

# Promoting a general history of Africa

More than 40 famous Malian artists were present at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 7 December 2016, to join the International Coalition of Artists for the General History of Africa, an initiative to promote the work done by UNESCO since 1964 to rewrite an African history free from prejudice.



Image by 123RF

Barack Adama of *Sexion d'Assaut* (rapper), Amadou and Mariam (singers), Dawala (producer), Salif Keïta (singer), Aissata Maïga (actress), Cheick Moutary Diarra (writer), Mokobé (rapper), Oxmo Puccino (rapper), Ballaké Sissoko (musician), Cheick Tidiane Seck (musician and composer), Rokia Traoré (singer) and many other renowned Franco-Malian artists will sign a declaration of commitment to join the Coalition.

The ceremony was opened by the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, the Minister of Culture of Mali, N'Diaye Ramatoulaye Diallo, and the Representative of the Delegation of Malian Artists, Badiri Diakit , known as Dawala.

In October 2015, UNESCO created a Coalition of Artists, from Africa and elsewhere, to help UNESCO "ensure that the vast knowledge contained in the GHA volumes reaches people's minds," according to Ray Lema, a Congolese musician and spokesperson for the Coalition.

The Coalition aims to raise awareness among young people regarding the messages conveyed in this work. Through their commitment and artistic creations, members of the Coalition strive to convince political leaders that teaching about the

shared heritage of African peoples represents a great interest for the whole continent.

Launched in 1964, the elaboration of the eight volumes of the General History of Africa has mobilised more than 230 historians and specialists for more than 35 years. Completed in 1999, this work is considered a major contribution to the knowledge of African history and historiography.

The ceremony was followed by an exchange with the press during which the artists explained the reasons for their engagement in such a project.

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