to understand slavery as the longest crime of humanity to ever be perpetrated, and whose legacies continue to this day in terms of racism, inequality and exploitation. This vote of thanks was also echoed by the outgoing President, María Elisa Velásquez, who also emphasized the importance of the recently inaugurated UN decade focusing upon Peoples of African Descent.

Dr Ulrika Richardson, UN Resident Coordinator, helped to open proceedings by making reference to, amongst other things, the importance of Cabo Verde to the

global history of slavery and abolition, and also emphasized continuing linkages between slavery and to contemporary manifestations of exploitation and abuse. Prof Dr Antonio Correia e Silva, Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology and president of the National Commission for UNESCO, provided a more detailed overview of the history and legacies of enslavement in Cabo Verde in general, and Ribeira Grande de Santiago in particular, as this was the first city established by the Portuguese to support the slave trade to Cabo Verde in the 1400s.

## **Organization of the Work of the ISC**

### **Presentation of the members of the Committee and presentation of the Committee's statutes and rules of procedure**

Dr Ali Moussa provided an introduction and overview of the Slave Route Project, including a description of the main duties and procedures governing members of the ISC. These included:

- To be ambassadors of the project as well as consultants and to write and review educational materials;
- To recognize "Projects Associated to the Slave Route Project";
- and To assist UNESCO Secretariat.

By way of introduction, there were also a series of reports by members of the ISC of regarding their activities over the past year (November 2014-October 2015). These reports are too lengthy to reproduce here, but a separate report has been prepared.

Members of the ISC noted the many contributions of the outgoing President, María Elisa Velázquez, and thanked her for her leadership.

### **Election of the new Bureau of the Committee**

This was followed by an election of a new bureau, where key roles on the ISC were decided upon as follows:

President:

Nelly Schmidt, France

Vice Presidents:

Doudou Diene, Senegal,  
María Elisa Velázquez, Mexico,  
Michelle Johnson, Canada

Rapporteurs:

Jane Landers, USA,  
Joel Quirk, Australia

### **Screening of a short film on the event “Artists and the Memory of Slavery” held at UNESCO on 4th September 2015**

Members then viewed two films: the first, a UNESCO film “A Long Road Traveled” celebrating the accomplishments of the project and second, “Les Artistes et la mémoire de l’esclavage”, showing an important event organized at UNESCO. Additional activities included books, films, and educational materials produced, archival preservation, meetings of the membership, commemorative and cultural events, as well as finally contribution to the “International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024)”. Several observations and suggestions were made regarding these films. They were both commended for their capacity to effectively capture the findings of recent research, and for their depiction of recent events, but some concerns were also expressed in relation to the limited range of languages which were available, along with their relatively brevity. A need for additional films, particularly in relation to the International Decade for People of African Descent, was emphasized.

### **Presentation of the Slave Route project’s activities (November 2014 – October 2015)**

Dr Ali Moussa presented the activities of the Slave Route project since November 2014 in the following different areas:

- Research and publications: Decennial agenda on the international decade for people of African descent (2015-2024); Guide for the management of memory sites and itineraries related to the history of slavery ; Collective work of the Scientific Committee: African slave trade, Slavery and Abolitions: plural perspectives;
- Promotional activities: Granting of the new label "Site associated with the Slave Route" project dissemination of movies within educational institutions, libraries and media, municipalities, cultural associations, creation and online publication of three new movies ;
- Organization of special events worldwide: International Symposium on "The Slave Route: Routes to reconcile history and memory" (December 2014 in Guadeloupe, France), Round Table on "The General History of Africa: Learning and Teaching African Heritage (July 2015 New York, United States), Symposium and Exhibition" Artists and memory of slavery: September 2015 (Paris, France), launch of the International Coalition of artists for the General History of Africa ( October 2015) etc;
- Participation in the international debate and meetings organized by partners: Meeting of the Human Rights Council (Switzerland) in March 2015, Afromadrid Conference in June 2015 (Spain), Regional Conference on "Beyond Repair: The Strengthening Project Slave Route in the Caribbean "- in July 2015 (St. Kitts and Nevis), North Sea Jazz Festival in July 2015 (The Netherlands), with Marcus Miller, UNESCO Artist for Peace and spokesperson for the Project, expert panel on the theme "Lest We Forget, recognition, justice and cultural interaction: a global perspective" in September 2015 (Oslo) etc.

The ISC members acknowledged the fact that these activities were undertaken despite an environment of limited resources, both financial and human, which was challenged by UNESCO Secretariat under the management of Dr Ali Moussa in an outstanding way.

Other outputs included a publication “Handbook for the Promotion and Management of Sites and Itineraries of Memory” focusing upon an itinerary of the Slave Route, to be translated into Portuguese, Spanish, French and English, a series of museum exhibitions in places such as Liverpool, workshops in places such as Guadeloupe, and an initiative in one in Rotterdam, Holland, to raise the status of Black Pieter as a tradition of racism. Further activities related to initiatives to secure World Heritage Status for historical sites associated with slavery and its legacies. Following the naming of the Valongo Wharf as a Site Associated to the Slave Route, the government of Brazil recently submitted an application for World Heritage List designation; The Democratic Republic of Congo, Reunion, Kenya and Peru also have requests at various stages. These activities were undertaken in an environment of limited resources, both financial and human, which limited the capacity of the Slave Route Project in various ways.

### **Presentation of the activities of the members of the International Scientific Committee and exchanges on their future initiatives**

The presentation of the activities of each member was followed by a report by Dr Ali Moussa regarding recent outputs and future plans in relation to the aforementioned Decade. This report made reference in particular to ISC member’s collective volume of works on emerging issues on Slave Trade, Slavery and Abolitions. The main objective of this volume is to report on the most critical debates that the study of slave trades and its sources of information still generate, as well as to report on issues that still require further research. These articles offer a multidisciplinary approach to various dynamics underway in Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, North America, Europe and Asia. Readers will therefore be able to have a comprehensive overview of scientific knowledge related to human trafficking, systems of slavery and its abolition. Twenty-five contributions, twelve of which had been translated into a second language are ready to be posted on the website.

The ISC members had enlightening debate on the following item of the agenda:

- Presentation of the Decennial Agenda for the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024);
- Presentation of the Guide for the promotion and management of memory itineraries related to trade and slavery;
- Consolidation of the International networks created in the framework of the Slave Route project: the Network of managers of sites of memory and Network research related to the slave trade and slavery in the Mediterranean region Red Sea Region and Middle East;
- Presentation of the new label “Site associated to the Slave Route project”.

This discussion of the Decade also triggered an extended discussion of reparations. It was recognized that this was a topic which has generated a great deal of interest and engagement over the last decade, and that the Slave Route Project needed to more urgently and explicitly address recent and ongoing debates. There was a general agreement that the question of reparations needed to be taken up, but members of the committee had different viewpoints regarding what reparations might look like, how politically realistic they might be, and what types of local adjustments and conversations/debates would be required in relation to discussion of reparations in different parts of the globe, which obviously had different histories. It was generally agreed that historical repair – and not simply humanitarian assistance – was required, especially given the scale and legacies of many slave systems.

Many different models of reparations were discussed, including truth and reconciliation, heritage and commemoration, legal codification and national legislation, apologies and financial compensation. It was highlighted that further for additional scientific research is needed. It was agreed that the Committee should express its position on this issue and a statement on reparations, and Joel Quirk and Michele Johnston were given the responsibility for preparing an initial draft.

**Tuesday, October 27, 2015**

### **Discussion on Fundraising and Partnership**

Dr Ali Moussa opened the second day with a discussion of ongoing projects.

These included:

- a research network on slavery and its legacies in the Islamic world, which emerged out of a meeting in Calabar in 2012;
- a research report on slavery in the Red Sea;
- an emerging connection with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

This was in turn followed by an extended discussion of the criteria and procedures that should be used as part of an expanding initiative to label various sites of memory associated with the history and legacies of slavery as being linked to the Slave Route. These criteria for association include the originality of the site and evidence of a connection to the slave trade, patterns of memory and belonging, scientific research providing evidence of the history of the site, visibility and access to the site, intangible heritage and provisions for presentation and promotion for the site. Considering that a number of resistance site according to their nature and function are not easily accessible, members of the ISC recommended that the criteria of visibility and access should be deleted.

Since a World Heritage designation is difficult to secure it has been recognized that there was a need to have some alternative form of affiliation and recognition with the Slave Route Project. It was recognized, however, that formal recognition invariably remained subject to various forms of political interference and resistance. As part of the discussion references were also made to the development of a number of inventories of heritage sites in places such as Brazil, Mauritius, and the Caribbean.

This was followed by a further discussion of the prospects and possibilities of fund raising to support the activities of the Slave Route Project and the Decade. This included reports on a number of funding proposals, including a major funding application from the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool.

The creation of a group of “Friends of the Slave Route project” was proposed. Its usefulness in terms of image, visibility, networking expansion, advocacy and fundraising activities was stated. This group should be ideally composed of outstanding high level and influential person committed to universal quest for dignity, freedom and respect.

The later stages of the second day were dominated by three main topics:

- Planning for and promoting the Decade;
- The name of the Slave Route Project;
- Reparations.

### **Planning for and promoting the Decade**

This topic saw an extended discussion of further expanding connections between academic research and education campaigns/activities, the need to focus upon local issues and agendas, rather than global discourses, and the prospect of building regional networks that brought together Afro-descendant communities. The main actions, direction and activities proposed by the members of the ISC are included in the recommendation they agreed upon.

### **Name of the Slave Route Project**

The question of the name of the project was a holdover and continuation from past meetings, dating back at least as far as the Columbia in 2011, where “Resistance, Liberty and Heritage” were included as a subheading. It has long been recognized that the language of “the Slave Route” increasingly seems dated. The preferred term now is “enslaved”, but the difficulty is that there is no equivalent to that word in French. However, it was recalled that the wording which was agreed in the previous meeting in Mexico should be taken forward once again. The Secretariat explains the procedure consisting in submitting this modification to UNESCO governing bodies for their decision.

### **Reparations**

The final topic of the meeting was reparations. The ISC members have debated this important question at length. As this question is central to the Decade, Joel Quirk and Michele Johnson circulated a draft statement for consideration. While many members of the committee were broadly supportive of the draft statement, a number of further suggestions for revisions were made. These included making the Durban declaration more prominent, strengthening linkages to the Decade, and refining language. These suggestions provided a foundation for a further series of revisions to the statement, which was eventually adopted in revised form before the committee left Cabo Verde. The ISC Statement is annexed to the present report.

## Conclusion

The ISC members discussed priorities area to address within the Decade and particularly during the biennium 2016-2018. Their conclusion and proposals are reflected in the Recommendations they adopted and annexed to the present report. Exchange among the Committee were rich and reveal once again the interdisciplinary dimension and social issues at the heart of UNESCO's mandate, that the project raises and addresses including: humanism, culture peace, approaching the historical truth, education for citizenship, intercultural, common heritage, cultural pluralism, the memorial tourism, social change and inclusion, as well as the fight against racism and discrimination.

The ISC members agreed on the following actions:

- Communicate to UNESCO Secretariat their comments on the “Handbook for the Promotion and Management of Sites and Itineraries of Memory”; their articles to enrich the ISC collective work online, their Cv and photos for updating the ISC webpage; and on a regular basis brief report on their activities and future initiatives to enhance synergies;
- Setting up of a communication tool within the ISC;
- Identify personalities to create the Group of Friends of the project "The Slave Route".

## Closure of the meeting of the ISC

After the intervention of Nelly Schmidt, President of the ISC and Dr Ali Moussa, Prof. Dr Humberto Lima, President of the Institute of Cultural Heritage congratulate the work of the ISC meeting and highlight its relevance in guiding the reflection on the global transformations, the prejudices, the cultural interactions that have resulted from slavery and the transatlantic trade.

## October 28, 2015 - Colloquium, Cabo Verde University

The members of the International Scientific Committee actively participated in the international colloquium “Stakes of Scientific Research on Slavery and challenges of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024)” organized at the University of Cabo Verde in partnership with the Cabo Verde National Commission for UNESCO. The colloquium was attended by researchers from Cabo Verde, international experts and members of the ISC to intervene and interact with the public on the four following topic of the conference:

- Challenges of the International Decade;
- Problems of sources and methods: current trends of historiography on trafficking and slavery;
- Construction of the African Diaspora in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean: Historical and new research process;
- Inheritance, identities of Afro-descendants in post slavery societies: rupture, continuity and innovation. This conference generated an

interesting and rich debate among stakeholders and the public on these issues.

### **From 26th to 29th October - Side events**

**Exhibition:** On the occasion of the Committee meeting, two exhibitions were presented to the public:

- An exhibition "Africans in Portugal: History and Memory of the 15th to 20th century" made by a former member of the Scientific Committee, Ms Isabel Castro Henriques, at the cultural center of Cidade Velha;
- An exhibition of national crafts highlighting the skills of women in Cidade Velha Cidade Velha Cultural Centre;
- An exhibition of books on the history and memory of slavery in the National Library in Praia, including the books offered by the project The Slave Route.

### **Cultural Events:**

A cultural program featuring music, dance and poetry has been specially designed and offered by the authorities to the Committee on the central square of Cidade Velha to illustrate cultural interactions and diversity of the Cabo Verde artistic expressions

### **Visit of memory sites:**

Committee members were able to visit emblematic places of the country's history:

- The military fort of Cidade Velha;
- The Tarafal prison where militants for independence from Portuguese rule in the country and opponents of the Portuguese regime were imprisoned;
- The house of Amilcar Cabral;
- The Municipality of Santa Catarina.



## Annex

### Recommendations

We, the members of the International Scientific Committee of the UNESCO Slave Route Project, who participated in the statutory meeting of the Committee in Cidade Velha, Cabo Verde, wish to express the following:

Our deep gratitude to the Government of Cabo Verde – especially the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation and President of the Cabo Verde National Commission for UNESCO, the United Nations Resident Coordinator of Cabo Verde, and the University of Cabo Verde – for the generous hospitality and expertise provided to the Committee's meeting, the first to take place during the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly;

Our thanks to, and continuing support for, the Organization of the United Nations, its Member States, and members of global civil society who remain committed to the goals of the International Decade for People of African Descent, which are to make recognition, respect, justice and development a practical reality for all Africans and Peoples of African Descent;

Our acknowledgment of the foundational position of the nation of Cabo Verde, which can be credibly described as 'ground zero' for the historical origin and evolution of the transatlantic systems of enslavement that integrated in a global and organized system of domination and exploitation, Africa, Europe, the Americas, the Caribbean and Indian Ocean;

Our strong support to the ongoing efforts by the government of Cabo Verde to both document and preserve the tangible and intangible heritage of slavery and related practices, to commemorate and publicise this history via museums and education projects, and to conduct new research to better understand its dimensions and effects;

Our strong support to the proposals of inscription of sites related to the slave trade and slavery on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Special mention needs to be made of:

- the initiative of the city of Rio de Janeiro and the Federal Government of Brazil of proposing the archaeological site of the wharf of Valongo to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, recognizing that it is a central site relating to the history of slavery and its legacies in the Americas;
- the initiative of the government of Angola, which has proposed the inscription of M'banza Kongo as a UNESCO World Heritage site, recognizing that it is one of the most significant historical sites relating to the Atlantic slave trade in Africa.

Our support, in the strongest terms, for the efforts of peoples of African descent to secure further recognition of their status, heritage, history and contemporary experiences.

We commit ourselves to support UNESCO and its Slave Route project to translate into operational actions the objectives of the International Decade for People of African Descent and to respond to its core themes of recognition, justice and development.

The members of the International Scientific Committee wish to submit to the Director General of UNESCO the following recommendations:

1. To call on UNESCO Member States to provide resources in order to undertake concrete actions towards the implementation of the programme of activities defined for the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) at national, regional and international levels.
2. To strengthen the links and coordination between UNESCO and other UN Agencies, academic institutions, organizations of the civil society and the private sector to coordinate efforts towards the achievement of the Decade's objectives.
3. To encourage governments to adopt national legislation recognizing the slave trade and slavery as "crimes against humanity", building upon the foundation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.
4. To commit UNESCO and convince its partners to comprehensively support new approaches and methodologies to a better understanding of the processes of African enslavement, to develop pedagogical materials improving the teaching of the history, heritage and living culture of Africa and its diasporas, resistance and the struggle for freedom and recognition, and the contributions of Africans and people of African descent to the modern world.
5. To commit UNESCO and its partners to promote further actions to combat racial discrimination and to repair the historical and contemporary effects of slavery and the slave trade upon Africans and people of African descent.
6. To explore all the possibilities and modalities to mobilise additional extra budgetary funding and partnerships, including innovative actions, to support the development of a programme of research, outreach and public events in accordance with the goals of the Decade.
7. To provide necessary human and financial resources to the Slave Route Project in order for the Project to play a leading role in the implementation of the programme of activities of the Decade.
8. To commit UNESCO and its partners to build global and interregional itineraries of memory, which systematically link together numerous sites that are foundational to the global history and legacies of enslavement and the

slave trade.

9. To commit UNESCO and convince its partners to recognising, researching and publically disseminating insights and information which can be found within oral narratives and everyday knowledge systems which have long been central to the lived experiences of enslaved peoples and their descendants.
10. To put in place a group of “Friends of the Project” to support the Project's activities during the Decade.
11. As the question of reparations will be central to the Decade, the International Scientific Committee has debated this important question at length, and on the basis of these deliberations has agreed upon the following statement:

### **Cabo Verde Statement on Reparations for the History and Legacies of Slavery**

We support recent calls by governments and civil society groups to make reparations a core component of the International Decade for People of African Descent. These calls both build upon, further extend and implement the Declaration and Plan of Action arising from the 2001 World Conference Against Racism held in Durban South Africa.

We also support the “Programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent” (UN resolution A/RES/69/16), as adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in November 2014. This programme speaks of “the untold suffering and evils inflicted on millions of men, women and children”; calls on States “that have not yet expressed remorse or presented apologies to find some way to contribute to the restoration of the dignity of its victims”; invites “the international community and its members to honour the memory of the victims of these tragedies with a view to closing those dark chapters in history and as a means of reconciliation and healing”; and calls upon “all States concerned to take appropriate and effective measures to halt and reverse the lasting consequences of those practices, bearing in mind their moral obligations.”

It should be evident from these statements and programmes, along with a now extensive body of research into slavery and its legacies, that the wounds inflicted by enslavement and the slave trades have not yet been fully recognized or repaired.

We therefore call upon governments and institutions responsible for historical patterns of enslavement to take immediate and comprehensive measures to repair these crimes, which are reflected in global patterns of poverty, inequality and racism.

This comprehensive action should include, at a minimum, the following measures:

- *Ethical reparations*: adopting additional legal measures that formally recognise enslavement and the slave trade as crimes against humanity at the national level.
- *Historical reparations*: investing resources and expertise into systematically documenting and publicising the local and international dimensions and

various effects of these crimes against humanity.

- *Educational reparations*: taking effective steps to ensure that the history of enslavement and related practices be incorporated into teaching and pedagogy, so that future generations can both learn about and learn from these crimes against humanity and their continuing contemporary legacies.
- *Socio-economic reparations*: implementing a long-term programme of collective action to redress global patterns of discrimination, racism, unjust enrichment, vulnerability and marginalization which continue to mark the contemporary experiences of Africans and peoples of African descent.

Finally, we commit ourselves to promote scientific and legal research into enslavement and its legacies, to contribute to ongoing global efforts and debates, to examine the theory and practice of reparations, to marshal and apply the best available evidence, and to contribute to proposals for political, socio-economic and legal action.