

International Day for the Remembrance of Slave Trade and of its Abolition (23 August)

*(Excerpts from United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization {UNESCO}
Documents)*

As an answer to the growing interest to and expectations generated by the launching in 1994 of The Slave Route Project, UNESCO's General Conference, by its Resolution 29/C40, proclaimed the 23 August International Day for the Remembrance of Slave Trade and of its Abolition.

Restating historical facts, development of international solidarity, promotion of tolerance and human rights by a mobilization and implication of all stakeholders (Member States, International organizations and Non-Governmental Organisations, civil society and private sector), constitute the major stakes ahead this celebration.

This date symbolises the fact that slaves were the principal actors of their freedom. Effectively, the insurrection that occurred in Saint Domingue (today Republic of Haiti and Dominican Republic), in the night of 22 to 23 August 1791, irremediably affected slavery system. This revolt was the start point to the transatlantic slave trade abolition process. Besides, this date pays tribute to the historic resistance that led to the creation of the first black independent State, the Republic of Haiti.

23 August: International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and of its Abolition
The night of 22 to 23 August 1791, in Santo Domingo (today Haiti and the Dominican Republic) saw the beginning of the uprising that would play a crucial role in the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.

The International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition is intended to inscribe the tragedy of the slave trade in the memory of all peoples. In accordance with the goals of the intercultural project "The Slave Route", it should offer an opportunity for collective consideration of the historic causes, the methods and the consequences of this tragedy, and for an analysis of the interactions to which it has given rise between Africa, Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean.

A Global Commemoration

The Director-General of UNESCO invites the Ministers of Culture of all Member States to organize events every year on that date, involving the entire population of their country and in particular young people, educators, artists and intellectuals.

Initiated in 1998 under the leadership of UNESCO, the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition is a moment of commemoration observed around the world.

“The Slave Route Project is a highly ambitious initiative with its sights set resolutely on the future, to the extent that it contributes in the long term to enhancing mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue. The challenge of “living together” in our multicultural societies implies recognition of each person’s history and memory, and at the same time the sharing of a common heritage, in order to transcend past tragedies.”

“On the occasion of this International Day, I invite all UNESCO’s partners, including national authorities, international and non-governmental organizations and civil society, to provide opportunities for exchange and reflection that place emphasis on the beneficial effects of cultural diversity, recognizing the importance of the continuous transfers and exchanges among cultures and the links established since time immemorial.”

(Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO) 2010.

Circular CL/3494 of 29 July 1998 from the Director-General to Ministers of Culture invites all the Member States to organize events to mark 23 August each year. The UNESCO Executive Board adopted Resolution 29 C/40 at its 29th session

Source: http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.phpURL_ID=41207&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html