



PRESS RELEASE

RELATING TO THE CELEBRATION OF THE AFRICAN NEW YEAR

Around the world, peoples have preserved, alongside the universally recognized system, their own systems of timekeeping as markers of their unique identity. This system of governing space and life establishes the times for celebrating major events and calibrates the course of the world according to a cosmogony.

Africa, the cradle of humanity and civilization, possessed, in its diversity and complexity, an endogenous calendar cycle and a symbolism of major societal events. This cycle shaped African cosmogony for centuries and regulated the internal organization of African societies. For example, a historical link may exist between the official solar calendar of ancient Egypt, established more than five thousand years ago, and certain traditional festivals celebrated in Africa, such as the **"taking of the sacred stone,"** marking the beginning of a new year in the Guin region of Togo; **"Umlanga,"** the Reed Dance celebrated periodically in some southern African countries; **"Umuganuro,"** celebrating the solstice in Burundi, now replaced by the Christian festival of Christmas; and **"Yennayer,"** the Berber New Year celebrated in North Africa.

However, the course of history and the upward trajectory of African progress were brutally and permanently disrupted by the deportations that scattered Africa's vital forces across the seas and by the colonial intrusion into the endogenous systems of social, economic, and political governance of African peoples. Through their cultural alienation and brutality, these intrusions have reconfigured the cycle of societal events and caused Africa to lose its bearings and its own identity.

This is also true of the Gregorian calendar imposed on African nations during colonization. Like the linear borders that divided the continent and whose scars many populations and languages still bear today, this Gregorian calendar ignores the endogenous rhythms and the established natural or cultural cycles that intrinsically define African identity.

The celebration of so many festivals, dates, and events essentially foreign to the African cultural and symbolic universe, regardless of the specific African micro-culture considered, makes Africa a perpetual mirror of a world whose codes are unknown to

its people, and the stage for an intense inter-civilizational exchange where its identity and cultural particularities are deliberately ignored.

This seemingly innocuous calendar shift has profoundly altered the way time is perceived and major events are organized, events which are themselves calibrated to cycles specific to the African context. This has resulted in acculturation and a loss of identity for Africans who, immersed in a system designed for the Western world, struggle to adapt or assert themselves.

In a contemporary context marked by the shifting world order and the gradual emergence of a multipolar order that, among other things, establishes respect for diversity as the foundation of global equilibrium and the driving force behind shared prosperity, and where Africa seeks to assert itself as an autonomous power, it becomes imperative for Africa to rehabilitate its historical system of dividing time and establishing traditional festivals and key dates, including the **African New Year**, and to elevate them to the status of shared universal heritage, like other peoples of the world such as those of China, Israel, and India, who respectively celebrate "**Chūnjié**" or **Lunar New Year**, **Rosh Hashanah**, and **Diwali** in northern India, and those of Ethiopia, who stand out in Africa with their New Year called "**Enkutatash**."

In this regard, Togo, which holds the presidency of the High Committee on the Decade of African Roots and the African Diaspora, intends to initiate, in collaboration with the African Union, discussions with African and diaspora specialists to propose dates for the celebration of African festivals, particularly the date of the **African New Year**, based on African historical, cultural, and religious traditions.

To this end, Togo plans to organize an international symposium on this topic in Lomé, on a date to be announced very soon. The conclusions and recommendations of this symposium will be submitted to the African Union Commission for a decision and subsequent implementation.

It is also worth emphasizing that the launch of this initiative today is part of the implementation of one of the key recommendations of the 9th Pan-African Congress held in Lomé from December 8 to 12, 2025, namely the decolonization of minds and the reinvention of oneself. This initiative responds to the deep-seated expectations of the African people to see their continent assert itself as an autonomous power, self-referential and defining its own path to development.

Done in Lomé, February 24, 2026