

Action Plan

Taking into account current situation and the initiatives undertaken in Africa in the past period regarding the underwater cultural heritage safeguarding and management in the framework of the UNESCO 2001 Convention;

The experts attending the African Regional Meeting on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage held in Yenagoa, Nigeria 11th -12th November, 2013, wish to bring forward the following acknowledgements and recommendations to the concerned African UNESCO Member States:

1. Strongly encourage countries that have not yet ratified the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage to ratify this legal instrument and encourage the full implementation by countries which are already States Parties to the Convention;
2. Adapt their national laws to reflect the provisions of the UNESCO 2001 Convention;
3. Survey, map and inventory their underwater cultural heritage;
4. Build capacity in underwater archaeology or get reliable, scientific and ethic consultant advice;
5. Strengthen public education on underwater cultural heritage and build on it as a means to strengthen local, national and regional identity;
6. Prevent the pillage of their underwater cultural heritage, especially by the implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, in countries that have already ratified the Convention;
7. Welcome the decision of the Nigerian authorities to establish an underwater cultural heritage center in Yenagoa aimed at the safeguarding and experts training in terms of the provisions of the 2001 Convention.
8. Strongly encourages sub-regional economic organizations, such as CAAS, EAC, ECOWAS, SADC and indeed AU, to recognize the need for cooperation and to ensure the region's commitment toward the implementation of the 2001 Convention.
9. Calls on UNESCO Secretariat in cooperation with the African Member States to further reinforce the application of the Convention in Africa by producing programmatic documents and supporting initiatives aiming at, but not limited to:
 - Relevance and benefits of African countries ratifying the Convention combined with a wide range awareness raising framework;
 - Capacity building programmes, as both formal and informal education, in Africa for African experts in association with, for instance, UNESCO UNITWIN Network on Underwater Archaeology;

- Government agencies create appropriate employment opportunities for the underwater heritage experts.
10. Welcomes the offer made by Kenya to host the next Regional Meeting on Underwater Cultural Heritage in 2014 and underline that this meeting shall offer the opportunity to review, in a very practical manner, aspects of the implementation of the 2001 Convention and the implementation of the action areas recommended in this Action Plan;