



**23.8.2015 - The United Nations' *International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its abolition* serves to remind people of the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade. It is a day to reflect on the causes and the consequences of the slave trade and to take a look at the present-day interactions between Africa, Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean.**

On the night of 22-23 August 1791, an uprising began in Santo Domingo (today Haiti and the Dominican Republic), which eventually led to the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. The slave rebellion gave the island its independence and weakened the Caribbean

colonial system as a whole.

This year, the commemoration of these events coincides with the launch of the [International Decade for People of African Descent](#) (2015-2024), an initiative announced by the UN in 2014, which aims to promote and protect the human rights of people of African descent. Today millions of people who identify themselves as being of African descent, live outside of the African Continent. Many of them are descendants of victims of the transatlantic slave trade. The theme for this decade, “Recognition, Justice, Development”, resonates with the [UNESCO](#) intercultural project [The Slave Route](#), which, amongst others, strives to create greater awareness of slavery and the slave trade.

The *International Day* also aims to prove that the slave trade is not merely a thing of the past. Traces of the slave trade can still be seen in modern society. It has altered people and continents, and transformed the destiny of nations, cultures and identities. Unfortunately, that is not the only way this topic is still relevant. Today, approximately 21 million children, women and men around the world are victims of forced labour. This modern slavery occurs everywhere, in poor and rich countries, takes many forms and cannot be ignored. August 23 is therefore the ultimate day to look back on the history of the slave trade and to learn from it, to pay homage to its victims and to pay tribute to the men and women who worked hard to abolish it.

The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, invites the Ministers of Culture of all Member States to organize events on this day, which involve the entire population of their country, so that people worldwide can participate in this important event. Theatre companies, musicians and artists can participate by organizing performances that express their resistance to slavery. Educators are encouraged to promote the day by informing people about the history of slavery, the consequences of slave trade and by promoting tolerance and human rights.

For more information, please consult the [International Slavery Museum](#) .