

## Declaration by the Réseau francophone numérique on keeping cultural heritage safe

The presidents and directors general of the national libraries, national archives, academic libraries and research libraries that are members of the Réseau francophone numérique, assembled in Paris on April 26, 2016, at the headquarters of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie on the occasion of the tenth General Assembly of the Réseau:

**Having been informed** by the directors of the national libraries of Belgium, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Morocco, Mali and Tunisia;

**Being mindful** of the attacks on the populations of a number of towns and cities in their countries, and in particular on visitors to cultural institutions;

**Recognizing** that these attacks often consist in acts of intentional destruction of both the tangible and the intangible cultural heritage, prime examples being the destruction of manuscripts in Timbuktu and the attacks on a number of cultural institutions such as the Jewish Museum in Brussels, the Bardo Museum in Tunis and the Bataclan in Paris;

**Aware** of the importance of the cultural heritage of which they are the custodians and perturbed by the extent of acts such as the looting of archaeological assets, trafficking in cultural property, intimidation of, and violence towards, the guardians of this cultural property and people visiting the locations in which this property is conserved:

### Declare that:

1. Tangible and intangible cultural heritage is an essential component of the invariably plural identity of peoples, communities, groups and individuals;
2. Tangible and intangible cultural property, regardless of the people to whom it belongs, has a universal dimension;
3. Cultural diversity is a principle which international law recognizes and defends;
4. As such, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, in all its diverse forms, must, everywhere, be preserved, treasured and disseminated.

**And they reaffirm**, at a time when they are in the process of establishing the Bibliothèque Numérique Francophone and procuring a legal personality for the Réseau, their determination to join forces to reinforce the conditions for preserving, referencing, disseminating and promoting the patrimonies for which they are collectively responsible for the benefit of present and future generations.

### Associated link

[Réseau francophone numérique](#) (in French only)