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pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

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36 C/65

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PROCLAMATION OF INTERNATIONAL JAZZ DAY

OUTLINE

Source: 187 EX/Decision 46.

Background: At the initiative of the United States of America an item proposing the proclamation of International Jazz Day was included in the agenda of the 187th session of the Executive Board (187 EX/46) and was examined together with the feasibility study prepared by the Secretariat in that regard (187 EX/INF.10).

Purpose: This document sets out the results of the feasibility study on the proclamation of International Jazz Day and the decision of the Executive Board thereon.

This document is submitted to the General Conference at its 36th session for consideration and decision.

Decision required: paragraph 16.

BACKGROUND

1. The United Nations General Assembly designated 2010 as the “International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures”. UNESCO’s role as the lead agency for that year was consistent with its mandate “to develop and increase means of communication between peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other’s lives”.¹ Over time, music fully demonstrated its aptitude to interpret and to influence people’s feelings, in addition to being a powerful means of communication. Because of its history and development throughout the years, jazz, more than other forms of artistic expression, embodies the synthesis of different cultures in a harmonious ensemble.

2. Jazz developed in the United States in the very early part of the twentieth century and New Orleans played a key role in this development. The city’s population was more diverse than anywhere else in the country, and people of African, French, Caribbean, Italian, German, Mexican, and American Indian, as well as English descent interacted with one another. African-American musical traditions mixed with others and gradually jazz emerged as a unique style of music from a blend of ragtime, marches, blues, and other kinds of music. Interest quickly spread, and within a few decades, Americans of all ethnic backgrounds, socio-economic classes, ages and genders were listening to and playing jazz. In the twentieth-century United States, jazz brought people together. Years before the integration of social structures such as the work place, education systems, the military, and professional sports teams, the jazz bandstand was a visual example of tolerance, cooperation and mutual understanding. During the course of the twentieth century, jazz proved to be a universal language spreading over all the continents, influencing and being influenced by other kinds of music, evolving as a merging cultural element for its supporters all around the world, with no distinction of race, religion, ethnic or national origin. In the same period, jazz music provided the motivation and opportunity for many women to reach beyond the traditional gender role designated to them by society, and jazz music was a propelling force in the Women’s Liberation Movement in the United States. Dance halls and jazz clubs were places where women could break away from the traditional roles that were demanded of them by a rigid society. Here, women were allowed greater freedom in their language, clothing and behaviour. Jazz music also helped to provide jobs for women within the music industry. Prior to the 1920s, almost all popular music was performed exclusively by male musicians.

3. Jazz works as an inclusive process by allowing each musician to develop a unique, individual style. Improvisation and interpretation are essential components that help make jazz an ever-renewing art form which continues attracting new generations. Jazz music is synonymous with freedom, both for its players that are free to invent and create each time they play a tune, and for its listeners. This is why this particular kind of music was banned under several totalitarian regimes. In 2011, global understanding, international cooperation, freedom of thinking and dynamic cultural interaction seem all the more necessary and jazz seems to perfectly match with these values.

4. In a letter dated 28 July 2011, the Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the United States to UNESCO, transmitted to the Chairperson of the Executive Board, the proposal by the United States and 17 other Member States to establish an International Jazz Day. This proposal invited the Director-General to conduct a feasibility study – including an indication of the expected results and an assurance that there will be no additional financial implications for the regular budget of UNESCO – on the celebration of an International Jazz Day, and to report to the Executive Board on that matter at its 187th session.

SCOPE OF THE FEASIBILITY STUDY

5. The study, conducted in late July and early August 2011, drew on consultations with experts, as well as a review of specialized publications and websites and the case histories of the Newport

¹ Resolution of the 34th session of the General Conference, adopted at the 22nd plenary meeting on 2 November 2007, 34 C/46.

Jazz Festival and the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. The latter, since its creation in 1970 has experienced a remarkable growth in popularity and, in the 1980s, began to gain wide acclaim as one of the world's greatest cultural celebrations with more than 300,000 people attending its Heritage Fair, evening concerts and workshops. With several stages of soul-stirring music (including jazz, blues, gospel, Cajun, rhythm and blues, rock, funk, African, Latin, Caribbean, folk and others) the Fair proved to be an artistic melting-pot, a privileged space for intercultural dialogue and a quite unique celebration of this kind.

6. In parallel, a broad consultation carried out among some Permanent Delegations, concerned NGOs, the International Council on Music, specialized journalists and eminent personalities, demonstrated wide support for the celebration of an International Jazz Day, especially in relation to its traditional role as a means of communication between peoples and to promote intercultural dialogue.

UNESCO'S ROLE IN THE PROMOTION OF JAZZ

7. In the light of the above, the proclamation of an annual International Jazz Day by UNESCO would encourage the celebration worldwide in its Member States, it being understood that the scope of the activities would depend entirely on the availability of extrabudgetary funds. Given the connection between the values inherent to jazz music and UNESCO's mandate, especially concerning intercultural dialogue, such a Day would raise awareness of the Organization's activities in social areas that are not usually targeted by UNESCO's message, in particular reaching younger generations.

8. Proclaiming an International Jazz Day would provide an additional and powerful means to highlight the contribution of jazz to the dialogue among cultures, by connecting different communities, schools and other groups around the planet in celebrating and learning more about the art of jazz and how it has become part of their culture. The proclamation of an International Jazz Day could also have a beneficial influence on the promotion of music teaching. UNESCO may have a special role in the educational aspect linked to the teaching of jazz music (especially to vulnerable children in marginalized communities) and its potential insertion in the curricula of many countries. The celebration of International Jazz Day would thus enable UNESCO to fulfil its role as a vehicle of cultural and educational activities all over the world.

PROGRAMME OF THE CELEBRATION

9. International Jazz Day could be celebrated annually on 30 April, which is not already listed as any other United Nations Observance but does coincide with the celebration in the United States of April as Jazz Month. UNESCO Member States and partners (National Commissions, associations, universities, relevant NGOs, schools and institutes) would be called upon to organize various types of activities (workshops, round tables, cultural activities in schools, universities and in public places, etc.), as well as concerts. UNESCO (Headquarters as well as its field offices) could provide a platform for exchanges, publicizing and promoting among its partners and its networks the activities organized in connection with the event.

10. For its part, UNESCO would encourage and support national, subregional and regional initiatives designed, *inter alia*, to:

- (a) activate local organizers (municipalities, cities, regions, etc.) to contribute to the preparation and holding of the International Jazz Day;
- (b) raise awareness in associated schools and universities so that the International Jazz Day may be celebrated as widely as possible;
- (c) build up a momentum enabling Member States, institutions, NGOs and schools concerned to spread the values which are inherent to jazz music and match with its mandate the promotion of cultural dialogue;

OBJECTIVES

11. The main objectives of International Jazz Day would be as follows:
- (a) to develop and increase means of exchange and understanding between cultures and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual comprehension and tolerance;
 - (b) to offer an additional and effective tool at international, regional, subregional and national level to foster intercultural dialogue;
 - (c) to raise public awareness on the role of jazz music in spreading the universal values of UNESCO's mandate;
 - (d) to promote intercultural dialogue towards eradication of racial tensions, foster gender equality and reinforce the role of youth for social change;
 - (e) to recognize jazz music as a universal language of freedom;
 - (f) to promote social progress with a special focus on developing countries through jazz music's universal diffusion associated with new technologies and communications tools such as social networks;
 - (g) to contribute to UNESCO's initiatives to promote mutual understanding among cultures, with a focus on education of young people in marginalized communities.

EXPECTED RESULTS

12. The expected results could be as follows:
- (a) greater international awareness of the need for intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding;
 - (b) mobilization of the intellectual community, decision-makers, educational institutions and the media to promote jazz-related values as a vector of UNESCO's mandate, pioneering role and intellectual mission;
 - (c) reinforcement of international cooperation and communication in the field of jazz music.

13. In order to ensure the feasibility of the International Jazz Day through the continuous participation of Member States and the long-term involvement of schools, NGOs and the public at large, the full support of public local authorities and effective methods of financing the celebrations would be essential.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

14. As already noted, UNESCO could provide a platform for exchanges, publicizing and promoting among its partners and its networks the activities organized in connection with the event. The spreading of the Organization's message would benefit from worldwide celebrations carried out by its Member States. UNESCO premises could be made available to Member States interested in organizing celebrations or events related to the International Jazz Day. However, the regular programme and budget does not include provision for such activities, which could only be assured through extrabudgetary resources.

15. At its 187th session, the Executive Board adopted the following decision (187 EX/Decision 46):

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 34 C/Resolution 46 (2007) and United Nations General Assembly resolution 62/90 (2008),
 2. Expressing appreciation for the active engagement of the international community in promoting and participating in the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures,
 3. Recognizing that enhancing intercultural dialogue is a never-ending process,
 4. Determined that UNESCO should continue to take the lead in fostering cultural rapprochement using a variety of art forms,
 5. Noting that jazz represents a very unique form of music which can be a unifying force for positive engagement among diverse groups worldwide,
 6. Having examined document 187 EX/46 and 187 EX/INF.10,
 7. Takes note of the conclusions of the feasibility study presented by the Director-General on the celebration of International Jazz Day, including an indication of the expected results as well as an assurance that there will be no additional financial implications for the regular budget of UNESCO;
 8. Recommends that the General Conference, at its 36th session, proclaim 30 April of each year as “International Jazz Day”.
16. In the light of the above, the General Conference may wish to adopt the following draft resolution:

The General Conference,

1. Having examined document 36 C/65 relating to the proclamation of International Jazz Day and the decision of the Executive Board concerning that proclamation,
2. Recalling that jazz is a means to develop and increase intercultural exchanges and understanding between cultures for the purpose of mutual comprehension and tolerance,
3. Aware that the proclamation of International Jazz Day will not have financial implications for the regular budget of UNESCO,
4. Endorses the results of the feasibility study presented by the Director-General on the celebration of International Jazz Day (187 EX/INF.10),
5. Proclaims 30 April of each year as “International Jazz Day”;
6. Calls on the Member States of UNESCO to participate actively in the celebration of this Day, at the local, national and regional levels, with the active participation of National Commissions for UNESCO, non-governmental organizations and the public and private institutions concerned;
7. Invites the Director-General to encourage all initiatives which will be taken in this regard at the national, regional and international levels;
8. Requests the General Assembly of the United Nations to associate itself with this celebration and encourage the Member States of the United Nations to do likewise.