Manifesto for the Renewal of African and Afro-descendant Culture
Rabat - May 24, 2023

We, African Mayors, gathered in Rabat at the invitation of the Minister of Youth, Culture and Communication of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Mayor of the City of Rabat, within the framework of the celebration of Rabat, African Capital of Culture,

Based on the decision taken by the Mayors and Leaders of African local authorities during the eighth edition of the Africities Summit in Marrakech, to initiate the program of African Capitals of Culture within UCLG Africa, to celebrate Africa’s cultural and creative excellence, and promote culture as the fourth pillar of Sustainable Development alongside the economic, social, and environmental pillars;

Taking into account the resolution of the 40th session of UNESCO in November 2019, to commemorate each year on January 24, the World Day of African and Afro-descendant Culture;

Inspired by the continuous action of the Culture Commission of the World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) for the promotion of the right to culture and the inclusion of culture among the sustainable development goals; and also inspired by the successful experience of the European Capitals of Culture;

Drawing lessons from the reflections carried out within the framework of the celebration of Rabat, African Capital of Culture, in particular the need to approach culture no longer exclusively as an entertainment sector but as an economic sector in its own right, with significant potential in terms of creating wealth and jobs for young people and as an essential contributor to the development of self-esteem, citizenship, togetherness, peace and harmony within communities.

Agree to adopt the Manifesto for the Renewal of African and Afro-descendant Culture on the basis of the following commitments to:

1. Consider culture and its various forms of expression as an inseparable component of African identity, which should be strengthened by promoting the memory, spiritual and intellectual capital of Africa, the knowledge and recognition of Africa by its children and the promotion of the contribution of the African continent to universal values of Humanity.

2. Place culture at the heart of national and territorial policies as the fourth pillar of sustainable development alongside the economic, social and environmental pillars, and advocate to include culture among the Sustainable Development Goals.
3. Participate in the work of the Culture Commission of UCLG Africa, which places development, innovation, and creativity strategies in Africa among the priorities of its interventions, based on cultural cooperation and diplomacy.

4. Consider the African diaspora and Afro-descendant populations as an integral part of African culture and the expression of its international dynamics, by taking advantage of their knowledge, expertise, and know-how.

5. Give special attention and a primary role to traditional authorities as guardians and guarantors of tradition and memorial issues, and stakeholders in the process of promoting culture in Africa as a source of conviviality and harmony between populations and communities conducive to intercultural dialogue.

6. Use educational policies as one of the melting pot for the formation of African identity, in particular through the introduction of African languages into education and research programs, as well as knowledge of history and African traditions; the development of educational institutions, training programs and research; the exchange and dissemination of good practices; taking advantage of the opportunities offered by digital technologies and digital innovations.

7. Promote, encourage, and support cultural professionals at the level of each country, each territory, and the continent as a whole, through the organization of events, residences and artists tour exchange; access to the culture market; access to finance; and fair compensation for their work.

8. Work collectively to develop common and harmonised regulations standards at the pan-African level, with a view to creating the conditions and frameworks guaranteeing the protection of African cultural artworks, productions and their authors, both nationally and internationally.

9. Carry out the census, inventory, safeguarding and preservation of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Africa with a view to its inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage Register and to advocate for the acceleration of the restitution of cultural works of Africa.

10. « African Capitals of Culture » program of UCLG Africa as an instrument for promoting the excellence of African culture, a factor in regenerating the feeling of belonging to the African continent, a factor in attractiveness of local authorities in Africa and creator of job opportunities, particularly for African youth.