



**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILDHOOD
JOURNEE INTERNATIONALE DE L'ENFANCE AFRICAINE
INTERNATIONALER TAG DER AFRIKANISCHEN KINDHEIT
INTERNATIONALE DAG VAN DE AFRIKAANSE JEUGD
DIA INTERNACIONAL DE LA CRIANCIA AFRICANA**

....and its YOUTH - **IDAY aisbl** - www.1606.eu

**Honorary
Committee
(at 01/01/2008)**

**Mrs. Hauwa
Ibrahim**
Sakharov Price 2005

Mr. Ousmane Sy
King Baudouin Price
2005
Founder of CEPIA

Mrs. Mampe Ntesi
Nelson Mandela
Children's Fund

Mr. Baba Maal
Ambassador of
UNDP- Senegal

**Mrs. Luisa
Morgantini**
Vice-President
European Parliament

Dr Codou Diaw
Executive Director
FAWE

THE IDAY CHARTER ¹

Goal

The members of IDAY participate in the mobilisation of civil society of their country on the International Day of the African Child, - June 16th - to achieve quality basic education for all African youth.

Basic education is understood by IDAY as including: (1) pre-school initiation; (2) a complete cycle of official primary education; and, (3) the equivalent functional literacy training for the youngsters who did not have access to a full primary cycle. Hence, under IDAY's holistic approach to basic education, the reference to the second Millennium Development Goal (2nd MDG) is in fact to be understood in reference to the six objectives of the Dakar Framework.

Why?

The African youth is without doubt the group of persons in the world whose fundamental rights are most massively disregarded. About 40 million³ of African children aged 6 to 12 have no access to a full cycle of primary education. They represent 40% of all youngsters of this age who are deprived of this fundamental right in the world. There are also 30 million illiterate African youngsters aged 15 to 24 and, contrary to the current trend on other continents, their number is increasing. Furthermore, these statistics only partly reflect the situation of child soldiers, child domestic servants, so-called "witch" children, enslaved or trafficked children, schoolgirls subjected to force marriages, imprisoned children, nomadic children, pygmy children, etc. It is generally admitted that without new and exceptional measures, sub-Saharan Africa will once more miss out on MDG2.

To help these youngsters get their rights respected is not only a question of safeguarding their human dignity, but also of equitable and sustainable development in Africa as in Europe.

¹ This is the second version (October 2008) of the Charter. Organisations having signed the previous version are assumed to agree with this new version and are therefore dispensed from signing it again.

² On June 16, 1976, the Apartheid army massacred an unknown number of young South-Africans as they peacefully manifested to obtain quality education. This day is also commemorated irregularly in some African cities under the label « International Day of the African Childhood ». IDAY covers not only the rights of the children (aged under 18), but also the youth age 15 to 24 whose rights to basic education have not been respected and are therefore illiterate. Their group includes all the "forgotten children" of the street, child domestic servants, child soldiers, so-called "witch" children, forcibly married girls, children in prisons, ...).

³ Figures from the latest UNICEF and UNESCO reports.

The goals of the Dakar Framework are:

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;
4. Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
6. Improving every aspect of the quality of education, and ensuring their excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

IDAY members also consider that:

1. Education is the very basis of economic development and an essential condition of sustainable improvement of the general health conditions of the population;
2. Since an overwhelming majority of Africans considers giving a proper education to their children a top priority, an improved dialogue and trust between government authorities and the African societies will change the development trend in sub-Saharan Africa;
3. As renowned economists have demonstrated, the active participation of civil society in a country's strategic decisions improves governance and is an essential condition to achieve sustainable development;
4. Only if the African civil society decides to take its future in its own hands, will the continent achieve a significant economic take-off;
5. Education and popular participation are essential for an efficient utilisation of foreign aid.

Without a massive mobilisation of the African and European civil societies involved in education projects and its youth, foreign aid in general, and humanitarian aid, including for health in particular, will remain bottomless pits. With 40% of its youth deprived from basic education, sub-Saharan Africa cannot pull itself out of misery before the end of the 21st century. Population in Africa are expected to grow during the 21st century from 760 million to more than 2 billion. Africa will then be the main reservoir of youngsters in the world. The development of Africa is important for the whole of humanity, but it is of strategic importance for Europe because of its historical, geographical, cultural and economic links with its neighbouring continent. The future wellbeing of not only the African but also the European youth is here at stake.

How?

Commemorate each year and together the International Day of the African Child around June 16 in Europe as well as in Africa, to create with the media a massive impact that will encourage European and African authorities to increase the means to implement the goal of quality basic education for all by 2015. Popular manifestations, organised in collaboration with the public authorities, will include seminars aimed at coming up with practical recommendations, broadcasting statistics on the state of progress prepared by the civil society and submitted to the relevant authorities. In each country, specific issues related to the

particular obstacles to the achievement of the MDG 2 will be raised. These issues are determined in close consultation with the local authorities. IDAY hopes hereby to get the African countries to increase public expenditure on education to a level at least equal to that allocated to military defence and security (on average 9% of GDP against 5% to education) and get donor countries to give priority to education programmes in that region.

During these days, the Message of Yaguine and Fodé (see annex), the two Guinean boys found dead in the landing gear of a Sabena plane in Brussels on August 2, 1999, will be read to commemorate all the young Africans who die or suffer inhuman living conditions and get the African and European leaders to give hope to these youngsters by improving significantly their education systems.

When?

IDAY members will organise collectively public events (seminars, marches, cultural presentations) related to MDG2 and literacy training for youngsters each year around June 16. IDAY members will seek to organise or participate in other related multinational events (Global Campaign for Education (GCE - end April), Global Campaign against Poverty (GCAP), or the Education Day in some countries (for ex, July 16 in Malawi, ...)).

Who?

Only the civil society organisations that are members of IDAY are authorised to utilise IDAY material and logo. To be registered with IDAY, one must:

Be a properly registered organisation involved in the implementation of education projects in Sub-Saharan Africa and be legally recognised in an African or European country or be involved in the empowerment of the civil society.

Becoming a member of IDAY implies:

- Accepting to operate in a network with all the other organisations of one's country involved in the sector of education in Sub-Saharan Africa to the extent that they accept the IDAY-Charter in its form and spirit;
- Respecting the statutes and internal regulation of IDAY-International
- Promoting the implementation of objectives of the Dakar Framework and/or the alphabetisation of youngsters, respecting common elements or themes of IDAY celebrations;
- Seeking to transcend the daily issues by impressing upon the African and European authorities the rights of the African youth to receive basic education. With this purpose in mind, local and European authorities will be invited to IDAY commemorations.
- Contributing to the common and collective interest, in particular by co-operating with the other networks of the civil society;
- Applying the IDAY logo to all documents and electronic publications and abstain from using IDAY documents (texts, photos, logo) for commercial or profit seeking purposes.

Only the organisations respecting these rules will be allowed to claim belonging to IDAY and use its logo. IDAY seeks to become pan European and pan African by 2010⁴.

Administration

IDAY is an official international non-profit seeking association under Belgian law since January 2008 and has a permanent secretariat. IDAY-International ensures the collaboration among the IDAY coalitions. It ensures the coordination among the various national manifestations with the aim to maximise impact on the media and on the political authorities. It also manages the IDAY website, assembles global statistics on education in Africa and on foreign aid granted to the region and prepares on the basis of

⁴ In 2005, IDAY was commemorated through some manifestations in a few African capitals and one manifestation in Brussels organised by 8 NGOs/NPSAs. In 2006, IDAY comprised manifestations specifically directed toward the realisation of MDG2 in 12 European and 11 African cities organised by more than 40 NGOS/NPSAs.

recommendations from the coalitions, the common Manifesto distributed annually to the multinational authorities and media while the coalitions are in charge of distributing the Manifesto to their national governments.

Coalitions of civic society members of IDAY decide by themselves the legal statutes of their organisation.

Registration

To register with IDAY, the official representative of the interested organisation must sign each page of the Charter and sign the last page. The signature must be preceded by the words « Read and approved » and followed by the postal, telephonic and email address of the official representative.

If the organisation is from a country where an IDAY coalition already exists, the document must be registered with the head of the coalition or the other member. The Head of the coalition is in charge of informing annually IDAY-International of the list of its members.

Organisations from countries where no IDAY coalition exists or multinational organisations, register the signed document with IDAY-International.

Only the organisations registered with a coalition of IDAY or with IDAY-International are members of IDAY.

IDAY seeks to mobilise all the interested parties in Africa and in Europe to implement these objectives and in this perspective does not discriminate on the basis of linguistic, political, national, tribal, or religious affiliation. IDAY is and shall remain politically and religiously strictly neutral.

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This is the text of the letter found on the body of Yaguine in an envelope tugged under his shirt. The bodies of the two Guinean kids of 14 and 15 years old were found in the landing gear of a Sabena plane returning from a flight from Conakry. The authenticity of the letter was confirmed by the discovery of the draft of the letter in one of Yaguine's school books.

« Help us, we are suffering terribly »

July 29th 1999

« Excellencies, members and responsible authorities of Europe,

We have the honour and pleasure of writing you this letter to tell you about the purpose of our journey and the sufferings, which we, the children and young people of Africa, experience.

But first may we offer you our most exquisite, adorable and respectful greetings in life. To that effect, be our support and our help. For us in Africa, you are the ones to whom we must turn for help. We beg you to listen to us, for the love of your continent, for the feeling that you have for your people and above all for the attachment and love that you feel for your children, whom you love for life ; and also for the love and graciousness of our creator God Almighty, who gave you all the good experiences, wealth and power to develop and organise your continent to be the most beautiful and admirable of them all.

Esteemed members and leaders of Europe, we in Africa appeal to your solidarity and your kindness. Help us, we are suffering terribly in Africa, we have problems and there are gaps in children's rights.

Among the problems we face are war, disease and malnutrition. As for children's rights , in Africa and especially in Guinea we have too many schools but not enough education and teaching – except in private schools where you can get a good education and good teaching, but only at great cost. But our parents are poor and they have to feed us. Furthermore, we have no sports schools where we can play soccer, basketball, or tennis.

This is why we, the children and young people in Africa, ask you to embark on a large-scale, efficient organisation for Africa so that our countries can develop.

Hence, if you see that we risk our lives and sacrifice ourselves, it is because there is too much suffering in Africa and because we need you to fight against poverty and to end war there. Nevertheless, we want to study and ask you to help us study to become like you, in Africa.

Finally, we beg you to forgive us for daring to write this letter to you, the great persons to whom we owe respect. Please realise that we have no one else to turn to in order to show how weak we in Africa are.

(signature) Written by two Guinean children Yaguine Koita and Fodé Tounkara »