



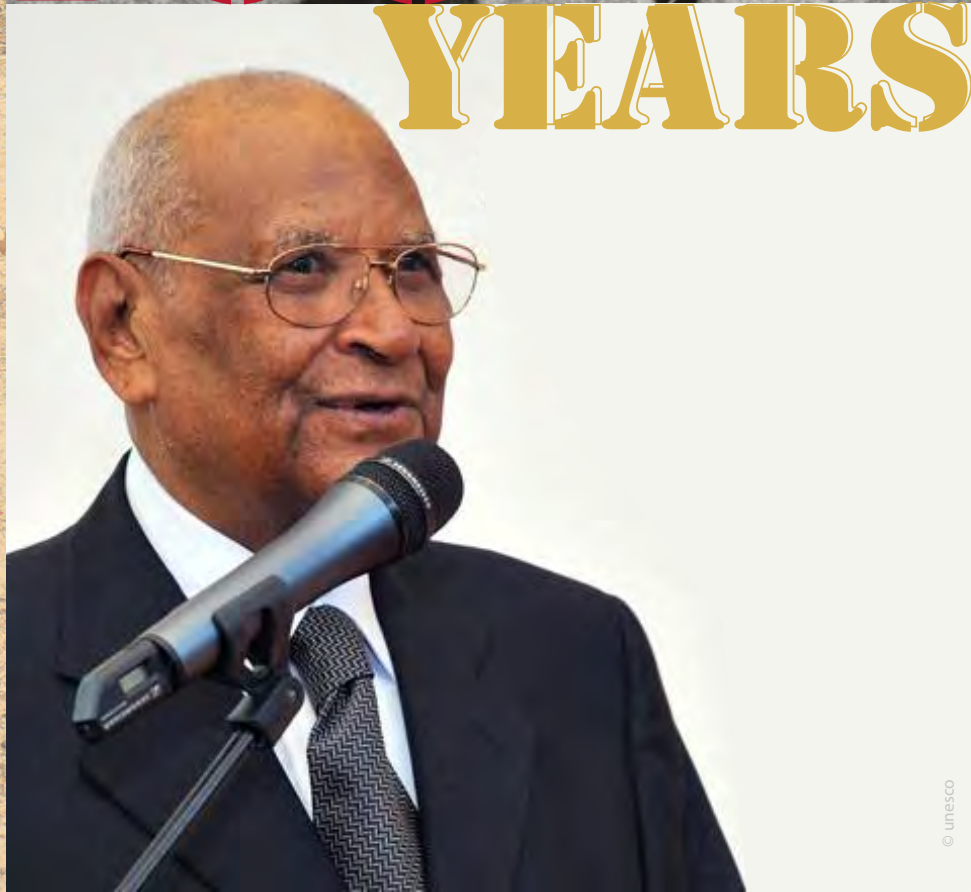
Association of Former  
UNESCO Staff Members

A  
MAN  
STANDING  
TALL  
IN HIS  
CENTURY

With the support of

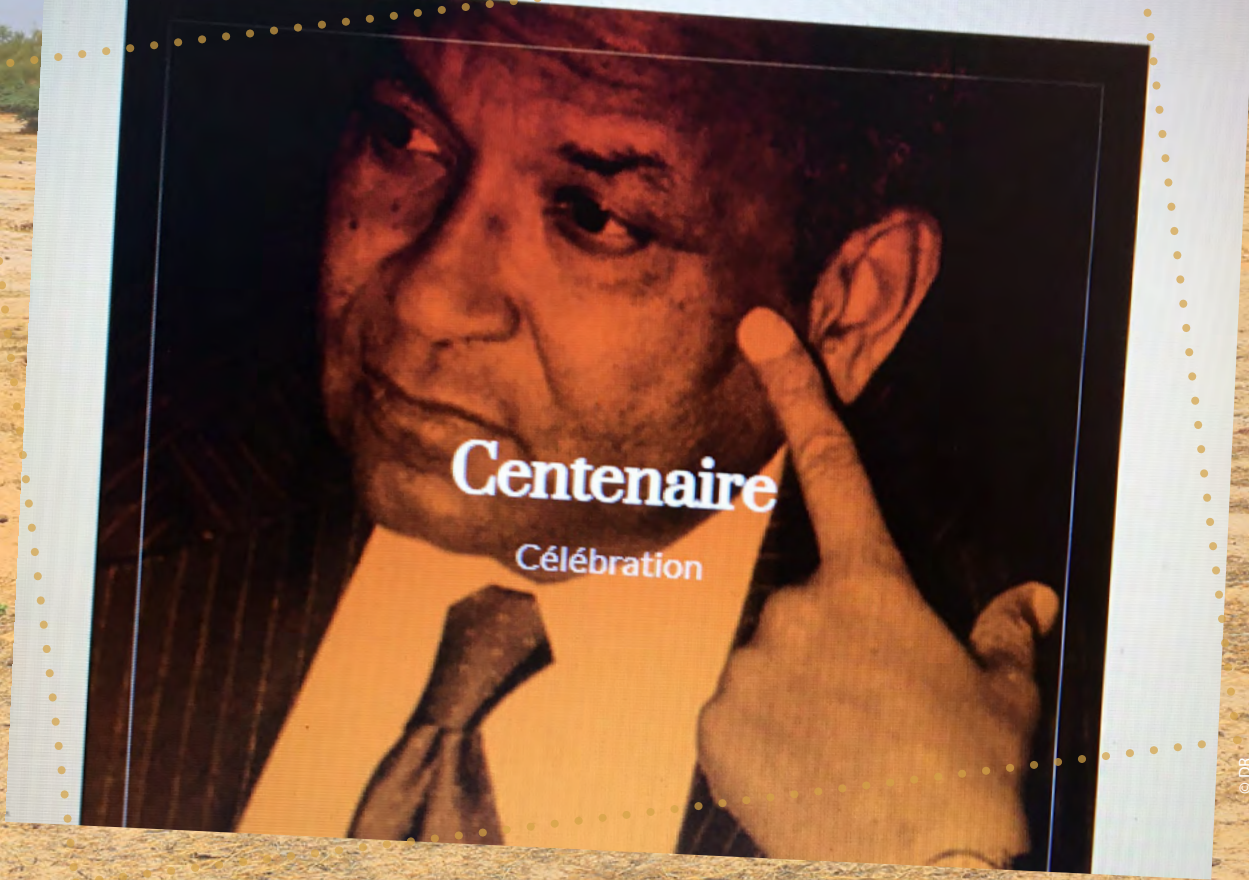


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# AMADOU MAHTAR M'BOW

Director-General of UNESCO (1974-1987)

**25 October 2021**

CELEBRATION ORGANIZED BY **AFUS**, IN COOPERATION AND  
WITH THE SUPPORT OF **UNESCO**



# PROGRAMME

09:45-12:45 FIRST PART: TRIBUTE

Room I

Photos panorama and video on the election of Amadou Mahtar M'Bow in 1974

Welcoming Remarks by **Georges Kutukdjian**, President of AFUS

Opening Address by **Audrey Azoulay**, Director-General of UNESCO

## Governing bodies

HE **Altay Cengizer**, President of the General Conference

HE **Agapito Mba Mokuy**, Chairman of the Executive Board

## Former Directors-General

**Federico Mayor**, Director-General from 1987 to 1999

**Koïchiro Matsuura**, Director-General from 1999 to 2009

**Irina Bokova**, Director-General from 2009 to 2017

Screening of videos montage of UNESCO's early history, prepared by the Archives Section

## Testimonials and messages

**Adel Rifaat** and **Bahgat El-Nadi**, political scientists and essayists

**René Depestre**, Haitian poet and novelist

**Stany Kol**, former Secretary of the General Conference, former Deputy Assistant Director-General

**George Saddler**, former Assistant Director-General

**Miguel Angel Estrella**, Argentinian pianist

**Ana Maria de Oliveira**, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Angola to UNESCO, former Minister of Culture

**Armin Ibrisimovic**, Assistant Programme Specialist, Bureau of Strategic Planning

**Edgar Morin**, sociologist

**Carlos Antonio Carrasco**, former Permanent Delegate of Bolivia and Representative of Latin Union to UNESCO

**Mohamed Bedjaoui**, former President of the International Court of Justice, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Algeria

**Tomas Keller**, former Secretary of the General Conference, former Assistant Director-General

**Henri Lopes**, former Deputy Director-General, writer

**Doudou Diène**, former Director of Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue

12:45-13:00 SECOND PART: ALLOCUTION

## AMADOU MAHTAR M'BOW

The Centenary Organizing Committee, under the honorary chairmanship of Federico Mayor, is composed of (in alphabetical order): Jens Boel, Carlos Antonio Carrasco, Monique Couratier, René Depestre, Doudou Diène, Bahgat El- Nadi, Neda Ferrier, Thomas Keller, Stany Kol, Georges Kutukdjian (Chairman of the Committee), Yemi Lijadu, Henri Lopes, Ana Maria de Oliveira, Nguyen Thi Nhu Phi, Jacques Rao, Adel Rifaat, Josiane Taillefer.



# CURRICULUM VITAE

## **“Amadou Mahtar M’Bow: courage, vision, resistance”** (Federico Mayor)

Director-General of UNESCO from 1974 to 1987, Amadou Mahtar M’Bow was born in Dakar (Senegal) in 1921. Raised in the Sahel, where the harshness of natural conditions and the social environment forges the character of men, very early on he aspired for his country and Africa as a whole to independence and development, and, for the world, to peace, justice and brotherhood. Commitment and activism led him, anticipating the call, to take part, as a volunteer, in the war of 1939-1945, in the French Air Force.

Demobilized at the end of hostilities, Amadou Mahtar M’Bow began studying at the Sorbonne (Paris) where he obtained his Degree in History and Geography. President of the Association of African Students in Paris and Secretary-General of the Federation of Black African Students in France (FEANF), he worked for the independence of his country. He married in 1951 and had three children with his Haitian wife, whom he had met at University.

Amadou Mahtar M’Bow began his teaching career in Mauritania, with his wife who was also a teacher. He was particularly aware of school failure, the premise of his future commitment to literacy.

Professor of History in Mauritania and Senegal, he strove to awaken the consciousness of his pupils and students to the history of the world and that of Africa, to the responsibilities of modern elites in their societies, and to arouse in them a sense of effort and the will to succeed.

He considered basic education, literacy and community education of rural populations, the construction of schools, the promotion of vocational training, scientific and technical education, as the priorities for his country’s economic and social progress and the revitalization of cultures.

In 1957, under the regime of internal autonomy, he became Minister of Education and Culture, Youth and Sports. Upon Senegal’s Independence, he again became Minister of National Education, then of Culture, Youth and Sports.

In 1966, A. M. M’Bow was elected, in a personal capacity, a member of the Executive Board of UNESCO, where his skills and leadership qualities were recognized by his peers who elected him Chairperson of the Programme and External Relations Commission. He was also elected as Chairperson of the African Group and the Non-Aligned Group.

In 1970, René Maheu, then Director-General, appointed him Assistant Director-General for Education. In 1974, he was elected Director-General of UNESCO by the General Conference, becoming the first Chief Executive Officer of an international organization within the United Nations system from an African country. In 1980, he was re-elected for a second term of seven years.



# ACHIEVEMENTS

## A VISION

- ◆ Education, an essential condition for harmonious cohabitation

*"It is through education that learning of difference and otherness takes place, the only thing capable, in a multicultural society, of defusing prejudices and stereotypes." (AMM, Entreprendre l'avenir, Paris, Unesco, 1981)*
- ◆ Recognition of the world's diversity with a New World Information and Communication Order

*"It seems essential to eliminate the obstacles which prevent men and nations from accessing all sources of information and directly expressing their own opinions, also essential to avoid distortions which undermine dignity, and the independence of peoples." (AMM, Aux sources du futur, Paris, Unesco, 1982)*
- ◆ Solidarity through peace, respect for human rights, and mutual understanding of peoples through reciprocal knowledge of their cultures
- ◆ For a global ethics of the environment

*"The management, by developing countries, of their own natural resources is one of the main axes of the search for a new international economic order." (AMM, Aux sources du futur, Paris, Unesco, 1982)*
- ◆ For the independence and security of the international civil service

## A METHOD

- ◆ Foresight and anticipation
- ◆ Consultation and decision-making by consensus
- ◆ Promotion and renewal of education
- ◆ Development of knowledge for all
- ◆ International cooperation in science and technology, social and human sciences, communication and information, in conjunction with Member States and intellectual circles in different regions of the world
- ◆ Establishment of regional policies in UNESCO's fields of competence
- ◆ Respect for human rights for all



## **ACHIEVEMENTS**

- ◆ New impetus for normative action in UNESCO's fields of competence (fight against racism and racial discrimination, education, culture)
- ◆ Establishment of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) (1976)
- ◆ Creation of the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in the case of Illicit Appropriation (ICPRCP) (1978)
- ◆ Creation of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) (1981)
- ◆ Designation of the first Biosphere Reserves, model protected areas reconciling biodiversity conservation and sustainable development
- ◆ New development and redefinition of the conciliation role of the Executive Board in resolving cases and questions of human rights violations around the world in UNESCO's fields of competence
- ◆ Reorganization of the Secretariat: innovations in structures, programming and programme execution, improvement of the geographical balance of staff
- ◆ Promotion of gender equality
  - "What is required of the international community is a continuous effort to demasculinize the very concepts of universal knowledge ... for a real renaissance of relations between all human beings."*  
(AMM, *Entreprendre l'avenir*, Paris, Unesco, 1981)
- ◆ Appointment at UNESCO of the first female Assistant Director-General
- ◆ Creation of the Social and Human Sciences Sector

**The role that Amadou Mahtar M'Bow played in international intellectual cooperation and in the constant search for harmony amongst peoples and nations, as well as his personal and moral qualities make him a Universal Man.**

**Screening of a diaporama photos on the screens outside Room I**  
(contribution by Centenary Amadou Mahtar M'Bow)