

# AU ECHO

2021 Annual Magazine

**THEME OF THE YEAR**  
**Arts, Culture and Heritage:**  
**Levers For Building The Africa We Want**

**SPECIAL PULLOUT!**  
**AFRICAN CHARTER ON**  
**CULTURAL RENAISSANCE**

**AU PLAN OF ACTION ON**  
**CULTURAL & CREATIVE**  
**INDUSTRIES**

**AFRICA'S**  
**COVID-19**  
**RESPONSE**  
**FUND**

**THE GREAT MUSEUM**  
**OF AFRICA**

**PROFILE:**  
**RICHARD OBOH, ORANGE VFX CEO**  
Youth at the Forefront of  
Africa's Animation Industry

**UNITING THROUGH MUSIC**  
'Stronger Together' & 'Stronger Than Covid'

**NO-NAME CAMPAIGN**  
For every child a Legal Identity,  
for every child Access to Justice



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# **ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE:**

## **Levers for Building the Africa we Want**

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## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The culture and creative industries (CCIs) generate annual global revenues of up to US\$2,250 billion dollars and exports in excess of US\$250 billion. This sector currently provides nearly 30 million jobs worldwide and employs more people aged 15 to 29 than any other sector and contributes up to 10% of GDP in some countries.

In Africa, CCIs are driving the new economy as young Africans tap into their unlimited natural resource and their creativity, to create employment and generate revenue in sectors traditionally perceived as “not stable” employment options. From film, theatre, music, gaming, fashion, literature and art, the creative economy is gradually gaining importance as a sector that must be taken seriously and which at a policy level, decisions must be made to invest in, nurture, protect and grow the sectors. Even with the Covid-19 pandemic, CCIs in Africa have embraced digital media as lockdowns and restrictions on travel took hold; innovation has become a key for survival in the sector due to increased digitisation, highlighting the nexus between technology and economic development.

The potential of CCIs in Africa has garnered international attention and investment with international music labels such as Sony, Warner and Universal Music as well as music platforms like Apple Music increasing their presence on the continent and Netflix the world’s largest subscription streaming service is actively supporting content creation on the continent.

At a continental level, Multichoice Africa / DSTV continues to invest in the production of local content and leads the way in establishing regional production hubs to support the development of educational, news and entertainment content produced by African talent for African markets and the world.

In this edition of the AU Echo in line with the African Union Theme of the Year 2021 on Arts, Culture and Heritage we focus on the cultural and creative industries. This vast sector has great potential and it is telling that African Governments will step up their efforts in the year 2021 to support the CCIs. From continental treaties such as the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance and The African Union (AU) Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries, as well as national development plans on CCIs, 2021 will be a year for rallying support behind a sector which by virtue of its linkages to social, cultural, economic and political issues is at the bedrock of the development of African society and the future envisaged in Africa’s Agenda 2063.

As we begin a new year that comes about as we try to adjust to the new normal under Covid-19, we also celebrate African musicians who have always been on the forefront of championing causes that unite and elevate African pride and the spirit of pan-Africanism. Using the powerful tools of their voices, hands and words they have always been at the forefront urging Africans on the continent and in the diaspora to face up to our circumstances and overcome. African musicians have been at the centre of the clarion call to unite and fight the Covid-19 pandemic. Through virtual concerts, they continued to play their role as advocates for action and Africa and Africans



**LESLIE RICHER**

**DIRECTOR** Directorate of Information & Communication

taking charge of their destiny and supporting the initiatives to find African solutions for African issues. On Africa Day (25th May), the African Union in partnership with Trace TV and All Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA) organised a Virtual Solidarity Concert under the theme ‘**Stronger Together’ and ‘Stronger than COVID’**. The concert brought together well-known artistes from across the continent to advocate for support for the Africa CDC and Africa’s Covid-19 Response Fund. This was just one of the many concerts and other efforts by musicians on the continent and in the diaspora to support the response to the pandemic in their communities and across the region; and we salute all of them.

An emerging sector within CCIs is the Animation, gaming and VFX sector. Globally the sector generated revenues of US\$ 264 billion in 2019. Whereas, the sector is still in its infant stages on the continent, led by African youth, animation is growing as a tool for fast and effective messaging used both in education and entertainment. African produced animation movies that have had an impact in the scene include Khumba and Adventures of Zambezia which generated US\$26 million and US\$35 million respectively (Forbes Africa) and became South African blockbusters and the third and fourth best-grossing films in the country’s history, respectively. In this issue we profile Orange VFX a company created and run by young talent and with whom we had the chance to work with to create the first animations for the African Union’s Agenda 2063.

We also profile Nyundo Music School in Rwanda whose students undertook the colossal task of recording the AU Anthem in Swahili, English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic. Balancing both their academics and other obligations, these young people gave of their time and talents to ensure that the AU Anthem would be accessible to a wide African and global audience playing their part in promoting the spirit of pan-Africanism and Ubuntu.

Finally, we also look at the role language has to play in promoting integration and socio-economic development by breaking down the linguistic barriers and the work being undertaken by the African Union’s institutions such as the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), in promoting African languages as factors for integration and development including the institution’s own going project to promote the use of Kiswahili as a language of wider communication in Africa

I personally look forward to seeing how we collectively put the culture and creative industries front and centre as a sector which has as much if not more potential than any other to give youth the opportunity to achieve their dreams today.

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**Cover Image:** The Nomadic Wodaabe tribe of the Sahara desert near Lake Chad, taking part in an annual courtship ritual competition called Gerewol.

## STRONGER TOGETHER

MONDAY  
25:5:2020  
4:00pm (WAT), 5:00pm (CAT),  
6:00pm (EAT)

AFRICA DAY  
SOLIDARITY CONCERT  
FOR THE COVID-19 RESPONSE  
FUND

LIVE BROADCAST ON  
**TRACE** STATIONS  
LIVE STREAMING ON AU, TRACE & AFRIMA FACEBOOK PAGES

**AFRIMA** 

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**Towards a New Paradigm Of Culture and Democracy**



# AFRICAN UNION AND AFRICAN PRIVATE SECTOR LAUNCH COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND

The initiative aims to raise US\$ 400 million to implement a pan-African self-reliance strategy to halt COVID-19 pandemic

While we continue to welcome expertise and feedback from regions already engaged in the fight against the coronavirus, we must also establish an autonomous strike force. African money and African expertise must be mobilised.

**H.E Cyril Ramaphosa,  
Chairperson of the African  
Union and President of  
the Republic of South  
Africa**



**W**ith the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the African Union through its continental public health institution, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) launched a public-private partnership with the AfroChampions Initiative, known as the Africa COVID-19 Response Fund.

The Africa COVID-19 Response Fund is a financial instrument to mobilise and manage funds from the private sector in Africa, and other well-wishers with the support of several African banks. The Fund will operate under the supervision of the African Union through its public health institution Africa CDC, which will determine priority interventions and

actions. The Fund is one of the instruments in Africa's primary strategy for managing the pandemic as elaborated in the **Africa Joint Continental Strategy for COVID-19**. Given that transmission throughout the continent is inevitable, delaying and diminishing the peak of outbreaks can help health systems better manage the surge of patients and communities better adapt to the disruption of social, cultural, and economic activities.

This continental wide public-private partnership aims to raise US\$ 400 million to support sustainable medical response to the COVID- 19 pandemic by pooling the resources required for the procurement of medical supplies and commodities; supporting the deployment of rapid responders across the continent as well as providing socio-economic support to the most vulnerable populations in Africa. The Fund will also support the deployment of one million community healthcare workers to support contact tracing; and standardisation and deployment of common technology platforms to boost public trust in testing data, epidemiological models and critical health forecasting techniques as part of the economic recovery and re-opening agenda. Other priority actions will include the purchase and stockpiling of key equipment for diagnosis, treatment and protection of caregivers, as well as implementing a broad awareness campaign on prevention among African populations.

An advisory board consisting of public and private sector representatives was established to oversee management of the Fund.

#### **AFRICA COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND BOARD OF TRUSTEES -**

- **African Union Commission** - H.E. Amira Elfadil - Commissioner for Social Affairs
- **Private Sector**
  - Prof. Benedict Oramah – Prof. Benedict Oramah, President of the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank)
  - Engr. Mansur Ahmed – Executive Director, Dangote Group
  - Mr. Paul Gomes – Chairman, Afro-Champions
- **AU Member states**
  - Prof. Wiseman Lumkile Nkuhlu - Chancellor of the University of Pretoria Chairman KPMG South Africa (Southern Region)
  - Mr. Martin Mogwanja – Senior Executive, Development and Humanitarian Relief Management. (Kenya) - Eastern region
  - Prof. Mohamed Awad Tageldin Senior advisor on public health and protection policies to the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt (Northern region)
  - Mr. Ndolamb Ngokwey – Former Deputy Special Representative of UN Secretary-general and UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Côte d'Ivoire (Democratic Republic Congo) (DRC) – Central Region
  - Mr. Abdoulaye Daffe Former President and Chief Executive Officer, Banque de Development du Mali (BDM-S.A) - (Mali) Western region
  - H.E Dr. Hala Zaid – Minister of Health and Population Egypt, and AU Specialized Technical Committee (STC) chair on Health Population and Drug Control.

African Union member states not only provided the seed funding for the Fund but have actively ensured its replenishment in the spirit of Africa solutions for African concerns. The Covid-19

There is a race against time to prepare and protect our communities. We must coordinate efforts of Member States, African Union agencies, World Health Organization, and other partners to ensure synergy and minimise duplication. We must also promote evidence-based public health practice for surveillance, prevention, diagnosis, treatment and control of COVID-19.

**Dr John Nkengasong,  
Director of the AfricaCDC**

pandemic has also brought to the fore the need to redefine the role of Africa's private sector as relates to supporting the health sector beyond contributing to the fund to one where players implement other actions like rolling out prevention campaigns in companies, redeployment of production lines towards equipment and products needed against the pandemic, and optimisation of transport and connectivity infrastructure to support health emergencies.

**Find out more about the Africa Covid-19 Response fund by visiting <https://au.int/en/AUCOVID19ResponseFund> and the Africa Joint Continental Strategy for COVID-19 by visiting <https://africacdc.org/download/africa-joint-continental-strategy-for-covid-19-outbreak/>**

#### **About AfroChampions**

The AfroChampions Initiative is a public-private partnership designed to galvanise African resources and institutions to promote Africa's economic integration. The Initiative supports the emergence and success of African corporate champions, who have a critical role in integrating African markets and accelerating the transformation of the continent. For more information, visit [www.afrochampions.com/about/who-we-are/](http://www.afrochampions.com/about/who-we-are/)

# AFRICA CDC DIRECTOR AWARDED THE BILL AND MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION GLOBAL GOALKEEPER AWARD FOR 2020 FOR ROLE IN FIGHTING COVID 19

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced Dr. John N. Nkengasong, director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), as the winner of the 2020 Global Goalkeeper Award.

**The 2020 Global Goalkeeper Award** recognises an established individual demonstrating significant commitment to health and development, specifically in response to the pandemic. The award was presented to Dr. Nkengasong, a central voice for Africa's scientific community. As co-chair of the Africa CDC Consortium for COVID-19 Vaccine Clinical Trials (CONCVACT), Dr. Nkengasong is leading the securement of a variety of late-stage vaccine clinical trials on the continent by bringing together global vaccine developers, funders, and local facilitators. This work will be vital to ensure that the most promising vaccine candidates for the African population are identified and scaled up.

Under to Dr. Nkengasong leadership, the Africa CDC has launched:

- **The Africa Medical Supplies Platform**, (<https://amsp.africa>) in partnership with the African Export-Import Bank, to facilitate country procurement of critical medical and laboratory supplies from certified suppliers.
- The **#TrustedTravel**, (<https://africacdc.org/trusted-travel/>) My COVID Pass tool to simplify verification of public health documentation for travellers during exit and entry across borders.
- **Africa Pathogen Genomics Initiative** (Africa PGI) which is a US\$100 million, four-year partnership to expand access to next-generation genomic sequencing tools and expertise designed to strengthen public health surveillance and laboratory networks across Africa.

Visit <https://africacdc.org> to find out more about the work of Africa CDC



**Dr. John N. Nkengasong**  
MSc, PhD Director of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Dr. John N. Nkengasong, is a leading virologist with nearly 30 years of work experience in public health. Prior to his appointment with Africa CDC, he was the Deputy Principal Director (acting) of the Centre for Global Health at the United States Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, and Associate Director of Laboratory Science and Chief of the International Laboratory Branch at the Division of Global HIV/AIDS and TB. Earlier in his career (1993 to 1995), Dr Nkengasong worked as Chief of Virology Laboratory at the Collaborating Centre on HIV Diagnostics at the Department of Microbiology, Institute of Tropical Medicine, Antwerp, Belgium and later joined US CDC in 1994 as Chief of the Virology Laboratory in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire.

Over his career he has received numerous awards for his work including Sheppard Award, the William Watson Medal of Excellence, the highest recognition awarded by CDC. In 2020 he was appointed as one of the WHO Director-General's Special Envoys on COVID-19 Preparedness and Response and was awarded the 2020 Goalkeepers Global Goalkeeper Award. He is also recipient of the Knight of Honour Medal by the Government of Cote d'Ivoire, was knighted in 2017 as the Officer of Loin by the President of Senegal, H.E. Macky Sall, and Knighted in November 2018 by the government of Cameroon for his significant contributions to public health. He is an adjunct Professor at the Emory School of Public Health, Emory University, Atlanta, GA. He serves on several international advisory boards including the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Initiative – CEPI, the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) among others. He is also a published author with over 250 peer-review articles in international journals.



# Global Media & African Artistes come together to support The African Union's Covid-19 Awareness Campaigns

Three of the world's biggest international broadcasters BBC Global News, CNN International and Euro news/Africa news reaching over 800 million people combine, came together to donate free airtime with worth up to US\$50 million to public health bodies for the promotion of messages to combat the global coronavirus health crisis. This was the first time that the three broadcasters came together for a joint initiative, highlighting how important it is to combine forces in the global effort to bring vital health information to people across the globe.

Through their support The African Union through the Africa Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) was able to air the Africa, Ubuntu Stronger Together TV commercial during prime time viewing on the TV and digital platforms of the international broadcasters. The production of the TVC was supported by the **Ecobank Foundation** ([www.ecobankfoundation.org](http://www.ecobankfoundation.org))



Figure 1 Watch on <https://au.int/en/videos/20200521/stronger-together-covid19>

## Facebook

To curb misinformation and boost access to credible information from the Africa CDC and African Union on Covid-19 awareness and prevention measures, Facebook Inc through their regional Africa office donated US\$200,000 USD worth of advertising credits to communicate information to help protect citizens and stop the spread of the virus.



All Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA) and Trace TV to organised the first Africa Day Solidarity Concert for the Covid-19 Response Fund which aimed to:

- Use the power of music and the crucial role of African artists in advocating for the curbing of COVID-19 on the continent;
- Engage African youth, especially young musicians, to join forces and work hand in hand with the AU in curbing the COVID-19 pandemic;
- To galvanise solidarity from well-wishers on the continent and beyond to provide financial and in-kind contributions to the Africa COVID-19 Response Fund;
- Inspire action with key AU messages on the prevention, protection and response measures to contain Coronavirus on the continent;
- To establish a greater synergy between African artists and the work that African Union is doing in response to COVID-19 pandemic led by the Africa CDC

The virtual concert was aired on TRACE TV which is a 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week television music network devoted to Music, Urban culture and is watched by 326 million viewers in various countries and regions on the continent and in the diaspora.



## African artists 'Stand Together' in new African anthem during COVID

The ONE Campaign and 10 major African artists came together to release a music track calling for the world to join in solidarity to fight COVID-19. In partnership with the Nelson Mandela Foundation and MTV Base, "Stand Together" is a solidarity anthem featuring some of Africa's biggest music stars. The song aims to raise awareness on the importance of the action of the collective to curb the spread of Covid 19. All the proceeds generated from this song have been donated to the African Union Covid 19 responds fund.

“ART DEFIES DEFEAT BY ITS VERY EXISTENCE, REPRESENTING THE CELEBRATION OF LIFE, IN SPITE OF ALL ATTEMPTS TO DEGRADE AND DESTROY IT.

Nadine Gordimer



**ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE:**  
Levers for Building the Africa we Want

#AfricanHeritage

[www.au.int](http://www.au.int)   

## HEALTH



# Deploying **ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE** in Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

**Angela Martins,**  
Head of Culture Division, AU Commission

Heritage and creativity lay the foundations for vibrant, innovative and prosperous knowledge societies.

In today's interrelated world, the power of arts, culture and heritage to transform societies is critical. Their diverse manifestations, from our cherished historic monuments and museums, cultural and creative industries to traditional practices and contemporary artforms, enrich our everyday lives in countless ways. Heritage constitutes a source of identity and cohesion for communities disrupted by bewildering change and economic instability. Creativity contributes to building open

and inclusive societies. Both heritage and creativity lay the foundations for vibrant, innovative and prosperous knowledge societies.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a sudden, unexpected and substantial negative impact on the arts, culture and heritage sectors. The global health crisis and the uncertainly resulting from it profoundly affected the operations of organisations, as well as the livelihood of employed and independent cultural

workers across the continent. The Pan-African Arts, Culture and Heritage sector organisations attempted to uphold their (often publicly funded) mission to provide access to cultural heritage to the community and to maintain the safety of their employees and collections; while reacting to the unexpected change in their business model with an unknown end.

In 2020, across the world most cultural institutions were closed (or at least reduced their services to 50% capacity); exhibitions, events and performances were cancelled or postponed. In response there were intensive efforts to provide alternative or additional services through digital/online platforms, to maintain essential activities with minimal resources.

The impact of the crisis further weakened the professional, social and economic conditions of artists and cultural professionals, in particular, individual entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises who often do not have the economic base necessary to respond to a crisis situation of this magnitude. This is particularly the case in the fields of crafts, music, audio-visual and cinema, fashion and design, museums and performing arts.

In line with the foregoing, the African Union, carried out activities aimed at reflecting on the responses being initiated within each AU Member State to curb the impact of the pandemic on the sector, as well as to use the power of cultural and creative industries to advocate for the prevention of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **UNITING THROUGH MUSIC - 'STRONGER TOGETHER' AND 'STRONGER THAN COVID'**

The powerful role of African artists through their music and art in curbing the pandemic as well as in advocating for contributions by well-wishers to assist the Africa CDC operations cannot be overemphasised. African Artistes took centre stage on Africa Day 2020, (celebrated annually on the 25th of May) through a Virtual Solidarity Concert organised in collaboration with the All Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA) and Trace TV Africa, The concert organised under the theme: 'Stronger Together' and 'Stronger than COVID', brought together renowned musicians to advocate for contributions support the work of the Africa CDC through contributions to the Africa COVID-19 Response Fund.

The AU is also working with musicians to produce a solidarity song on the fight against COVID-19.

### **HIGH LEVEL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE SECTOR**

A Virtual Forum of Ministers responsible for Arts, Culture and Heritage, was held on 27th of May 2020 to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector and the challenges it posed for the cultural and creative industries sector.

Following this meeting the Ministers made the following commitments:

1. To advocate for and sensitize artists, actors, and musicians to use creative ways and means to continue producing arts and culture including the use of online/virtual and TV platforms for music concerts, fashion and design shows, visual arts webinars, cultural and creative industries hubs amongst other.
2. To advocate for heritage experts and African world heritage site managers to continue promoting and disseminating information on African sites of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) through online/virtual platforms and interactive programmes.
3. To advocate for cultural workers to be in the fore front of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic by using their art as a powerful tool for dissemination of key messages originated from the Ministries of Health, Africa CDC and W.H.O related to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
4. To set out cultural and creative industry schemes and provide, where possible, emergency funds to rescue the cultural workers, to enable them to continue producing cultural goods and services as is already being done in some AU Member States;
5. To explore further the schemes to be provided by the African Export-Import Bank (AFREXIM Bank) through its strategy for the support of the cultural and creative industries sector which, amongst others, looks into positioning Africa's creative enterprises as attractive commercial assets and viable components of global investment portfolios.
6. To continue sharing best practices to inform policy development and curb the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector on the continent.

## CHILDREN'S RIGHTS



# No Name Campaign

## Ending the Indignity of Invisibility for All Children



In Africa, only **52%** of children under-5 are registered, leaving millions deprived of their basic right to a legal identity.

Member States have the obligation to ensure the legal recognition of individuals in their territory, without the exception of emergencies such as the current COVID-19 pandemic.

**Prof. Victor Harison,  
AUC Commissioner for  
Economic Affairs.**

In Africa, nearly one in two children is deprived of a legal existence. Worrying projections show that the total number of unregistered children in Africa will continue to increase and will exceed 110 million by 2030 if no immediate interventions are effected.

In spite of these projections, some African countries are on the right track with the data as of August 2020, showing that North Africa has the highest birth registration of children at 98%, with Algeria and Tunisia topping the list of countries that have impressively reached the targeted 100% of registration of children under-5.

The trend of increasing registration of children is also evident in West and Central Africa regions, where over the past three years, the regional average registration of children under-5 years increased from 45% to 53%, equalling 8.6 million more children registered. These statistics reveal that the continent is making considerable progress in improving birth registration. However, that improvement only accounts for 52% of children under-5, registered in Africa, leaving millions of other children deprived of their basic right to a legal identity. In Eastern and Southern Africa, the average percentage of under-5 children registered is currently 40%

The low numbers of birth registration in Africa are as a result of the weak prioritisation of civil registration in national plans and budgets; low accessibility of services particularly for vulnerable populations such as refugees; high birth registration fees which are not affordable for some parents; fines imposed due to late and delayed registration especially in most Francophone countries; rising population growth leading to backlogs of unregistered children; and lack of modernisation of the civil registration system among other key issues.

#### Factors contributing to low birth registration in Africa:

- Low prioritisation of civil registration in national plans and budgets;
- Low accessibility of services particularly for vulnerable populations such as refugees;
- High birth registration fees;
- Fines imposed on late or delayed registration;
- Registry System Backlogs
- Lack of modernisation / low use of technology

#### The “No Name Campaign”

To advocate for enhanced action towards the universal registration of children at birth and the urgency to reposition civil registration and vital statistics in Africa, the African Union and UNICEF launched the No Name Campaign: **“For Every Child a Legal Identity, For Every Child Access to Justice.”** The campaign, launched on the 17th June 2020, seeks to address the indignity of invisibility of all African children. The campaign recognizes that children whose births are not registered and who lack proof of their age are more vulnerable to marginalisation, discrimination, abuse, and associated protection risks such as child marriage, child labour, forced recruitment to armed groups and forces, and trafficking.

To demonstrate the negative impact the COVID-19 pandemic can have on birth registration if mitigation measures are not instituted, the Campaign for instance notes that if children under-1 are not registered for one month in 2020 due to closure of civil registration services, the regional average of children registered in West and Central Africa will drop from 48% to 44%. If extended to a period of three months the regional average of children registered will drop from 48% to 36%

With the challenges of birth registration on the continent aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the No Name Campaign identifies immediate and long-term opportunities that AU Member States should put in place. The Campaign underscores the need for civil registration offices to prepare contingency plans to meet post-pandemic demand and backlog for birth registration; calls for the late registration fees and penalties to be waived for a given period of time; highlights the need for more decentralisation of facilities such as mobile registration centres; expanding staffing; and creating awareness of the availability of the services. Caution for the safety of the workforce and the citizenry is reiterated, in areas where services are open during the pandemic.

Further, the Campaign emphasises the linkages in the inter-operability between health and immunisation platforms and



civil registry, and advocates for a shift towards digitisation as a top priority. The value of investing in joined-up services, particularly with health platforms for improved coverage and access is crucial as a high-impact intervention.

The digitisation of birth registration has brought about gains in a number of countries. In Namibia, for instance, where digitisation is well advanced, birth registration is close to 80%. Mozambique has equally achieved significant progress in digitising registration services at decentralised levels. Countries such as Ghana, Mali, Uganda and Namibia have almost doubled their new-born registration by making the two sectors inter-operable. In Senegal, between 2014 and 2017, routine registration of children increased by 44% per cent in the four regions where birth registration service points were established in health facilities; while in Tanzania, decentralising birth registration to the local authorities and local health facilities increased certification rates from 10% in 2012 to more than 80% in 2019, in 13 target districts.

### The No Name Campaign: “For Every Child a Legal Identity, For Every Child Access to Justice.”

Addressing the vulnerability and indignity of invisibility of all African children by shining a light on the risk of marginalisation, discrimination, abuse, child marriage, child labour, forced recruitment to armed groups and trafficking for children whose births are not registered and who lack proof of their age.



We must go beyond business as usual and integrate birth registration to health and immunisation facilities, and engage innovative and digital solutions to ensure no child is left behind.

**Marie-Pierre Poirier,**  
**Executive Director for**  
**UNICEF, West & Central**  
**Africa.**

**From commitment to action, implementation of policies as a catalyst.**

Several legal instruments and protocols of the African Union call for the promotion and strengthening of birth registration, notably the African Charter on Human Rights; the Convention on the Rights of Children and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare which is designed to hold Member States accountable in promoting the rights and welfare of children in their respective countries by adopting, ratifying and implementing the provisions of the Charter. Article 6 of the Charter contains provisions relating to naming, acquisition of nationality, and birth registration.

In July 2016, the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, declared 2017-2026 the “Decade for repositioning Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Africa’s continental, regional and national development agenda”, urging governments to respond with appropriate action. Ensuring universal birth registration is one of the key areas that needs action to achieve the goals of this decade. The

10th of August is also commemorated as the “African Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day” observed every year to improve public awareness of the importance of making everyone visible in Africa through universal birth registration and certification.

Through the Africa Program on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS), the AU is also bringing its support to the UN Legal Identity Agenda 2020-2030, an initiative backed by the UN Secretary General to support countries building holistic, sustainable, civil registration, vital statistics and identity management systems.

**Learn more about the “No Name Campaign visit, <https://au.int/en/newsevents/20200617/no-name-campaign>**

## AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA

## HEADQUARTERS OF THE AfCFTA SECRETARIAT OFFICIALLY OPENED IN ACCRA GHANA



**(L) AUC Chairperson - H.E Moussa Faki, (C) AfCFTA Secretary General - H.E Wamkele Mene and (R) President of Ghana H.E Nana Akufo - Addo at the official handover of the AfCFTA secretariat in Accra Ghana.**

An increase in trade is the surest way to deepen regional integration in Africa. It will mean a rapid increase in the exchange of agricultural, industrial, financial, scientific, and technological products, which would significantly enhance our economic fortunes as a continent, create prosperity, and provide opportunities for employment for the broad masses of Africans, particularly the youth. The economic integration of Africa will lay a strong foundation for an *'Africa Beyond Aid'*.

**Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo,  
President Republic of Ghana**

**T**he African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the world's largest free trade area after the establishment of World Trade organisation brings together into one trading bloc a market covering over 1.2 billion people and a collective gross domestic product of over US\$3.4 trillion.

This colossal trading bloc with the potential to transform the lives of Africans and promote the socio-economic growth envisaged in Africa's Agenda 2063 will be overseen by the African Union's AfCFTA Secretariat which will be headquartered in Accra, Ghana.

The Secretariat was commissioned and handed over to the African Union by H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo the President of the Republic of Ghana on 17 August 2020. The commissioning of the Secretariat was a signal to the world that in spite of the Covid-19 pandemic, Africa was still gearing up for intra-regional trade, the need for which has been brought strongly to the fore ironically, by the pandemic which disrupted global supply chains and highlighted the need for Africa to increase reliance on its own manufacturing and services within the continent and reduce over dependence on external suppliers for goods and service which can be provided within the continent

with the right level of investment and convert African economies into equal trading partners as the rest of the world rather than a mere consumers.

Trading within the AfCFTA was expected to commence in July 2020 was postponed to 2021 due to the lockdowns imposed as a result of Covid-19. However, the value of having its own trading bloc in the AfCFTA was tried and tested during lockdowns when a short-term tool was devised to launch trade corridors to enable easy access and transit of essential goods by the Africa CDC to help combat the pandemic.

The AfCFTA Secretariat is now at the forefront of transforming Africa's trading landscape and the innovative use of technology to launch tools such as the online platform launched to track non-tariff barriers as well as other activities to facilitate trade in spite of the disruptions caused by the pandemic, are a sure sign that Africa is up to the task for finding solutions to ensure it achieve its economic integration agenda and sustainable growth as envisioned in Agenda 2063.



It sends a strong signal to the international investor community that Africa is open for business, based on a single rule-book for trade and investment.

**Wamkele Keabetswe Mene,  
Secretary - General,  
AfCFTA**



# PLATFORM LAUNCHED TO TRACK NON-TARIFF BARRIERS WITHIN THE AfCFTA

During the AU Summit held in Niamey, Niger in July 2019, 5 Operational Instruments aimed at supporting the implementation of the of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) were launched.

These instruments were: The Rules of Origin; The Tariff concessions; The Pan-African Payments and Settlement System (PAPSS); The African Trade Observatory and The Continental Online Tool for monitoring, reporting and elimination of Non-tariff Barriers (NTBs)

NTBs are seen as a greater hindrance to intra-African Trade than Tariff Barriers and they refer to a wide range of restrictive regulations and procedures, imposed by government authorities, that make importation or exportation of products difficult and/or costly. NTBs comprise policies of economic protectionism against foreign trade, such as prohibitions, quotas, licenses or discriminatory taxes; restrictive customs procedures as well as unjustified and/or improper application of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and other technical barriers to trade (TBT).



**The table below list some of the more common NTBs**

<i>Non-Tariff Barriers Examples</i>			
General or product-specific quotas	Unjustified Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary conditions	Seasonal import regimes	Restrictive customs procedures
Import bans	Unjustified packaging, labelling, product requirements	Inadequate product classification or customs valuation	
Complex/discriminatory Rules of Origin	Determination of eligibility of an exporting country by the importing country	Excessive document requirements	Export subsidies
Unjustified quality requirements imposed by the importing country	Determination of eligibility of an exporting establishment (firm, company) by the importing country	Import licenses and their restrictive application	State subsidies

One of the key objectives of the AfCFTA is to progressively eliminate existing NTBs and refrain from introducing new ones in order to enhance and facilitate intra Africa trade. In September 2020, the African Union launched the online platform to track NTBs. The tool which was launched in collaboration with UNCTAD will support efforts to make continental trade easier and less costly by monitoring NTBs and enabling African businesses to report such barriers and supporting their elimination with the help of governments. To ensure the NTBS platform is accessible to all businesses, regardless of size, a campaign dubbed #TradeEasier campaign was rolled out. The campaign specifically aims to reach micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), informal traders, youth and women business operators who play a crucial role in African trade but are disproportionately impacted by NTBs due to their limited resources and access to information.

**To find out more about AfCFTA Non-Tariff Barriers tool visit [www.tradebarriers.africa/about](http://www.tradebarriers.africa/about)**

# African Union






**THE WRITER IS THE  
VISIONARY OF HIS PEOPLE...  
HE ANTICIPATES, HE WARNS.**

**Wole Soyinka**



**ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE:**  
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# THE AFRICAN UNION PLAN OF ACTION ON CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

## Development and Promotion of The Creative Economy on The Continent



The African Union (AU) Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries emanated from the process of revising the 1992 Dakar Plan of Action on Cultural Industries which was developed within the framework of the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997). The first revised AU Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries was adopted during the 2nd Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Culture (CAMC2) held in Algiers, Algeria in 2008. Thereafter, the 5th Pan-African Cultural Congress (PACC5) held in September 2018 highlighted the need to align the AU Plan of Action with emerging trends. These trends included the renewed continental and global interest in the viability of the cultural and creative industries as a springboard for Africa's integration, economic empowerment, social inclusion, sustainable development, job creation, and peaceful coexistence. The proposal by PACC5 was considered and adopted by the 3rd Specialized Technical Committee on Youth, Culture and Sports (STC-YCS3) of the African Union held in Algiers in October 2018.

In compliance with the resolution of STC-YCS3, the African Union Commission (AUC) initiated the process for the revision of this AU Plan of Action in order to harness the enormous opportunities of Member States in the cultural and creative industries. It further builds upon the provision of the Treaty of Abuja of June 1991 which established the African Economic Community (Protocol on Culture and African Cultural Common Market: Article 70, Chapter XII: Education, Training and Culture), Dakar Plan of Action on Cultural Industries (1992) first revised AU Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries (2008) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The revision also took cognisance of the conditions that necessitated the creation of the AU Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage, and the Statute of the African Audio-Visual and Cinema Commission. The plan of action is an important step by the AU, to strengthen African cultural and creative industries (CCI) to enhance the role they play in achieving sustainable development in line with the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance and Africa's Agenda 2063.

### Guiding Principles for the AU Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries:

- Stimulate economic growth
- Promote social inclusion, cohesion, peace building and African Integration;
- Respect the diversity of cultural expressions and African cultural identities;
- Protect intellectual property rights
- Promote compliance to standard-setting instruments
- Enhance international cooperation
- Protect cultural rights and freedom of expression

**Empowering youth and women to participate adequately in the CCIs will accelerate the growth of the African economy, evolve innovative and globally competitive goods and services that will enrich and diversify the economies of African countries as well create employment opportunities for the citizens.**

The AU Plan of Action recognises the role of the CCI in engendering inclusive development, good governance, economic empowerment, poverty alleviation, job creation, trade and regional integration, and articulates the priorities and paths for the development of African cultural and creative industries as well as provides a framework that allows for effective coordination of inputs from Member States, strategic partners and stakeholders towards a common goal.

60 percent of Africa's population is under twenty-five years of age and accounts for the world's top ten youngest populations by median age, while women constitute about 51 percent of the population. Empowering this demography to participate adequately in the CCIs will accelerate the growth of the African economy, evolve innovative and globally competitive goods and services that will enrich and diversify the economies of African countries as well create employment opportunities for the citizens.

The exploitation of the value chain in Africa's cultural and creative industries could improve livelihoods and engender sustainable development, as well as create jobs for Africa's youthful population. The revised AU Plan of Action therefore provides an enhanced framework for the development of the CCIs as key contributors to economic growth, social inclusion and human development.

**This revised AU Plan of Action is based on the following principles:**

- (a) Stimulate economic growth;
- (b) Promote social inclusion, cohesion, peace building and African Integration;
- (c) Respect the diversity of cultural expressions and African cultural identities;
- (d) Protect intellectual property rights;
- (e) Promote compliance to standard-setting instruments;
- (f) Enhance international cooperation; and
- (g) Protect cultural rights and freedom of expression

This Plan of Action envisions ***"An innovative, integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa, where cultural and creative industries are the cornerstone of inclusive and sustainable development driven by its people and rich heritage."***



**The AU Plan of Action is centred on six goals:**

- a. Creating an enabling environment for the growth of Africa’s cultural and creative industries;
- b. Fostering creativity and innovation for socio-political development, job and wealth creation;
- c. Forging a strong cultural identity through the promotion of shared values, ethics and common heritage;
- d. Ensuring Intellectual Property compliance for socio-economic development;
- e. Accelerating the movement of cultural goods, services and people within the continent for economic benefits; and
- f. Leveraging technology in order to develop and enhance the global competitiveness of Africa’s cultural and creative industries.

**The specific objectives of this AU Plan of Action are:**

- a. To ensure an increase in national budgets and resources allocated by Member States to CCIs by five percent within the first ten years of implementation;
- b. To facilitate the emergence and growth of CCI businesses within Member States that are globally competitive;
- c. To increase the innovative use of technologies in Africa’s creative sector by five percent within the first ten years of the implementation of this plan;
- d. To increase copyrights compliance in Member States by ten percent in the first ten years of the implementation of the plan by protecting intellectual property rights of creators through effective legislation and enforcement;
- e. To increase Intra-trade on African goods and services by five percent within the first ten years of the implementation of this plan, while international trade should grow by ten percent within the same period;
- f. To facilitate the establishment of world class CCI infrastructure and spaces where all players are free to create, share ideas, collaborate and showcase their art; and
- g. To support cultural heritage, creative arts and businesses that promote the ideals and values of Pan Africanism and cultural renaissance.

The AU Plan of Action has identified eight key areas affecting the development of and growth of the CCIs in Africa. namely:

- Markets for Africa’s Cultural and Creative Industries;
- Education, Capacity Building and Sustainability;
- Finance and Investment
- Intellectual Property Rights;
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs);
- Cultural Infrastructure;
- Cultural and Creative Industry Statistics;
- Social Inclusion and Cohesion

Having reviewed the eight factors identified several activities have been identified that could position African CCI to convert its potentials and comparative advantage towards improving the performance of the sector.

6	GOALS	
	Enabling Environment	01
	Foster Creativity & Innovation	02
	Forge a Strong Cultural Identity	03
	Intellectual Property Compliance	04
	Promote movement of Cultural Goods, Services and People	05
Leverage technology	06	

OBJECTIVES IF THE AU PLAN OF ACTION ON CCIs
Increased national budgets by 5%
Facilitate growth of globally competitive businesses
Increase use of technology in creative sector by 5%
Increase copyright compliance by 10% - protecting intellectual property rights
Increase trade in goods and services by 5% regionally and 10% internationally
Establish world class infrastructure
Support businesses that promote ideals of pan-Africanism



## 1 Expanding Africa's Cultural and Creative Industry Markets

### Activity I:

#### **Developing and Strengthening New and Existing Markets for CCIs**

- Build and strengthen marketing, including digital marketing skills for CCI professionals.
- Encourage the African tourism industry to incorporate cultural signifiers in its marketing and product development.
- Develop African CCI brands and provide seed funding and innovative financial support.
- Promote the establishment of CCI production clusters in urban and rural settings.
- Support training programmes that will inform those involved in the delivery of cultural tourism products.
- Implement policies and programmes that enhance the mobility of cultural and creative professionals, their goods and services.
- Increase support for national, regional and international cultural exchange.
- Create co-production and co-distribution partnerships and agreements within and across countries to ensure the penetration of African cultural products into continental and international markets, whilst ensuring full respect for the intellectual property rights of African creators.
- Consider collectively negotiating for special trade arrangements and preferential treatment for African cultural goods and services with other regional blocks.

### Activity II:

#### **Strengthen Inter-African Co-operation and Grow Common Markets**

- The African regional economic communities (RECs) which form the cornerstone of the African Cultural Common Market, need to continue to develop and support, within their respective secretariats, departments responsible for cultural development in general and cultural and creative industries in particular.

## 2. Education, Capacity Building and Sustainability

### Activity III.

#### **Enhance the Capacities of Cultural and Creative Industry Professionals**

- Introduce and mainstream arts education in the formative years to stimulate an early interest and create a firm foundation for further education and training in the sector among children, instead of relegating arts to extra-curricular activities;
- Teacher training in arts education should address the current challenges within the CCI to include newer and relevant teaching methods and supportive infrastructure;
- Continuous professional development, networking and exchange programmes, such as workshops, seminars and conferences should be offered to teachers to raise awareness of the current trends in the CCI sector;
- Develop and mainstream CCI education and curricula that centres on the provision of creativity, innovation, technical, entrepreneurial and digital skills to learners at all levels of education and ensure assessment;

- Career guidance fora should expose those wishing to pursue further learning and training in creative arts to the diverse careers and opportunities of the industry;
- Resources should be channelled to support creative, networking and learning spaces such as creative hubs, accelerators, creative clusters, mentorship programmes and collaborative partnerships for all industry practitioners;
- Build and enhance the capacity of operators in all aspects of the value chain of the cultural and creative industries – creation, production, distribution to exhibition and audience awareness;
- Document best practices in the cultural and creative industry sector to educators and trainers, arts and cultural organisations, foundations and businesses to Member states;
- Establish new training facilities, and improve the existing ones and equip them with adequate equipment to promote professionalism in all cultural production activities;
- Establish policies, programmes and platforms for supporting interaction between formal and non-formal arts education at the level of accreditation of informal sector programmes and qualifications, quality control and standardisation systems to non-formal arts education programmes; and.
- Establish local, national, regional and continental networks for the exchange of information and periodic information to reinforce skills sharing.

### Activity IV:

#### **Strengthen National Cultural and Creative Industries Policies**

- Encourage Member States to establish departments with responsibility for CCIs, where they do not exist. Where they already exist, steps should be taken to audit the departments and make necessary modifications to ensure that they are fit for purpose within the context of the revised AU Plan of Action;
- Encourage Member States to put in place specific policies and strategies for CCIs in line with the AU Plan of Action;
- Coordinate cultural, social, and economic development policies to enhance access and participation in cultural activities by the population. These policies must emphasise and reflect the importance of the inclusion of women, the disabled, the youth, and other marginalised groups in the cultural and creative industries;
- Encourage regional bodies in charge of economic integration to include clauses which explicitly encourage cooperation in cultural and creative industries in their protocols;
- Create national and regional forums and strengthen existing ones to facilitate and enhance dialogues between creators, decision makers, planners, development policy makers and entrepreneurs;
- Implement existing treaties, agreements, conventions and standard setting instruments concerning economic and cultural cooperation with a view to adapting them to their situations;
- Conduct national and regional research to evaluate the contribution of the cultural and creative industries to national economies;
- Audit and amend all legislation and regulations which

impact on the production, presentation, marketing and consumption of cultural goods and services;

- Promote human rights, especially freedom of cultural expression as a prerequisite for production, distribution and consumption of cultural and creative goods and services;
- Strengthen and implement legislation that supports creative and media freedom and guarantees freedom of cultural expression;
- Strengthen policies and programmes that promote the social and economic rights of cultural operators;
- Ensure popularisation of the Plan of Action, including organising capacity building programmes on how to integrate the AU Plan of Action into national development plans and strategies;
- Facilitate the participation of Pan African cultural institutions and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the popularisation and implementation of the Plan of Action.
- Encourage and support Pan African initiatives by private sector operators that promote activities of the CCI.

### 3. Finance and Investment

#### Activity V:

#### ***Develop and Strengthen Financial Resource Base for Cultural and Creative Industries***

- AU to encourage Member States to increase national budgets for CCI especially support for projects that combine artistic excellence with commercial potential.
- Raise awareness of the value of cultural and creative industries among financiers to encourage investment.
- Implement capacity building programmes aimed at improving business management and entrepreneurship skills of players in the cultural and creative industries.
- Create legal, regulatory and policy frameworks which promote the acceptance of Intellectual Property as collateral for financial facilities.
- Conduct studies to demonstrate the value of cultural and creative industries and their contribution to the Gross Domestic Product to attract investment.
- Provide incentives that will encourage investment in the CCI by the private sector.
- Include cultural and creative industries in national sustainable development policies and strategies so that they can tap into financial resources allocated to the implementation of these plans.
- Member States to support CCI entrepreneurs with training on resource mobilisation strategies such as microfinance initiatives and provide information on sources of funding available to them and the associated requirements from potential financiers and development agencies.
- Address challenges of multiple taxation and provide tax incentives to CCI operators and investors.

### 4. Intellectual Property Rights

#### Activity VI:

#### ***Strengthen the Protection of Intellectual Property Rights***

- Ensure that fit-for-purpose legislation is in place and is effectively actioned through the courts and judiciary systems and that said legislation is tested to withstand creative abuse of intellectual property rights.



- Protect and Promote the rights of creators and ensure that creative works are protected from theft and unlicensed reproduction.
- Member States to ensure regular sensitisation of creators on their intellectual property rights and available legal remedies.
- Recognise the importance of intellectual rights protection as an important component in the CCI capitalise/create/market/re-capitalise/create cycle.
- Promote public education on the need to stop piracy.
- Put in place measures to facilitate copyright and digital rights management at national levels and across the continent.
- Strengthen capacities of national and private collecting societies to enhance royalty collection.
- Increase regional cooperation, exchange of information, harmonization and co-ordination of IP Laws through regional bodies like the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation.
- Encourage investments in the establishment of platforms for the distribution of CCI products and improve the capacity of creators to access them.

### 5. Information and Communication Technologies

#### Activity VII:

#### ***Leverage Information and Communication Technologies to Grow CCIs***

- Develop and improve ICT infrastructure that will foster the diversity of cultural expressions and ensure equitable access to ICT by all citizens especially in the rural areas;
- Educate and empower the citizenry on the utilisation of ICT to stimulate productive activities in the CCIs.
- Strengthen policies and strategies to promote and safeguard cultural goods and services through ICT.
- Promote and support development of technology based schemes for the commercialisation of cultural goods and services;

- Promote the integration of CCIs into regional and national economic development plans including virtual spaces.

## 6. Cultural and Creative Industries Infrastructure

### Activity VIII:

#### ***Develop and Improve Access to National Cultural Infrastructure***

- Integrate and mainstream cultural infrastructure planning into all levels of governance to ensure community awareness and access to the facilities.
- Encourage partnerships for cultural and creative industries infrastructure delivery and funding among national governments, local councils, cultural organisations, private sector, philanthropists and individuals.
- Make innovation spaces accessible to creative entrepreneurs and support the growth of community based cultural facilities and infrastructure with funding for programming and facilities management
- Engender CCI activities on virtual platforms to expand access by majority of the citizens.

## 7. Cultural and Creative Industries Statistics

### Activity IX:

#### ***Improve National Cultural Statistical Systems of Member States***

- RECs and Member States to develop a framework for cultural and creative industries and statistical definitions for the CCIs with a view to addressing statistical capacity gaps;
- The Pan African Intellectual Property Organisation (PAIPO) in coordination with PAN-African Statistical Training Centre (PANSTAT) to invite National Statistical Institutions (NSIs) to propose amendments to existing international codes to capture missing categories of the CCIs;
- Member States to develop methodologies for collecting key socio-economic data from CCI activities;
- Member States to engage national technology research centres to support NSIs to map the CCIs in the digital environment

### Activity X:

#### ***Improve National Capacities to Collect Data on CCIs Employment***

- Member States to develop methodology to collect data on income and employment in the culture and creative industries value chain.
- Member States should develop tools for collecting disaggregated data for the size of the contribution of CCIs to labour force, by gender, education level and status of employment and age groups. For instance, include a question on CCI in the Census bulletin;
- PAIPO in coordination with PAN-African Statistical Training Centre (PANSTAT) to propose missing International Standards Industrial (ISIC)/Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Codes and names specific to Africa's CCI categories; and
- Member States to collaborate with data aggregators for cultural and creative goods and services to obtain more in depth data on the sector's new sales patterns and cross-border trade of cultural and creative products and services through e-commerce.

### Activity XI:

#### ***Development of Data Sets to Address Policy Priorities***

- Member States to link data collection in the CCIs to policy priorities that encourage innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Member States to build capacity amongst alternative data providers for data capturing on issues that could inform policy, improve mobility of cultural and creative workers at regional, national and international level.
- Member States to improve routine data collection for cross-border trade and e-commerce for cultural and creative goods and services.

### Activity XII:

#### ***Development of a Cultural Statistics Framework for Africa***

- Member States to define a regional statistical framework for culture to ensure effective tracking of the development of CCIs over time and facilitate for regional, national, international comparisons.
- Member States to develop cultural indicators: identifying policy priorities, indicators and weightings with policy-makers and industry stakeholders.
- Member States to establish guidelines and develop tools for collecting, analysing and aligning data to international coding systems in the field of cultural statistics.
- Strengthen human and institutional capacities of the NSIs and key stakeholders in order to implement a continental framework to compile and validate statistical data from the CCIs.

## 8. Social Inclusion and Cohesion

### Activity XIII:

#### ***Promote African Identity, Respect for Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue for Peace and Security***

- Member States to ratify, domesticate and implement the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance.
- Member States to implement the Languages Plan of Action for Africa.
- Member States to promote the social status, working and living conditions of the CCI professionals.
- Member States and Pan African institutions introduce African Cultural Renaissance programmes to promote identity and shared values.
- Member States to provide a conducive environment for the promotion and management of Africa's diversity – ethnic, religious, cultural at national, regional and continental level;
- Member States to effectively promote and protect cultural and natural heritage sites; and
- Member States to enhance youth and women leadership in the cultural and creative industries





**H.E. AMIRA ELFADIL MOHAMMED  
ELFADIL, AUC COMMISSIONER  
FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

# YEAR OF THE ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

In recognition of the importance of Culture, Arts and Heritage in promoting the objectives of Agenda 2063 to achieve sustainable economic growth and development; and the need to enhance the role that the creative economy and industries will play in in this endeavor, the AU Heads of State and Government declared the Year 2021 as

“The AU Year of the Arts, Culture And Heritage”. The Specific theme proposed for 2021 is: ‘Arts, Culture and Heritage- Levers for Building a Prosperous, Peaceful, Integrated and Resilient Africa in the Context of Multisectoral Challenges.’

***What is the rationale for declaring 2021 the “Year of Arts, Culture and Heritage” and how will it impact the way of life in Africa?***

2021 has been declared the year of arts, culture and heritage with the aim of promoting our culture. As you are aware, culture is a term that incorporates the social behaviour and norms of a society as well as the language, knowledge, beliefs, traditions, arts, customs, capacities and habits of a certain community.

Everything we do is based on our beliefs and knowledge and transmitted by our social behaviour. African Culture plays a key role in the affairs of the African Union and its Member States hence it is important that we promote our culture and the development and preservation of the arts and heritage sector for the generations to come.

In the recent past, we seem to have not provided the much needed desirable attention to the arts, culture and heritage sector on the continent, hence the declaration of the year of arts, culture and heritage will enable us as a Union and the Union Member States to reflect on the role of culture in our development and position the sector in its rightful place.

***What major progress has Africa witnessed through the various AU programmes to promote the arts, culture and heritage?***

The role of the AUC is the development of policies and to fast track the implementation of such policies in the AU member states. Progress witnessed in the promotion of the arts, culture and heritage include:

- Ratification and implementation of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance by fourteen (14) AU member States, and development of the Implementation Guide of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance;
- Inclusion of a major cultural project as a Flagship Project of the African Union Agenda 2063 – the Great Museum of Africa.
- Development and popularization of the AU Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage;
- Establishment of the African Audiovisual and Cinema Commission (AACC) a Specialised Agency of the African Union;
- Revision of the African Union Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries in order to boost the development of creative economy policies on the continent as well as boosting the creative economy;
- Implementation of the mandate of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) including the establishment of Vehicular Cross Border Language Commission (VCLC) and the operationalization of ACALAN Structures, the Assembly of Academicians, the Scientific and Technical Committee and the ACALAN Board.
- Implementation of the mandate of the Centre for Linguistic Studies and History through Oral Traditions (CELHTO)

***What will the Commission do to mark the year of arts, culture and heritage?***

The AU Commission has drafted the Concept Note for the Year of Arts, Culture and Heritage together with a comprehensive roadmap to implement the planned programmes and activities. In line with the adopted theme for 2021 which is aimed at promoting the arts, culture and heritage sector and building a resilient Africa which provides primary health care and social services to all in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and

uses the creative economy as a tool to achieve that objective, the following areas will form the basis of interventions by the AU Policy Organs, the AU Member States and Partners as outlined in the theme of the year comprehensive roadmap:

- Arts and Culture;
- Health, Wellness and Post COVID-19 Response
- African Languages
- History and Oral Traditions
- Heritage

***So far, what progress has been with regard to the establishment of the Great Museum of Africa (GMA) as one of the AU Agenda 2063 Flagship Projects?***

The Great Museum of Africa is an important project of the African Union’s Agenda 2063. The GMA is aimed at creating a dynamic and interactive contemporary museum for the collection, preservation, study and engagement with Africa’s history, tangible and intangible culture and heritage. The following are the achievements to date of this project:

- The establishment of the Technical and Advisory Committee of the GMA composed of experts from AU Member and independent cultural and heritage experts, anthropologists, historians, curators and law makers
- The drafting of the Comprehensive Project Document of the GMA
- The drafting of the Statute of the GMA
- The provision of the site of the GMA by the Government of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria in a central location in Algiers
- The provision of a temporary location called ‘*Villa du Trait*’ which will be the host the secretariat of the GMA until the permanent site is finalised.

As part of the 2021 theme of the year activities we aim to inaugurate the Villa du Trait with the first continental exhibition in 2021 and also to embark on a robust resource mobilisation to enable the permanent headquarters of the GMA to be built.

***What measures/ or policies are being undertaken by the African Union regarding the protection of African cultural heritage and empowerment of cultural institutions?***

The fight against the illicit trafficking in cultural heritage has been a preoccupation of the African Union for decades. You may recall that in 2009 the AUC organized the 2nd Pan-African Cultural Congress (PACC2) under the theme: ‘*Inventory, Protection and Promotion of African Cultural Goods*’. The Outcomes of the PACC2 provided the scope for the actions that the African Union Commission undertook with regards to the protection of cultural property and heritage.

In collaboration with the EU an inventory of all cooperation activities between Africa and EU was successfully undertaken and concluded in 2014. One of the recommendations of this inventory was the drafting of the AU Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage which we undertook and concluded in 2018. The purpose of the AU Model Law is for Member States to use it as a guide in the development of national legislation on the protection of cultural property and heritage. Some few member states have laws in this regard but some others are already being inspired by the AU Model law to develop their own.

Other recommendations of the Africa-EU Inventory Study which are in the pipeline to be implemented are:

**The AU Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage is one of the tools developed to fight against illicit trafficking of Africa's cultural heritage and will guide countries in the development of national legislation for protection of cultural property and heritage**

- Strengthening and upgrading of legislations on protection of cultural property and heritage in the Member States;
- Enhanced capacity building and training of law enforcement agents in AU Member States for the protection of cultural property and heritage;
- Promoting the digitization of cultural goods which is the process of collecting, capturing and storage of objects in multimedia format of text, visual and audio-visual formats;
- Development and implementation of research programmes in the field of cultural property and heritage.
- Establishment of an African Observatory which will develop and manage a database of African cultural properties in Africa and worldwide.

The Great Museum of Africa (GMA) when fully established and operational will play a key role in the return of the illicitly trafficked cultural heritage from the continent

With regards to empowering Pan-African Cultural Institutions, we constantly work in collaboration with them since our role is to develop and monitor the implementation of cultural policies whilst theirs is mostly to produce and showcase cultural goods and services. Our roles are very much interlinked.

The establishment of an African Observatory as a database of African cultural properties in Africa and worldwide is key.....  
...The Great Museum of Africa when fully established and operational will play a key role in the return of the illicitly trafficked cultural heritage from the continent.



***What specific activities and programmes is the Department of Social Affairs carrying out to advocate for the ratification of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance as well as the promotion and popularisation of the Revised AU Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries, the AU Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage and the operationalisation of the African Audio-visual and Cinema Commission (AACC)?***

For the popularisation of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance – the AUC is undertaking campaigns on the charter including holding regional workshops in member states to to advocate for the speedy ratification and implementation of this important policy instrument; To date only 14 of the 55 AU member states have ratified the Charter to date.

With regards to the popularisation of the AU Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage, a regional workshop for West Africa member states was held in Benin in May 2019. The Model Law was well received and we learnt that for instance the Republic of Guinea had been inspired by the AU Model to develop their own draft model law on the protection of heritage.

In relation to the operationalisation of the African Audio-visual and Cinema Commission (AACC), you may be aware that the Republic of Kenya has offered to host the institution's temporary secretariat. The main role of the secretariat will be to advocate for the ratification of the AACC Statute. We are following up with Kenya to ensure that this office is operational soon.

I should add that the AU is also working with international organisations on the issue of preservation, protection and promotion of Africa's culture and heritage. In line with the UN Agenda 2030, the AUC collaborated with the Government of Angola and UNESCO to organise of the 1st Luanda Biennale – Pan African Forum on Culture for Peace which provided a platform for discussions on how to use arts and culture as a tool to promote and enshrine a culture of peace and non-violence on the African continent.



***How can the AU build the capacity and strengthen the role of the private sector and civil society in production, distribution, exhibition, and preservation of the products of African cultural industries? Do you have specific projects/ or partnerships in this area?***

As mentioned earlier, in the areas of arts, culture and heritage, we work closely with Pan-African Cultural institutions since our role is mainly on defining policies and theirs is production, distribution and showcasing of cultural and creative industries.

The AU has institutionalised a forum in the areas of arts, culture and heritage for engagement with the private sector and civil society organizations and Pan-African Cultural organizations called the Pan-African Cultural Congress which meets every three (3) years.

For instance, in order to review the AU Plan of Action in Cultural and Creative Industries we had to partner with the creative sector actors on the continent since they are the people on the ground they know better the developments and

needs of the sector and a key stakeholder in assisting us in this process.

The newly established African Audio-visual and Cinema Commission is envisaged to play a key role in the production, distribution and exhibition of cinema and audio visual content on the continent and beyond. As you are aware audio visual and cinematic expressions play a crucial role in the African integration process as a factor of peace building, understanding and conflict prevention as well as socio-economic growth;

The AUC constantly engages with institutions that promote the development of the cultural and creative industries of the continent to mention a few: the All Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA); the Pan-African Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO); the Africa Fashion Reception (AFR); the Pan-African Festival of Music (FESPAM); and the Pan-African Festival of Dance (FESPAD).

In the area of preservation and protection of cultural and natural heritage we work closely with the African World Heritage

Fund (AWF) on one hand to profile African heritage to the continent and the world at large and on the other hand to increase the representation of African World Heritage Sites in the World Heritage List.

***The Department of Social Affairs houses two technical institutions of the AU in the area of Arts, Culture and Heritage, namely the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) and the Centre for Linguistic Studies through Oral Traditions (CELHTO). What are the mandates of these institutions?***

***ACALAN***

The main mandate of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) is to develop and promote African languages by encouraging the formulation and establishment of vigorous and articulated language policies and the sharing of experiences in policy-making and implementation in the Member States of the African Union, as a means of using African languages in a wider range of domains on the basis that African languages will serve to forge the linguistic and cultural unity of Africa.

ACALAN's main objectives are to promote and develop African languages in general and vehicular cross-border languages in particular, in partnership with the former colonial languages, promote convivial and functional multilingualism, especially at the education sector, and ensure the development of African languages as a factor of African integration and development.

ACALAN has the following core projects:

- The Linguistic Atlas for Africa (LAA),
- The Pan-African Master's and PhD Programme in African Languages and Applied Linguistics (PANMAPAL),
- The Pan-African Centre for Interpretation and Translation (PACTI),
- The Terminology and Lexicography Project (TLP).
- Stories Across Africa (SAA)
- The African Languages and the Cyberspace Programme (ALCP)

### **CELHTO**

In 1968, UNESCO created in Niamey, Niger the Centre of Research and Documentation for the Oral Tradition in order to collect African oral sources for the elaboration of African history within the framework of General History of Africa Project launched in 1964. Several years later in 1974, the Centre of Niamey was integrated in the organisational structure of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) under the name Centre for Linguistic and Historical Studies by Oral Tradition (CELHTO). This Centre is currently a key reference point for the collection and exploration of oral tradition data in Africa.

Africa is first and foremost a continent of oral traditions and its development processes must take this reality into account. As a specialised office, CELHTO's mission is to help member States to develop study, conservation, preservation and dissemination of African oral traditions and cultures in order to make them a tool for the development of the continent.

The CELHTO is a centre for animation and coordination of researches in oral tradition. It works in close collaboration with the continent's universities and research centres as well as associations of culture professionals, narrators, artists etc. The CELHTO also works with regional economic communities' projects as well as with some projects of international institutions involved in cultural development.

### **What measures has ACALAN taken to promote Kiswahili as an official language of the African Union and as a Language of Wider Communication on the continent?**

One of the most important developments in the consideration and development of Kiswahili was when the African Union chose it alongside Arabic, English, Portuguese and French as official languages of the African Union in 2004. The African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), as the African Union's

specialised language agency has thus strategically embarked on a programme to promote Kiswahili as a Language of Wider Communication in Africa:

- In August 2011, ACALAN established a Kiswahili Commission whose main role is to develop and promote Kiswahili.
- In November 2018, ACALAN harmonised the writing system of Kiswahili alongside other languages in the sub-region.
- ACALAN organised a consultative workshop in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in June 2019 to identify means of efficiently promoting Kiswahili as a language of wider communication in Africa. At the end of the meeting, the Dar Es Salam Framework for Action was developed as a collective commitment to action to recall African Governments to ensure that Article 25 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (Previously Article 29 of the OAU Charter) is implemented.
- ACALAN has embarked on a Kiswahili Corpus project to build a Kiswahili corpus of at least 100 million words, and to train a number of experts in the area of corpus linguistics for the development Kiswahili and for lexicography and terminology development.



## ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

[Africa] must unite or perish... The struggle against colonialism does not end with the attainment of national independence... We are fast learning that political independence is not enough to rid us of the consequences of colonial rule. Without necessarily sacrificing our sovereignties, we can forge a political union based on defence, foreign affairs and diplomacy and a common citizenship, a monetary zone and a central bank. We must unite in order to achieve the full liberation of our continent.

- Kwame Nkrumah  
25 May 1963

**We Must Unite or Perish**

# A SUI GENERIS PROTECTION SYSTEM: A CATALYST FOR SILENCING CULTURAL APPROPRIATION OF THE TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE OR TRADITIONAL CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS

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The current regime of intellectual property rights (IPRs), such as copyrights, trademark, patents, trade secrets, plant breeders' rights, and industrial designs have been acknowledged globally as being inadequate to protect traditional knowledge or traditional cultural expressions. Across the globe, as well as in Africa, traditional knowledge has been left largely unprotected by the current IPRs system, making it vulnerable from unauthorised use or misappropriation, especially in the form of cultural appropriation.

A general lack of protection for IPRs relating to Traditional Knowledge (TK) or Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCEs) necessitates for a sui generis (a Latin term meaning "a special kind") protection. Piracy of TK or TCEs is one of the greatest challenges facing Africa and destroys the ability of Africa's rich heritage and culture to contribute to the creative economy and industries. Protection of traditional knowledge through a sui generic system,

is becoming an essential tool for silencing cultural appropriation of the TK or TCEs. The paper seeks to make a meaningful contribution towards the fight against cultural appropriation of Africa's rich heritage and culture by making a case for a sui generis protection for TK or TCEs.

## THE NEW AFRICA

The turn of the 21st century found Africa once again looking forward. Starting in 2015, the adoption of the African Union's (AU) agenda 2063 (described as Africa's new long-term vision and plan) is a paradigm shift in the process of achieving integration of African economies and structural transformation. To this end, the AU, through its Aspiration 5 of the Agenda, seeks to establish a sustainable creative industries sector that can make a meaningful contribution to the member states' national economies. Today there is a growing recognition in the AU, and among the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) that

Cultural Appropriation  
 “the borrowing from  
 someone else’s  
 culture without their  
 permission and without  
 acknowledgment to the  
 victim culture’s past.”

inadequate protection of traditional knowledge through the current IPRs system results in perpetuating a trend of cultural appropriation of Africa’s rich heritage and culture. Under the current IP system as provided for in various regional and international IP treaties, the recognition and protection of traditional cultures and knowledge form the subject matter of IPRs. Realising the regulatory vacuum that exists with plant protection in relation to TK, Article 27(3) of the Agreement on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) allows for member states of the World Trade Organization to use a sui generis protection system as a useful tool for the protection of TK.

### CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

The most describing explanation of cultural appropriation is found in Marisa Wood’s Cultural Appropriation and the Plains’ Indian Headdress (2017) as the borrowing from someone else’s culture without their permission and without acknowledgment to the victim culture’s past.” Examples of what may be regarded as cultural appropriation can be found across the fashion industry. In 2017, Louis Vuitton was accused of cultural appropriation for their clothing range known as the Basotho blanket (Rampersadh and Yeates, 2017) and in the same year, Vogue Magazine was also accused of cultural appropriation for a photo shoot showing the model Karlie Kloss dressed as traditional female Japanese entertainers known as geisha (Choong, 2017).

### The Sui Generis protection system: a South African case study

The South African sui generis legislation for the protection of TK or TCEs sheds some light on the potential of regulatory frameworks as effective tools for silencing unauthorised use or misappropriation of TK, especially in the form of cultural appropriation.

For all intents and purposes, the IK Act 6 of 2019 appears to have succeeded in achieving its main purpose of protection and preservation of the cultural heritage in South Africa. Since traditional works are recognised as a new protectable subject matter in South African law, the affected indigenous communities will then have a recourse that can include non-proprietary forms of protection like equitable compensation and moral rights. All this can be done through the established National Indigenous Knowledge Systems Office, where the government is the custodian of TK or TCEs on behalf of the indigenous communities. This makes it easy for the indigenous works to be protected against misappropriation or misuse by unauthorised third parties in a simplified and inexpensive way.

### Conclusion

Across the globe, there is an increasing awareness that the fight against cultural appropriation of Africa’s cultural heritage and culture can be won through the use of a sui generis legislation for the protection of TK or TCEs. Harnessing the capacity of creative arts as a significant contributor to the creative economy and industries has now become part of an African dream since the commitment made through the African Union’s Agenda 2063 aspiration 5 i.e. “An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics. The only goal of that aspiration is to have an African cultural renaissance that is pre-eminent, inculcating the spirit of Pan Africanism; tapping Africa’s rich heritage and culture to ensure that the creative arts are major contributors to Africa’s growth and transformation; and restoring and preserving Africa’s cultural heritage, including its languages”.

The prospect for successfully safeguarding traditional knowledge or traditional cultural expressions in the African continent is possible through deliberate sui generis legislation as provided for in the provisions of the treaties of various regional and international organisations.

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**WE HAVE TO SUPPORT OUR OWN FILMS. IF WE DON'T, HOW CAN WE EXPECT OTHERS TO SUPPORT THEM?**

**Cicely Tyson**



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## ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE



# AFRICAN STORYTELLING IN THE GOLDEN AGE OF CONTENT



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This article personalizes the experience of content creators all over Africa who face the challenge of protecting their intellectual property and the need for African countries to implement and adopt policies such as the African Charter on Cultural Renaissance and the AU Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage that will ensure that those in the creative industries can enjoy the legislative protection over their works and contribute to the development of African economies through increased revenue generation from the Creative Industries sector.

Until very recently, it would have been unusual to find Asian fans of America's *Stranger Things*, lovers of Korean pop music in Europe, or avid watchers of Nollywood films in the United States. Has that ever changed! This year, *Variety* reported that the global market for entertainment was—for the first time ever—worth \$100 billion<sup>1</sup>. This record-breaking number has been powered by streaming and mobile home entertainment, which saw an international increase of 29% in 2019.

The “globalisation” of audio visual content is, no doubt, the most important trend in our industry: increasing the diversity of stories and characters on the screen, encouraging the growth of vibrant local film industries, and even helping consumers take a chance on something new. Just last year, this sea change was on full display at the 2019 Academy Awards, where the all-Asian cast of Bong Joon-ho's *Parasite* was honoured with the “Best Picture” award. And with a box office take of \$245.9 million, it has become the

Africans are storytellers.  
This characteristic has  
shaped our heritage  
and powered some of  
the most vibrant film  
industries in the world

fourth largest grossing non-English language film in U.S. box office history.<sup>2</sup> With the rise of globalized content on streaming platforms in particular, I am cautiously optimistic that we may see more *Parasite*-like success stories. And as a member of the African creative industries, I wonder: what does that mean for us and our industry?

Africans are storytellers. This characteristic has shaped our heritage and powered some of the most vibrant film industries in the world—like that of my country, Nigeria. Long before I began writing, producing, and directing movies, I was an actress in the world-famous whirl of Lagos that produced 2,500 films in 2019 alone.<sup>3</sup> But for creatives like me, the energy of our country's creators did more than inspire me—it helped pay the bills. Every successful film, series, or project from my country then, made the difference between doing what I love and doing something else. In my experience, coproduction agreements, encouraging foreign investment through local production incentives, and partnerships between global industries can help African creators large and small. But it's implementing these policies together that we can ensure our industry thrives in an environment where so many others fail.

And though Nigeria is home to one of Africa's most successful film industries, I would be remiss without mentioning my brothers and sisters doing great work in other parts of the continent, such as Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, and South Africa. Collectively, our industries play an important role in safeguarding Africa's heritage, exporting our culture around the world, and providing a living to African creators. But the concentration of talent, high productivity, and immense scale of Nollywood begs a more delicate question: why do film sector revenues in Nigeria (estimated at \$23.6 million in 2018) pale in comparison to other countries like India?<sup>4</sup> To address this problem, we focus on low wages, limited international exposure, and stifled industry growth. The thought of technical matters like copyright and contracts, then, may seem the least important issue to discuss when in fact they are the most important.

Let's take, for example, my new film **"Love is War."** This was my most ambitious project to date, taking a year-and-a-half to write (alongside my colleague Naz Onuzo), produce, and direct. The story—which tells of a husband and wife who find their relationship tested as they run against each other in a local election in Nigeria—was a labour of love, particularly given its message of female empowerment

for African women. I am so proud and blessed by the positive response from friends, family, and Nollywood lovers around the world. Now available for streaming on Netflix, you could imagine my surprise to hear that it is now one of the most-watched Nigerian-made movies on the platform—even making *Fast Company's* list of the "7 films to watch for a Netflix and Nollywood weekend."<sup>5</sup>

But the very next day, I learned that a complete copy of my film was posted on a social media site without my permission and downloaded thousands of times. The fact, even, that it was posted under a different title to evade detection was hurtful not just to me, but the entire crew. And though I'm told that pirates make money from distributing our work, I didn't sit next to one in the writer's room, see one helping build a set, or strategize on how best to market my film. The problem, then, is clear: our industry cannot grow until our government truly appreciates the importance of intellectual property rights.

Copyright protection is what makes my work—truly any film industry today—possible. A simple symbol not only shows respect to the work of a film crew and a story, it preserves a legacy for future generations. One of the most basic, and oldest, forms of intellectual property is the copyright because artists, authors, and creators struggled to earn a living for their work even one hundred years ago. By affording this right to individuals, we increase the socioeconomic diversity of our creators—allowing them to continue doing what they love and share that work with society.

The principle of copyright has become even more important in the digital age, which has been critical to ensuring the widespread success of my recent projects. Digital entertainment platforms, alongside more traditional theatrical and broadcast channels, are providing more, better, and cheaper global content than ever before. But none of this would be possible without simple, good faith efforts to protect creators' work. Piracy affects our industry everywhere but is particularly devastating to small and medium-sized creators like me, and nascent film industries like Nigeria's. More African content in movie theatres, broadcast television, and streaming platforms may raise the profile of our industry, but the benefits of our film industries will not be realized until our creators' work is protected.

**Watch the trailer of my new movie WINGS OF A DOVE on**  
<https://youtu.be/nmSr1txGwuY>

Co-production agreements, encouraging foreign investment through local production incentives, and partnerships between global industries can help African creators large and small. But it's implementing these policies together that we can ensure our industry thrives in an environment where so many others fail

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# LANGUAGE AND POLITICS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

**By Biruk Shewadeg,**

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## Introduction

Language and politics are intrinsically linked. Some argue that language is founded in an exclusionary way as a means of distinguishing allies from enemies and of grooming allies and potential allies. Similarly, others locate the origin of a language in the need to form coalitions of a critical size, representing the initial form of social and political organisations. In the same vein, in his attempt at disclosing the enigma of language embedded in the political nature of human beings, Aristotle states,

... Yet it is an idea with a venerable heritage: hence it is evident that the state is a creation of nature, and that man by nature is a political animal ... now, that man is more of a political animal than bees or any other gregarious animal is evident. Nature, as we often say, makes nothing in vain and man is the only animal who she has endowed with the gift of speech.

This implies the very act of language to be political in its nature. It reveals language as a necessary part of politics in every corner.

Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the most linguistically diversified regions. This diversity is also coupled with cultural and ethnic variations. Building stable national identities in the vast majority of post-colonial sub-Saharan African

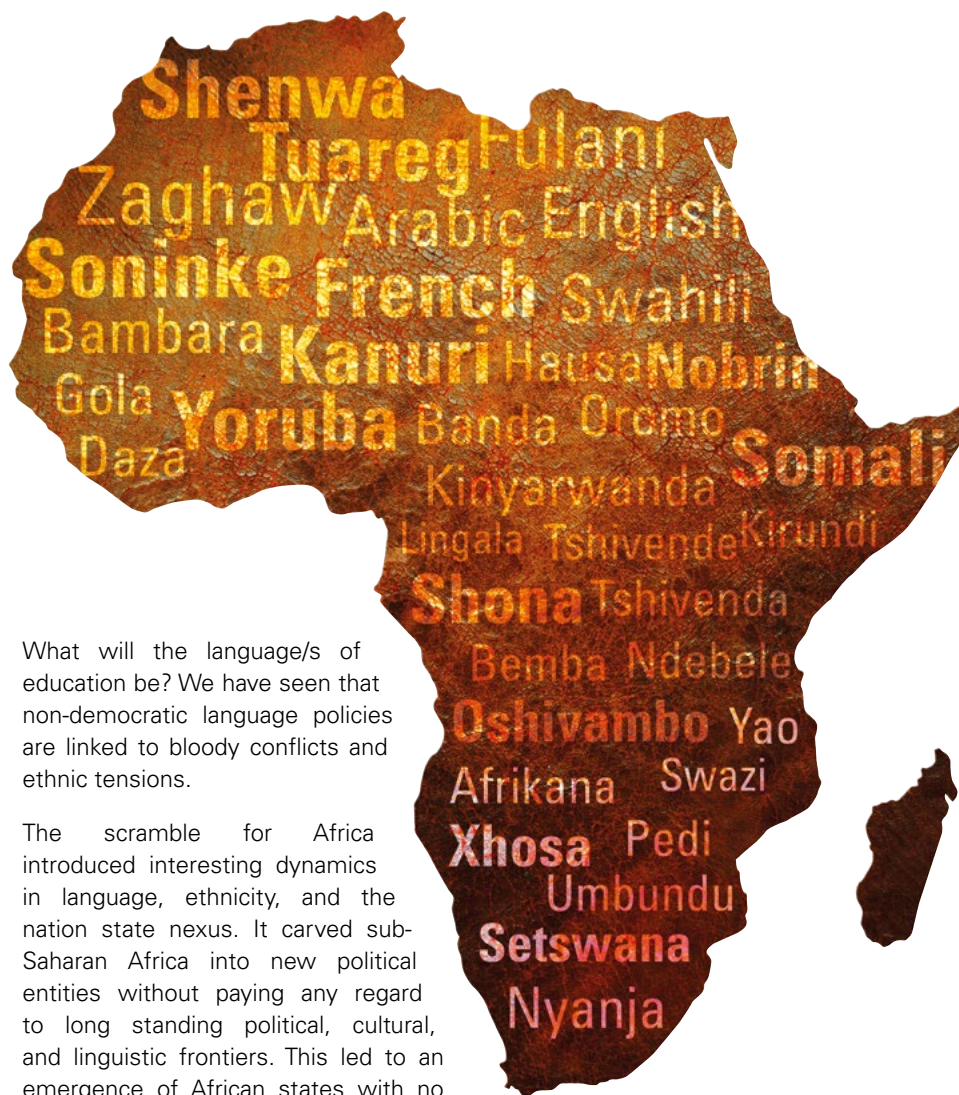
states was often a problematic task mainly because of the language factor. This compelled Ndhlovu to argue,

Any African studies discourse that overlooks the role and place of language would be incomplete because language occupies an important position in any meaningful dialogue on African development and on Africa's engagement with herself and with the wider international community.

Several sub-Saharan African countries, in the immediate aftermath of the colonial era saw the development of what can be referred to as 'linguistic nationalism' as a way of contesting a state-directed effort of linguistic homogenisation. This attempt of homogenization or the 'one nation-one language' motto is evident in some cases, for example in Tanzania and Ethiopia. Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia attempted to promote one language as part of their nation building project.

Such a project can be explained in two ways. One is the recognition of a one and only one language at the expense of others - or what is termed assimilationist language policy. The second explanation falls under the pragmatic need to promote one language that may serve as a language of wider communication. Linguists from Ethiopia, for example, Zelalem accorded the second explanation as a rationale for their attempt.

In post-colonial situations, the choice between the colonial language and an indigenous language was almost always politically driven, though in different ways in different places. The politics of language choice becomes particularly difficult when institutional choices have to be made. Including questions of, in what language/s will the government conduct its activities and communicate with its citizens?



What will the language/s of education be? We have seen that non-democratic language policies are linked to bloody conflicts and ethnic tensions.

The scramble for Africa introduced interesting dynamics in language, ethnicity, and the nation state nexus. It carved sub-Saharan Africa into new political entities without paying any regard to long standing political, cultural, and linguistic frontiers. This led to an emergence of African states with no solid foundation and in which divergent ethnic groups became compatriot as was the case in Nigeria. In another dimension, former unitary groups were dispersed into two or more nations as it is evident in the Yorubas where they belong to Nigeria and Benin; the Ewe in Ghana, Togo, and Benin; the Somalis in French, British, and Italian Somaliland, etc.

As language is one of the important factors of identity formation and given the multilingual nature of Africa, a political discourse related with ethnic and nation-state issue finds the language factor very crucial in bringing a holistic account of the case.

A brief glance at how divergent conceptualisations pertaining multilingualism in sub-Saharan Africa may enrich the discussion of language, ethnicity and nation state nexus.

#### **Competing Views on Multilingualism**

Two diametrically opposite views have emerged with respect to the presence of many languages in various countries of sub-Saharan Africa. The

first view capitalises on the negative consequences of multilingualism, associating it with many problems, such as, ethnic conflicts, political tensions, and poverty and under development. This school of thought avers that language diversity is "a bane of African unity, whether at the national, regional, or continental level". Multilingualism is regarded as a burden, particularly when considered in the context of the amount of resources needed to promote the use of many languages in the areas of education, media, law and administration, business and commerce, and international communication. Moreover, the presence of many languages is also equated with economic backwardness while the existence of one language is associated with economic prosperity and political stability. Linguistic heterogeneity is further associated by many with poor economic performance, insufficient provision of public goods, higher levels of corruption, less social trust and high probability of internal conflict.

The second perspective on language diversity which is based on a post-modern human rights discourse, demonstrates the indispensability of multilingualism as seen within the context of democracy and human rights where the right of language choice is considered an integral part of fundamental human rights. Rather than being a costly obstacle to development, nation-building, national unity, political integration and social cohesion, multilingualism Buzasi argues, is "considered to be an asset". The premise in the second school of thought rests on the point that every language in a multilingual society has the right to exist and to be given an "equal opportunity to develop legal and other technological limbs to flourish". As a relatively new approach, some scholars suggest that people have to be careful in interpreting linguistic diversity as a completely harmful societal condition that must be eliminated.

Some linguists indicate an ambivalence on the issue of multilingualism with the argument that the abundance of languages in Africa is attributed to be the cause of the continent's predicaments, particularly, in education and politics; while also stating that multilingualism appears to have helped the African gain a wider cultural understanding and enhanced him culturally to acquire a forbearing and affable personality. What is more important beyond the either/or debate however, is the need to accept the crude reality that the continent is linguistically well-diversified and language in and of itself, or language per se, is not a problem but its management plays a significant role in eliminating challenges. Moreover, in a region like sub-Saharan Africa, where a primordial conception of ethnicity dominates the political environment, the language factor needs special attention as being an essential marker of ethnic identity.

### **The Concomitance of Language and Ethnicity**

The language-ethnic identity relationship discourse provides considerable insights into the link between language and culture. Each language is tied to distinct ethnic dynamics. A strong emotional attachment to language and ethnicity is a norm in sub-Saharan Africa. The cultural paraphernalia, as Fishman argues, is "shaped by its language".

Each ethnic group in the region expresses and identifies itself by the language it speaks. It is not uncommon hearing a "Ghanaian, Nigerian, Ugandan, Sierra Leonian, Cameroonian, or Togolese refer to somebody as "my brother" simply because they share the same language and ethnic group background". Sameness of a language and ethnicity serves as a basis in defining bonds of acceptance and togetherness, identity, separateness, solidarity, and brotherhood and kinship. Language, is a "reliable criterion for ethnic identity and social identity, in its most general sense, is reflected in linguistic behaviour".

Before contact with the outside world, particularly with Europeans, Africans predominately lived in distinct ethnic and linguistic groups. One can argue that the various ethnic groups lived autonomously to each other before the advent of colonialism. Each ethnic group had its own quasi-political and administrative structures, its particular language, and often times its own cultural values. The various ethnic groups could be said to constitute 'states' having members speaking the same language within.

In Ghana for example, "the Akan saw themselves as a state, and the Akan language performed a dual function". The language both brought the Akan people together and also set them apart from other ethnic groups. The same phenomenon also applied elsewhere in the region.

Each African language thus served as a way of self-expression and defined intra-ethnic communication of identity groups. Each language effectively constituted a binding force that linked families, lineage, clans, and the entire ethnic group together. Languages in sub-Saharan Africa are said to constitute the storehouse of ethnicity basically because each ethnic group expressed and identified itself by the language it spoke. Moreover, in conditions where there were larger ethnic groups, minor differences in dialects led to the creation of more organic and cohesive small units. Within ethnic groups therefore, language persisted as an icon of the group's distinctiveness, and the group's cultural heritage as well.

In sub-Saharan Africa, language often appeared to be a "passport to ethnic origin, just as ethnic background was

indexical of a language". Since, ethnicity and linguistic affinity are overlapping, they were also instrumental in strengthening the groups and in consolidating their defences against invasion by outsiders. Speakers of the same language who belonged to the same ethnic group experienced solidarity and strong bonds in any situation of strife and happiness. But, this is not to argue that complete unity is automatically engendered through the agency of language. The Akan of Ghana, found themselves in internal conflict more times than they fought with other ethnic groups. Similarly, the violence and unrest in Somalia and Zanzibar, where a relative homogeneity prevails in terms of ethnicity, in the post-Siad Barre and early 1960s respectively, illustrate that common language is not by itself a remedy for avoiding intra-group conflicts. Despite such anomalies, however, the colonial enterprise highly impacted on inter and intra-group communications.

As a result of contact with European traders, explorers, missionaries, educators, colonial officers and even settlers in certain areas, new and larger communities which formed a conglomeration of various ethnic and linguistic backgrounds came into existence. New political frontiers entered the ethnic divide and led to a situation where inhabitants were subjected to being torn between their ethnic and linguistic allegiances and allegiances to the state. This situation resulted in political unrest.

Sub-Saharan Africa, in the 1960s and 70s saw the blossoming of the ethnic revival movement. Politically, this era was marked by the struggle for independence. What the then politicians failed to give due consideration to was that the almost irrevocable bond between language and ethnicity had resulted in the development of enduring stereotypes of those who shared a language and related ethnic identity. "

The ethnic consciousness of the time brought about a reawakening of resentful feelings. Some members of ethnic groups regarded themselves as superior to all others and downgraded languages other than their own, and the people who spoke such languages. The ethnic revival movement did little to discourage resentment of members of other ethnic and language groups; it hardly promoted inter-ethnic understanding beyond the official level.

Some ethnic groups were associated with significant discriminatory, prejudicial, and stereotypical images, and people discouraged members of their ethnic group from interacting with such stereotypical groups. In some stances, there were secessionist attempts as was the case in Biafra, Nigeria, in the late 1960s, or the Antor secessionist scare in Ghana in the late 1950s. In other cases, strong ethnic feelings led to 'ethnic-cleansing' as was observed in Rwanda and Burundi, and the civil war in Liberia.

Although people could, with difficulty in one way or another live together as one nation and also acquired the feeling of oneness, at the same time, each ethnic group forming the state, had specific characteristics, such as language, an alleged common psychological make-up, religion etc. that distinguished them apart from other ethnic groups of the same country. Living in a same country, they continued to see themselves as distinct ethnic groups. Thus, although politicisation may help change ethnicity into nationalism elsewhere, in sub-Saharan Africa, what happened was the reverse. Politicisation, perhaps, aggravated ethnicity and jeopardised the multi-ethnic feature of Africa's statehood.

More importantly, the ethnic revival and the accompanying strong ethnic feelings also brought with it, political exclusionism and unique voting patterns during elections. In most sub-Saharan African countries, politicians could simply win over the votes of members of their ethno-linguistic groups in spite of their professional incompetence. The ethno-linguistic divide dominates the political landscape at the detriment of meritocracy. In some countries the ruling coalitions are a formation of parties organised in the ethnolinguistic arrangement. The political modus operandi makes ethnolinguistic identity and politics inseparable..

#### Language viz. Nation-State Discourse

Nation-state is a vague concept. Delanty articulates the nation-state as, "The state is the government and its institution; the nation is best described as some kind of grouping of people who identify with each other, be it for cultural, ethnic, linguistic, or historical reasons. The nation-state is the marriage of the two ideas."

The nation-state as the context of policy and planning operations has been problematic in sub-Saharan Africa for a couple of reasons. First, the nation-state narrative in Africa is marked by the arbitrariness of boundaries from the partitioning of Africa at the Berlin conference in the 1880s. Ethnic nationalities were bisected and trisected by colonial boundaries and people with diverse, and in some cases conflicting aspirations, were lumped together in one nation. Thus, the nation-state narrative seems to have been formed to fail, or at least to face formidable difficulty in succeeding. Second, migration and displacement as part of the post-modern condition in Africa has diffused once homogenous communities, particularly in the urban areas where diverse communities exist. These two conditions at times jointly, at other times separately, pose a challenge for the success of the nation-state framework.

The language factor is a sine-qua-non in sub-Saharan Africa's post-independence quest for a nation-state. In the region, the central-government authored policies often do not reflect the reality of language-use needs and practices of the majority of the populous within the particular state, who either do not have the official language of their own

vernacular or possess only modest competence in those languages which are deemed official. Facing with two ideological positions, on the one hand, the '19<sup>th</sup> Century European nation-state ideology and 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century African renaissance ideology on the other hand, language planners and decision makers in Africa, found themselves in a complex dilemma. The academic and political discourse on the language factor in post-colonial Africa is embedded in highly ideologised and appears to find itself between a rock and a hard place. The ongoing debate suffers from a mismatch between the multilingual realities in the African post-colonies and the governing political ideology that governs the mainstream discourse on nation building inside and outside of Africa.

The mainstream discourse on nation building is based on ideological positions that expound official monolingualism that pronounces the promotion one colonial language. The reality that most African countries are essentially pluralistic in terms of language, culture, and ethnic compositions, such official monolingualism imply to opt for some kind of 'neutral' or 'unifying' language.

The idea is that such a heterogeneous reality should conform to the Westphalian



model of a 'nation-state', which is characterised by factual or ideologically postulated linguistic, cultural, and ethnic homogeneity, ideally allowing the constituents of the polity to speak of one single 'nation' populating its own nation-state.

The ideology that promotes the import of such policies, i.e., "official monolingualism" policy, is basically Social Darwinist by a prior acceptance of the essential 'evolutionary' difference that exists between human societies, with some being more advanced than others, and thus legitimises colonialism. As far as language policy is concerned, this policy favours what linguists refer to 'exoglossic monolingualism', that is, -the promotion of ex-colonial languages in the guise of 'neutrality' and 'unity'. This disregards the historically grown socio-cultural realities in Africa with roots in the continent's characteristic territorial multilingualism. Such an official monolingualism policy fosters language attitudes that target the eradication of multilingualism for all official purposes, including in formal education, in the emergent post-colonial nation-states. Put otherwise, the ideological presupposition is that modern statehood in Africa must be 'de-Africanised' to match Western prescriptions. This widely shared perspective has been and remains under sharp criticism for its inherent racism and continued linguistic and cultural imperialism.

In its 2015 edition, the Ethnologue identifies 2138 language for Africa, putting aside the theoretical challenge of 'Language' and 'Dialect'. On average there is 40 languages per state. This further implies that most African ethno-linguistic groups do not have their own nation-state. Thus, one might infer that the Western notion of nation-state anchored on the idea of "official monolingualism" makes little, to no, sense in the African context. Fundamentally, because, sub-Saharan Africa is multi-lingual, by and large.

The argument that views multilingualism as threatening or blocking national unity and social coherence, and therefore, and by implication, policies which would officially accept multilingualism are detrimental to socio-economic modernisation and development is a myth based on a monistic Western nation state ideology. The Somali

experience that perfectly matches the 'nation-state' formula stayed in political crisis for quarter of a century. The Somali people, sharing more or less, the same language, culture, religion and perhaps, ethnicity, they remained in a serious political crisis nearly for three decades. This myth is used as political propaganda in post-colonies for two reasons. First, it is used to discredit multilingual policies that would include indigenous languages; and second, to maintain the hegemonic dominance of the language of the former colonial master and, consequently, avoid jeopardising the quasi-natural privilege of the 'owners' of the language of power.

### Conclusion

The issue of language in sub-Saharan Africa dominates the political arena in a significant way. The politics of ethnicity and the nation-state cannot be examined without the language factor. The sense of ethnic self is created and perpetuated by language. Ethnic and linguistic identification are at the centre of the socio-political and cultural lives of sub-Saharan Africans even today. Even in those countries that may constitutionally ban political mobilisation along the ethnic divide, the driving force behind political offices is ethno-linguistic identity.

It is observed that sociocultural life in sub-Saharan Africa ethno-linguistic identities determining privileges, positions, achievable heights, goals, and aspirations. Ethnic identity is preserved through language, and ethnicity has been one of the many tools and strategies for the assertion of superiority and the denial of, or protest against, being labelled ethnolinguistically different or competent.

With the discourse of nation-state that dominated the political environment since the post-independence period, one can observe in effect that although several different ethnic groups are "clumped" together in one polity, the sub-Saharan African situation points to the fact that there is an absence of a strong sense of political belonging. The situation of offering a little or no emphasis to put on African languages and the intent was to "unify" the people promoting one or another colonial language/s, in the guise of 'neutrality', the consequences remained disastrous. Because, the sustained use of the colonial languages created a form of dejection in the masses, and extended to the exclusion of a large populous

from participation in public activities and from decisions affecting their own lives. This reality reinforces people's need to intensify their links with their ethnic groups, which are linguistically and culturally accommodating.

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“IT IS THE STORYTELLER WHO MAKES US WHAT WE ARE, WHO CREATES HISTORY. THE STORYTELLER CREATES THE MEMORY THAT THE SURVIVORS MUST HAVE - OTHERWISE THEIR SURVIVING WOULD HAVE NO MEANING.

Chinua Achebe



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# THE AFRICAN ACADEMY OF LANGUAGES (ACALAN)

**T**he African Academy of Languages, ACALAN is the African Union Specialised agency charged with the promotion and development of African languages as a means for fostering continental integration and development. It is headquartered in Bamako, Mali

The organisation was established in Mali in December 2000 by Presidential Decree as the Mission for the African Academy of Languages (MACALAN). It was transformed into ACALAN in January 2006 and became a specialised institution of the African Union when its statutes were adopted by the Sixth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union.

#### ACALAN's main objectives are to:

- Promote and develop the use of African languages in general and vehicular cross-border languages in particular in partnership with the former colonial languages
- To ensure the development of African languages as a factor of African integration and development
- Promote convivial, functional multilingualism at all levels of the society, particularly in the education sector

#### To deliver on its mandate ACALAN aims to

1. To establish its two working structures: Vehicular Cross-border Language Commissions (VCLC) and National Language Structures (NLS) as national focal points in the Member States of the AU

2. Support the Ministers of Education and of Culture of the AU Member States in the revamping of the African education system
3. Assist Member States in the formulation and implementation of national language policies.
4. Assist in the implementation of the Charter for the African Cultural Renaissance and of the Language Plan of Action for Africa
5. Collaborate with the regional institutions of language and oral tradition amongst which include:
  - The African Union's Centre of Linguistic and Historical Studies through Oral Tradition (CELHTO);
  - The International Centre for Research and Documentation on African Traditions and Languages (CERDOTOLA);
  - The Eastern African Centre for Research on Oral Tradition and National Languages (EACROTANAL),
  - The International Centre for Bantu Civilisation, (CICIBA)

ACALAN has five organs which oversee its mandate: the AU Specialised Technical Committee (STC) on Youth, Culture and Sports, which is its supreme organ; the Governing Board (highest policy organ), the Assembly of Academicians, the Scientific and Technical Committee and the Executive Secretariat.

ACALAN's working structures are the National Language Structures (one in each Member State) and the Vehicular Cross-border Language Commissions (one for each vehicular cross-border language).

#### **ACALAN has several key projects that it is undertaking.**

The Linguistic Atlas for Africa (LAA) is one of ACALAN's key projects and it aims to produce precise knowledge about the number of African languages, their interrelations and dialectical variations. The Linguistic Atlas is divided into the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). ACALAN is working on completing the cartographic aspects of the atlas for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) chapter plus Mauritania which will be availed in print and electronic format in all the languages in the 15 Member States of ECOWAS.

ACALAN actively supports post-graduate level students in African languages and linguistics. Its key project is the Pan-African Master's and PhD Programme in African Languages and Applied Linguistics (PANMAPAL) which aims to train qualified linguists, language professionals, educators and other practitioners to become specialists in African languages.

The Pan-African School for Translation and Interpretation (PASTI) is an ACALAN project that trains young Africans in the profession of translation and interpretation so as to enable African languages become true working languages and languages of instruction in a multilingual context.

In the area of Terminology and Lexicography (TLP) , ACALAN trains dictionary compilers and terminology developers; and provides research, support, counsel services in these fields in the major African languages. In addition, ACALAN has produced dictionaries in Ikinyarwanda–Kiswahili–English; English–Kiswahili–Kinyarwanda; Euegbefiala–Ewe–English; English–Ewe; Mandenkan–Bamanankan; and an online Hausa spell checker.

The Stories Across Africa (SAA) project aims to produce anthologies of stories for children to enjoy in their own languages as a means of instilling the culture of reading in them.

Finally the African Languages and the Cyberspace (ALC) project aims to promote African languages in the cyberspace and apply Human Language Technologies to them.

*(Read about ACALAN'S work in promoting Kiswahili as covered in this issue in the article The case for Kiswahili as a language of wider communication in Africa)*

#### **Find out more about ACALAN**

**Website: [www.acalan-au.org](http://www.acalan-au.org) and [www.acalan.tv](http://www.acalan.tv)**

**Email: [acalan@Africa-union.org](mailto:acalan@Africa-union.org) Tel: +223 2029 0459**

**Twitter: [@AcademyAcalan](https://twitter.com/AcademyAcalan)**

**Facebook: 'African Academy of Languages Acalan'**

# THE CENTRE FOR LINGUISTIC AND HISTORICAL STUDIES BY ORAL TRADITION (CELHTO)

The Centre for Linguistic and Historical Studies by Oral Tradition (CELHTO) is a specialised technical agency of the African Union and aims to contribute to Africa's integration and development by providing analysis on African history, societies and culture. Its main mandate is to work for the recovery of the continent's autonomy from external cultural visions by affirming a cultural identity that promotes the integration and development of the continent. The Centre aims to undertake linguistic, historical and sociological studies of African communities; produce and preserve written, audio, photographic and audio-visual records of oral traditions; and ensure popular approaches to the economic, political and socio-cultural integration of Africa. CELHTO works closely with universities, social science centres of research and civil society cultural organisations.

CELHTO is the successor to the Centre for Research and Documentation for Oral Tradition (CRDTO), which was originally established in 1968 on the recommendation of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). CRDTO became CELHTO when it was integrated into the OAU in 1974. CELHTO is located in Niamey, Niger

**CELHTO key programmes are:**

- collecting, safeguarding, digitising and distributing records of African oral traditions;
- strengthening the development and use of African languages;
- publishing research results in scientific journals;
- protecting heritage as part of conflict prevention and resolution in Africa; and
- supporting African civil society and its diaspora.

*Find out more by*

*Website: [www.celhto.org](http://www.celhto.org)*

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**TALENT IS LIKE ELECTRICITY.  
WE DON'T UNDERSTAND  
ELECTRICITY. WE USE IT.**

Maya Angelou



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# THE CASE FOR KISWAHILI AS A LANGUAGE OF WIDER COMMUNICATION IN AFRICA

There is a close relationship between language as an expression of cultural coherence and development; because meaningful development cannot take place in the midst of linguistic barriers. Language can facilitate or hinder the participation of the citizens of a nation in their own development. Consequently, it is a factor of socio-economic development. This suggests that language is a key contributing factor towards the realisation of national development. Paradoxically, it is the former colonial languages that have dominated the development discourse in most African states. Even for Africa's continental body, the OAU Charter (Article 29) and subsequently the Constitutive Act of the African Union (Article 25 and Article 11 of the Protocol) stated that "the official languages of the Union and all its institutions shall be, ***"...Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Kiswahili and any other African Language..."***

This accordingly will allow Africans to communicate their ideas, aspirations and needs, and to attain a Pan-African identity outside the labels of Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone: we have to shed off that old colonial skin.  
**Prof. F.E.M.K Senkoro**

African languages have been restricted to a few domains of use and in the less formal sector such as intra-community communication and interpretation in local courts. This accounts in part for the failure of many states in Africa in their efforts for sustainable socio-economic development, and the maintenance of peace and stability. Development in Africa slows down because important communication relies, as we have stated, on former colonial languages, notwithstanding the fact that, a vast number of the African population do not understand these languages. Consequently, the people involved in the process of development cannot interact effectively.

In a continent with almost 2000 indigenous languages, the idea of promoting a pan-African language as a language of wider communication in Africa would support the linguistic expression of the African Union's political will. It will also strengthen the African identity and linguistically provide Africa a place on the world stage.

There is no doubt that Africa is very much a multilingual continent, and the multilingual reality needs to be respected. Linguistic diversity is a quality that recognizes diverse or different cultures and languages, as opposed to monoculture. Linguistic diversity can also sometimes be used to refer to the variety of language groups in specific regions, on the continent, and in the world as a whole.

The issue now is, how do we respect and maintain the multilingual reality and diversity of Africa and, at the same time, carve a way for a pan-African language of wider communication? Indeed, this question is not only of a linguistic nature, but it also pivots on political attachments, nationalistic and patriotic viewpoints,

ethnic alignments and configurations, and cultural mindsets and connections.

In showing the urgency and necessity of the idea of finding a language amongst the numerous indigenous African languages and elevate it to the level of a common Pan-African language of wider communication and ultimately as Africa's lingua franca, Professor F.E.M.K. Senkoro noted, "there is a need for common expression for peace, security and economic integration of Africa, and a need for a common language in meetings, negotiations, mediations and discussions," (Senkoro, 2018). This accordingly will allow Africans to communicate their ideas, aspirations and needs, and to attain a Pan-African identity outside the labels of Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone: we have to shed off that old colonial skin. (ibid)

The major issue here is how the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) can effectively promote a language of wider communication on the continent in the midst of African linguistic diversity so as to enhance African integration and development. To situate this issue, there is the need to first look at the aspects of linguistic diversity on the continent in view of determining its role in African integration and development.

## ***Language of Wider Communication in Africa***

The adoption of Kiswahili, as an official language of the African Union, is part of the political will and efforts of African leaders to enable the use African languages in Africa's development. As the lingua franca for about 200 million Africans in the countries within the Great Lakes region in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa, Kiswahili is already a powerful tool for integrating the national and regional levels in the countries of the region. The language is an important ingredient for

fostering diversity and inclusion in the East African Community, for regional integration and sustainable development. Owing to its ability to 'globalise from below', the language has no place for discriminatory representations that perpetuate inequality or exclusion.

Kiswahili has a great potential as a language of wider communication in Africa due to factors, which include its strategic position, history and structure. Kiswahili expanded not only along the eastern coast, from Brava, present day Somalia in the north, to Sofala, present Mozambique, in the south, but also into the interior, as far west as the present Democratic Republic of the Congo. With time, Kiswahili has expanded to cover most of eastern and central Africa, where it is spoken as a lingua franca and language of integration in the area. Hence, it is currently one of the major African languages, spoken in at least 13 countries. Kiswahili is the most extensively spoken language in Africa, south of the Sahara. It is a dominant and, therefore, national language and lingua franca, in Tanzania and Kenya. It has recently been promoted to a national language in Uganda. Moreover, it is a major language in a number of countries, including Burundi, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Mozambique. It is also spoken in Comoro Islands, some parts of Madagascar, Malawi, Zambia and South Sudan. Kiswahili has similarity with other Bantu and Niger Congo languages, which are highly similar in form, structure and vocabulary, making it easier for most people, especially in sub-Saharan Africa to learn. Kiswahili is not associated with ethnicity, because after its long period of use as a lingua franca it has lost its cultural base, and therefore, is easily accepted by any language group.

Considering the foregoing, The African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), has over the years embarked on programmes to promote Kiswahili as a language of wider communication in Africa, alongside other regional languages such as Arabic, Hausa, Fulfulde, Mandenkan. In August 2011, ACALAN established a Kiswahili Commission whose main role is to develop and promote Kiswahili. In November 2018, ACALAN harmonised the writing system of Kiswahili alongside other languages in the sub-region. ACALAN has also embarked on a Kiswahili Corpus project to build a Kiswahili corpus of at least 100 million words, and to train experts in the area of corpus linguistics for the development Kiswahili and for lexicography and terminology development. In June 2019, ACALAN organised a consultative workshop in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania to identify ways and means of efficiently promoting Kiswahili as a language of wider communication in Africa. An outcome of this meeting was The Dar Es Salaam Framework for Action which was developed as a collective commitment to action to remind African governments of their responsibility and obligation to ensure that Article 25 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union and Article 11 of the Protocol are implemented. This is a desire that can be realised through collaboration and partnership amongst those charged with the responsibility of the development and use of African languages in Member States, supported by co-operation with Regional Economic Communities, international agencies and institutions, individuals and language interest groups.

Kiswahili has a lot of potential and prospects to become a major continental language. Many people see Kiswahili as a lingua franca, which has no ethnic base or complex structures.



They regard it as a language which is easy to learn. Kiswahili is rapidly expanding in Southern Africa and in 2019 in celebration of the International Year Of Indigenous Languages, countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) adopted Kiswahili as one of its official languages of communication with some countries like South Africa introducing Kiswahili into its school curriculum.

The idea of promoting a pan-African language of wider communication is very attractive in the sense that it is the linguistic expression of the African Union's political will. It is also good as a means of signalling African identity. Interestingly, the adoption of Kiswahili, at the AU was loaded with diplomatic potential for Africa. If effectively promoted as a language of wider communication in Africa, Kiswahili will be very crucial for the empowerment and active participation of citizens of most of Africa in their own development.

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## ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

# IN SEARCH OF SOLUTIONS:

Can Creative Industries assist in Curbing Unemployment in Africa and deliver The Africa We Want In the AfCFTA?

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**Abstract:** Africa is endowed with vast prime agricultural land and mineral resources which have not positively been utilised in addressing the prevailing challenges, among them unemployment and low intra-African trade. In attempting to complement efforts and benefit from traditional sectors, questions have emerged on whether Africa should not also utilize its creativity, rich cultural heritage and inexhaustible pool of talent to foster a creative economy for development. This paper seeks to explore the potential role that creative and cultural industries have in solving the challenges highlighted and thereby advancing the aspirations of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063. Key issues have been identified in order to help the AU and its member states to form a strategic plan of action for building a strong premise for its creative economy. The paper concludes with case studies of countries that have developed their creative economies for development.

Africa is poised to be the next global frontier and as such policymakers are in search of innovative ways to make this happen. The AU Agenda 2063 is a strategic plan that seeks to take Africa to the next level of development by addressing challenges while contributing meaningfully to the global economy. There are challenges that need to be addressed in Africa if it is to curb unemployment and increase the low intra-African trade. Therefore, it is the authors' thrust to interrogate the possibility of advancing creative and cultural industries in a bid to enhance the creative economy in Africa with the ultimate goal of reducing unemployment and advancing the aspirations of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Specially by querying:

- Can Africa realise her dream by leveraging and exploiting creative industries?

- In her pursuit of regional integration and enhancing intra-African Trade, what role do creative industries play?
- Will creative industries export products aid in realising the aspirations of the AfCFTA?

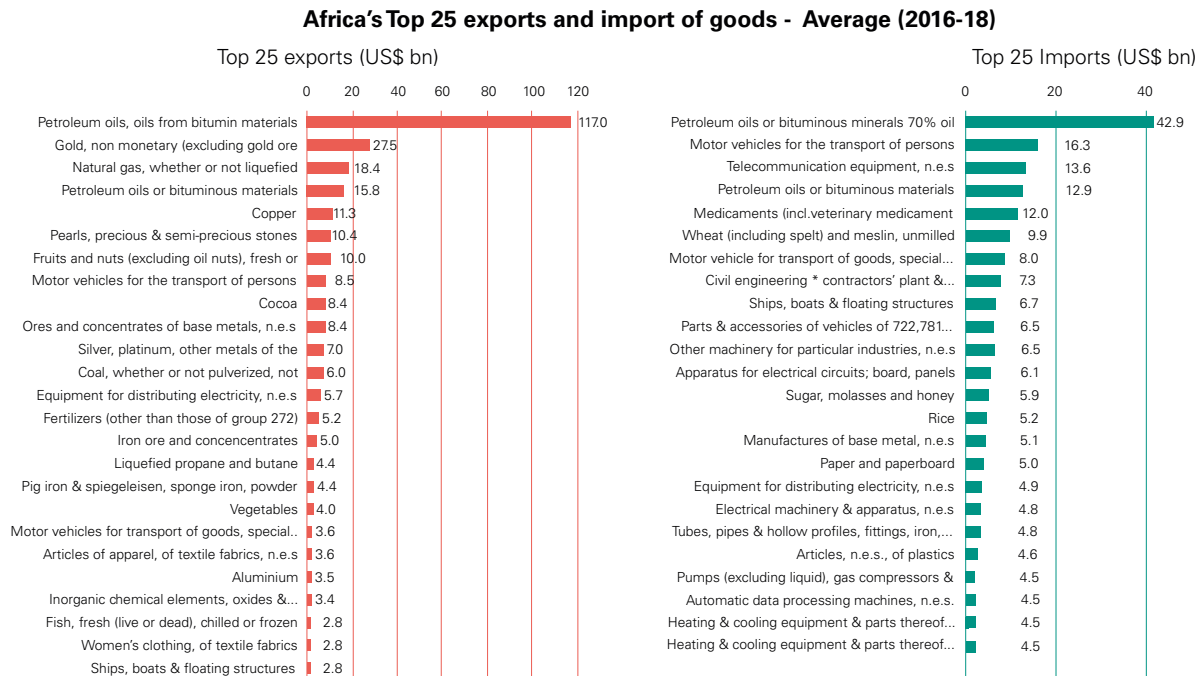
### Overview of the African socio-economic structure

According to a report by the African Development Bank (AfDB), prior to the global coronavirus pandemic, Africa's growth was forecasted to pick up to 3.9% in 2020 and 4.1% in 2021. This is below the 5% regional average growth that has prevailed for decades. The continent has witnessed East Africa maintaining its lead as the fastest growing region, with average growth estimated at 5% in 2019 followed by North Africa at 4.1%. West Africa registered positive growth from 3.4% in 2018 to 3.7% in 2019, closely followed by Central Africa at 3.2% in 2019. Southern Africa was trailing behind the continent having dropped from

1.2% in 2018 to 0.7% in 2019, as a result of the devastation of cyclones Idai and Kenneth.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the growth prospects of the world economy, Africa included. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) projects that Africa will register a significant drop in economic growth from 3.2% to 1.8%. The decline is due to the continent's connectedness and links with China, Europe and the rest of

the world and as such disruption of global supply chains entails a drop in value creation and, a slowdown in investment and ultimately job losses. It is also worth-noting that Africa has high trade vulnerability due to the price decline and volatility of its top export products such as petroleum among others. The table below illustrates Africa's top exports and imports of goods for the period 2016 – 2018:



Source: ECA based on UNCTADStat



As much as the supply side is affected by COVID-19, the demand side shocks have negatively affected oil, tourism and remittances to Africa, mostly because COVID-19 affected countries that are Africa's export and import destinations.

On the socio-economic front, the World Economic Forum (WEF) revealed that Africa is demographically the world's youngest continent. While this is good news, the AU reports that the COVID-19 pandemic will threaten nearly 20 million jobs in Africa. With youth unemployment twice that of adults, the potential for social unrest is real. Notwithstanding, the UN's International Labour Organisation (ILO) indicated that Africa is the only region where the youth bulge will continue to grow in the foreseeable future, presenting both an opportunity to reap the demographic dividend and an imminent time bomb and threat to social cohesion as well as massive migration in search of opportunities if appropriate policies are not implemented to

harness the dividend. With all these challenges hanging, all hope is not lost as the continental body has come up with a myriad of propositions to tackle the aforementioned challenges. Policy aspirations to address employment and economic challenges are enunciated in the AU Agenda 2063 development framework.

**Africa's Agenda 2063 aspirations**

The African Union's Agenda 2063 is a strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over a 50 year timespan, starting from 2013, by prioritizing inclusive social and economic development, continental and regional integration, democratic governance and peace and security amongst other issues aimed at repositioning Africa to becoming a dominant player in the global arena. The blueprint outlines seven aspirations and their related goals and priorities that the continent will focus on. Of particular relevance to this paper are aspirations # 1, 2, 5 and 6:



Aspiration	Goal	Priority
<b>1</b> A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A High Standard of Living, Quality of Life and Well Being for All Citizens</li> <li>- Transformed Economies that creates shared growth, decent jobs and economic opportunities for all</li> <li>- Fully developed human capital</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Incomes, Jobs and decent work</li> <li>- Sustainable and inclusive economic growth</li> <li>- Economic diversification and resilience</li> <li>- Cities and other settlements are hubs of cultural and economic activities</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> An integrated continent, politically united, based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intra-African trade growing from less than 12% in 2013 to 50% by 2045.</li> <li>- Full economic integration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trade facilitation and world class, integrative infrastructure that criss-crosses the continent.</li> <li>- Free movement of people, capital, goods and services.</li> </ul>
<b>5</b> An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- African Cultural Renaissance is pre-eminent</li> <li>- Construction of the African identity and social interaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pan-African cultural assets (heritage, folklore, languages, film, music, theatre, literature, festivals, religions and spirituality) will be enhanced.</li> <li>- African creative arts and industries will be celebrated.</li> <li>- Cultural Values and African Renaissance</li> <li>- Cultural Heritage, Creative Arts and Businesses will be advanced.</li> <li>- Africa's women and youth shall play an important role as drivers of change.</li> </ul>
<b>6</b> An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engaged and Empowered Youth and Children</li> <li>- Eliminate Youth unemployment</li> <li>- Creativity, energy and innovation of Africa's youth shall be the driving force behind the continent's political, social, cultural and economic transformation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talent of the child and the youth will be fully developed, rewarded and protected for the benefit of society.</li> <li>- Africa's youth guaranteed full access to education, training, skills and technology, health services, jobs and economic opportunities, recreational and cultural activities as well as financial means and all necessary resources to allow them to realize their full potential.</li> </ul>

From a policy perspective, Agenda 2063 endeavours to attain full economic integration of the continent, emanating from economic transformation of countries and being underpinned by full utilisation of African cultural assets, human creativity and heritage.

### **Creative Economy (CE)**

Traditional economic pursuits and particularly traditional sectors of the African economy may not have assisted in re-dressing the aforementioned challenges of unemployment and low intra-African trade. The aspirations of a transformed economy based on cultural and economic activities/hubs, driven by talented young Africans and utilisation of cultural assets, persuade one to think along the lines of a Creative Economy for African Renaissance.

There is need to bring out definitions which contextualise the discussion. In this regard, numerous scholars and authorities have defined creative industries differently, yet the essence is the same. One such definition that applies in this context presents creative and cultural industries as those requiring creativity, skill and talent, with potential for wealth and job creation through the exploitation of their intellectual property (UK, 2011 in UNCTAD, 2010). Creative and cultural industries have also been considered as areas

of social or economic activity that relate to intellectual or artistic creativity, innovation and originality and/or the conservation, teaching and celebration of cultural heritage and language which is capable of providing work and income for original creators and support services/industries for the same (Van Gran, 2005).

The creative economy covers the knowledge-based economic activities which incorporate creative and cultural industries such as: advertising, architecture, arts and crafts, computer games, design, fashion, film, graphic design, industrial design, music, new media, performing arts, photography, product and surface design, publishing, research and development, software, TV/radio and video.

## The creative economy can be summed as the interplay between human ideas and creativity and intellectual property (IP), knowledge and technology.

The creative industry has become an increasing driving force in the international marketplace with estimates showing that it is growing annually at 5% per annum and is likely to triple in size globally by 2020 (Howkins, 2001 in Joffe & Newton, 2008). UNESCO advanced the notion that creative industries represent one of the most rapidly expanding sectors in the global economy with a growth rate of 17.6 % in the Middle East, 13.9 % in Africa, 11.9 % in South America, 9.7 % in Asia, 6.9 % in Oceania, and 4.3 % in North and Central America. Africans are endowed with many ways of exhibiting cultural expressions and making cultural assets. Advancing these together with Africa's rich heritage which is unique across the globe will see the realization of the Agenda 2063 aspirations.

The major question is what will it take to advance such industries? The AU has provided clear policy guidance through the Agenda 2063 aspirations, for the development of creative and cultural industries. It remains for member states to devise national strategic frameworks to develop and effectively support the same.

It is imperative that member states create conducive environments for the creative and cultural industries to thrive, through legal frameworks that provide for the establishment, operation and formalisation of the industry. Africa thus needs to frame a framework for the protection and promotion of creative and cultural goods and services that addresses Africa's realities as does the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (CDCE). There is also need to avail favourable funding mechanisms to creative entrepreneurs. This, tied with raising creative entrepreneurs through mainstream education and courses on business development, basic finance and accounting principles, marketing and branding, international trade, technological appreciation, and project management, is important in capacity building of the industry.

Equally important is the need to raise awareness, recognise and reward creative and cultural attainments and achievements so as to contain creators within the continent. There is therefore need to have a common vision around the creative economy and underlying value chains and a system of recording them in national accounts.

### Case Studies

Literature records that Asian countries such as Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong and China have been able to consolidate domestic creative and cultural industries and were able to penetrate the world market with leading industries of software, publishing, design, music, video movie making and electronic games. Singapore's advertising industry which has strong linkages with heritage, design and media is contributing immensely in growing the creative industries. India has reportedly developed around the film making and entertainment industry, which has gained huge markets domestically and around its diaspora community. India broke the world record of producing the highest number of films (877 films) in 2003, earning the country US\$4.3 billion (UNCTAD, 2004).

Closer home, South Africa has since independence established institutions such as the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) and frameworks such as the 1996 White Paper on Arts and Culture and Heritage which speaks to cultural expression, development and protection of heritage and the role of creative and cultural industries in economic development. The craft industry alone generated ZAR3.32 billion while employing above 270 000 people in 2011 (DTI, 2013) indicating the potential of the industry to contribute to national development.

### Conclusion

To sustainably address the employment challenges Africa is facing, particularly for the youth and to reap the demographic dividend, there is need for member states to pay attention to the creative industries. No wonder a former chief economist at the AfDB, Prof. Mthuli Ncube, once said that unemployment and under-employment in Africa is an unacceptable reality given an impressive pool of youth, talent and creativity that the continent is endowed with (Ighobor, 2017).

On the trade front, an effective mapping of the endowment of creative assets and services across the continent must better inform policymakers on possible regional value chains to develop in an effort to advance intra-African trade, thus promoting aspirations of the AfCFTA.

If Africa is to be the next global frontier, then there is a need to develop other sectors beyond the traditional ones, and this will assist in building and managing the continent's resilience and volatility to socio-economic shocks.

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African Union 

“  
**WE ARE THE LEG SPECIALISTS,  
THINGS HAVE TO MOVE,  
THAT IS HOW I SEE MUSIC.**

Manu Dibango



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# CULTURE: THE MISSING ELEMENT IN OUR WEAPONRY

**By Thomas Nyondo**

*School manager and teacher of literature, English language and Civic education  
Tema private school.*

The most cardinal component of every culture is not necessarily its artifacts, but rather the philosophy of the practices, values, ethos and principles that the culture postulates and promotes. ....

....A culture that does not pedal along with modernity is obsolete at best and detrimental at worst.



**T**he business of constructing this beautiful continent lies in the hands of all Africans, young and old, men and women, boys and girls. We are the ones that possess the cultural raw materials for building the continent. These raw materials are deeply imbedded in, and reflected through our beliefs, values, ethos, philosophy, art, music and literature. It seems that our education has not adequately imbibed our culture into our teaching. Could this possibly be the reason why we are still ravaged by intimidating enemies in the name of poverty, disease, corruption and underdevelopment among others? Does culture have any place in the fight against these enemies? These are the questions that this article seeks to answer.

Africa probably has the most precious culture ever known to a people and yet we hardly talk about it in our teaching. Culture is the single most identity that makes a people unique from another. Bantu is one such

example of who Africa truly is and yet that has only been buried in our history books. In Zambia, for example, 'Bantu' is only mentioned in a history topic to secondary school learners and only to the extent that 'bantu refers to ethnic groups in Africa south of the Sahara who share similar languages, customs and traditions.' When in essence, Bantu (or Ubuntu the derivative of it) should be the fabric that encircles our school curricular and our national values. Ujamaa is another typical component of who Africa truly is and yet that is never even mentioned at all in our teaching. It is beyond any doubt that if our school curricular as Africa could bear such African ideologies as their philosophical frameworks, we would weave an African continent of peace, human dignity, hard work and self-reliance, for these are the core philosophical values that these ideologies seek to postulate. This also seems to resonate pretty well with the second aspiration reflected in the Agenda 2063 which lucidly maintains the realisation of an "integrated continent, politically united, based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance." How else could this be crystalised except through making culture (Pan-Africanism) an encircling element of our citadels of learning at all levels across the continent?

Nelson Mandela spoke of education as the most powerful weapon which we can use to change the world. The first thought that comes to mind when we hear the word weapon is obviously its use in a fight or a war. Yes, we are at war with poverty, injustice, disease,

The word Ubuntu is derived from a Nguni (isiZulu) aphorism: Umuntu, which can be translated as “a person is a person because of and through others” (Moloketi, 2009:243; Tutu, 2004:25-26). Ubuntu can be described as the capacity in an African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, humanity and mutuality in the interest of building and maintaining communities with justice and mutual caring (Khoza, 2006:6; Luhabe, 2002:103; Mandela, 2006:xxv; Tutu, 1999:34-35)



corruption and underdevelopment to list a few. In essence, what education should really be doing is training individuals in a country to think, but it ought to be the kind of thinking that is relevant to their problems and most importantly, to their identity (culture). The most cardinal component of every culture is not necessarily its artifacts, but rather the philosophy of the practices, values, ethos and principles that the culture postulates and promotes.

Many of our enemies can be defeated if and when our culture becomes a major component of our citadels of learning. Weaving such philosophies as Ubuntu and Ujamaa from our culture into our educational domains is a task that would be similar to loading the right ammunition into a weapon of war. This is however, an innocuous weapon, for it is an instrument of peace, love, collective wealth and of human dignity. For these are the very values and ethos that our culture stands

for. We have in the recent past, for example been insistent on advocating for better political regimes and seeking financial aid and advice from the ‘West’ and the developed world. But here lies another approach to our problems – African culture imaged in our school and university graduates. Through the philosophical lessons excavated from culture such as the Ubuntu and Ujamaa principles, income inequalities for instance, (which have continued to increase in most African countries), could be reduced, better leaders would be produced and prosperity for generations present and those to come would be realised much faster than we could imagine.

#### **Training the mind to think**

A culture that does not pedal along with modernity is obsolete at best and detrimental at worst. What we should try to propose is teaching the philosophical underpinnings of these ideologies. A philosophy is basically, a way of thinking

about something. Have our schools adequately taught us how to think about one another and about our problems as Africans? One of the things that a good curriculum should achieve is to create an identity in those who go through it.

Africa needs an African identity. The curriculum must forge individuals who mirror certain characteristics that the community can easily identify and associate with. These must serve as common values that should be expected of everyone that goes through such a curriculum. Such values should be so evident and profound that it must be seen as very strange if one does not live up to them or acts contrary to them. In our typical African settings, this is how it has been for years, but time and modernity seemed to have mutilated it. The danger we face is that if we do not understand well our identity, our culture and our problems, we risk training people to think the wrong way and that automatically makes our enemies master us.

### **Shared Culture promotes solidarity**

Africa's belief in its connectivity is seen through many proverbs, sayings and slogans echoed from the many diverse African languages. These 'linguistic raw materials' promote and encourage communal life and the esoteric connectivity of her people and they are all testimony to the Ubuntu and Ujamaa ideals. The philosophical underpinnings of these cultural ideologies mirror a global impression because they express the interconnectedness, common humanity and the responsibility of individuals to each other. This is fundamental to developing an African continent that is a "robust global player and partner" (Agenda, 2063). Cultural slogans are an effective way to quickly, simply and effectively communicate an agenda or any given philosophy. We may not quantitatively ascertain the exact extent to which various cultural slogans have in the past, influenced the attitudes and the mind-sets of individuals in a given society, but we undoubtedly can affirm and attest to their significance and impact in this regard. The role that cultural slogans play in shaping people's attitudes and mind-sets is replete and cannot be undermined.

Julius Kambarage Nyerere the first president of Tanzania, coined the Ujamaa slogan which was widely used by many Tanzanians as a national slogan. The slogan later culminated into the fibre that pedalled Tanzania's social and economic development policies after political independence in the 1960's. The transcending wisdom in this slogan mirrored a beautiful political and economic structure in Tanzania, promoting values of national cohesion, hard work, service and self-reliance. These virtues must needs be emphasised more in Africa today than any other time. In reality, Ujamaa was not only a Tanzanian slogan or philosophy, it was an African slogan for two reasons. First, Nyerere as one of the founding fathers of a free Africa, wanted an Africa that was free from dependence on European powers. Secondly, the meaning and wisdom of the Ujamaa slogan transcends the boundaries of any single African state. The reality of this slogan still beckons on all Africans to unite and work towards one goal of making Africa truly great.

The spirit of ujamaa is what Africa needs for meaningful trade and commerce among African countries. Africa needs to be more connected if self-reliance and freedom from European power and aid will be a reality. Industrialisation and technological development of Africa, requires African citizens who are connected- African citizens who are 'ujamared,' if we could coin a new word. If Africa will become the next world economic leading power of the century and if the agenda 2063 will not end up a pipedream, Ujamaa and Ubuntu must continue to be the fabric connecting Africa's development agenda.

It is true that Africa's development and salvation does not lie in the hands of China, Europe or any other foreign benevolent benefactor but in the hands and minds of Africans. True to the words of Professor PLO Lumumba

"the reality is that the poverty of Africa is the glory of some civilizations." Prof. Lumumba further, holds that "Africa must define her own problems and having defined her own problems must find solutions to her own problems."

The questions that this article closes with are as follows: Are we as a continent doing enough to leverage our culture for development? Are we doing enough to load our weapon with the right ammunition? Are you as an individual doing enough to play your role? Are you as an individual doing your work? Here the answer is not your job per se but rather your God given assignment to humanity. How will you know your work from your job? It is work when it is underpinned by the ideologies of Ubuntu and Ujamaa, when it affects a nation or a large group of people?. Remember that you are the government. The government thinks of everyone in the nation, your work – whatever it is – music, art, literature, tourism, teaching, journalism, writing or entrepreneurship, must have national interest and continental impact at the centre of it. That's what Ubuntu and Ujamaa is all about after all! Work which is largely tied to your talent (natural endowment) or area of gifting and is perpetuated by your life purpose and vision and built and premised on African culture.

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African Union 

**IF YOU LOVE MUSIC,  
YOU HAVE TO BE THE  
ONE THAT OPENS DOORS.  
YOU HAVE TO BE THE  
ONE THAT BUILDS  
BRIDGES ON WHICH  
EVERYBODY CAN  
BE FREE TO WALK ON.  
I KNOW THAT THAT'S  
MY MISSION.**

**Angelique Kidjo**



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# THE AFRICAN AUDIO VISUAL AND CINEMA COMMISSION (AACC)



The AACC shall be responsible for the promotion of rapid development and strengthening of the African audio-visual and cinema industry, and shall encourage the establishment of appropriate structures at the national, regional and continental levels to strengthen cooperation between African states in the area of audio-visual and cinema.

The African Audio Visual and Cinema Commission (AACC) is a Specialized Agency of the African Union established by a Statute approved by the 32nd African Union Assembly held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in February 2019.

This African Union specialised agency was established upon the request of the continent's cinema and audio visual experts to the 3rd African Union Assembly held in Maputo, Mozambique in July 2003 in order to coordinate the film and audio visual industry sector and ensure that it contributes fully to the continent's creative economy. The establishment of the AACC was spearheaded by the Government of the Republic of Kenya, the AU Commission and the Pan-African Federation of Film Makers (FEPACI).

The Republic of Kenya has offered to host the Temporary Secretariat of the AACC which will oversee the process of ratification of the instrument as well as the operationalisation of this important continental institution that will promote the development and growth of the creative economy

The Statute of the AACC shall enter into force upon the receipt by the AU Commission of the 15th instrument of ratification. To date no Member State has yet signed or ratified the AACC Statute.

#### **Mandate of the AACC**

The AACC shall be responsible for the promotion of rapid development and strengthening of the African audio-visual and cinema industry, and shall encourage the establishment of appropriate structures at the national, regional and continental levels to strengthen cooperation between African states in the area of audio-visual and cinema.

The AACC shall also, through the use of audio-visual and cinematic expressions, promote job creation, integration, solidarity, respect of values and mutual



understanding in order to foster peace and promote a positive image of Africa.

### Functions of AACC

#### Archiving and Research

1. Promote research on the African Audio-visual and Cinema industry in close collaboration with various research institutions;
  2. Collate, disseminate and archive the results of audio-visual cinematic research;
  3. Promote and encourage State Parties to take all measures for protecting and archiving programmes for national film and audio-visual materials, and retrieving those held in foreign lands;
  4. Facilitate the establishment and where appropriate the exchange of information relating to African audio-visual and cinematographic works held in data banks, archives, directories of national and international audio visual products, films and filmmakers, film training institutions and financiers;
  5. Promote collection, archiving and dissemination of documentation of oral African literature and knowledge using audio-visual and cinematic expressions, television and moving images;
  6. Financing  
Ensure and fast track the establishment of the African Audio-visual and Cinema Fund for sustainable financing of the audio-visual and cinema value chain;
  7. Pan-Africanism, Integration, and Positive Image  
Recommend such agreements as necessary to enhance the capacity of AU Member States to collaborate in developing, streamlining and promoting audio-visual and cinema industry policies;
  8. Encourage the signing of cooperation treaties that would enhance the movement of filmmakers across African borders and exchange of programmes;
  9. Strengthen regional African structures to appreciate the role of film in economic and social development;
  10. Work to enhance African centeredness in film, promote the positive image of the continent, re-define relations between African audio-visual and cinema and other expression from the rest of the world;
  11. Elaborate a cinematic atlas of Africa; exposing, reawakening, and repositioning, the different milieu of African film;
  12. Contribute to the popularization of the cinema culture particularly among African youth;
  13. Training, Technical Assistance & Policy Dialogue  
Facilitate harmonisation of training curricula to reflect high quality film production and seek its adaptation by training institutions across Africa; and encourage establishment of regional film schools.
  14. Promote the use of African audio visual and cinema as a medium of instruction and as a subject of study in educational institutions;
- Through the use of audio-visual and cinematic expressions, the AACC will promote job creation, integration, solidarity, respect of values and mutual understanding in order to foster peace and promote a positive image of Africa
15. Foster capacity and talent development, training and certification in African Film industry in order to ensure higher quality of film productions.
  16. Assist and offer advisory services to Member States on auditing national film support structures, including ensuring that national licensed broadcasters carry African content;
  17. Provide technical support and advisory services to Member States for the formulation and implementation of audio-visual and cinema policy, particularly in the establishment and/or development of national structures for the promotion of African audio-visual and cinematic expressions;
  18. Jobs, Incomes and Statistics  
Encourage Member States to capture and store social and economic data on film and audio-visual industry showing jobs created, capital formation, and contribution to sustainable and inclusive economic growth;
  19. Distribution  
Encourage the creation of Pan African television, digital, and other networks to promote African perspectives;
  20. Promote distribution of African films throughout the continent and internationally;
  21. Support national institutions responsible for broadcasting and content distribution to ensure that African Broadcasters (Public and Private) and other content distributors invest resources into researching African stories and commissioning film makers to produce films and ensure effective and profitable distribution of the films;
  22. Encourage all Member States' broadcasters, cinema and movie theatres, and all other content delivery channels including mobile phones, video on demand and online streaming services to carry a minimum of seventy percent (70%) African content in all their programming with special emphasis on prime time.
  23. Intellectual Property Protection, Rights of Authors, and Fight against Piracy  
Promote the protection of indigenous knowledge and of existing African oral and written folklore both at the national and continental levels; promote the protection of the rights of authors
  24. Support the protection of intellectual property rights with due regard to existing frameworks on the harmonisation of standards and legislation;
  25. Perform such other functions as are consistent with the promotion of African cinematic expressions and products.



# YOUTH AT THE FOREFRONT OF AFRICA'S GROWING ANIMATION INDUSTRY

## PROFILE OF ORANGE VFX



**Richard Oboh**  
CEO / MD Orange VFX

**W**hen he graduated with a Chemical Engineering degree from the University of Port Harcourt in Nigeria, Richard Oboh joined the masses of young people eager to join the workforce and build a lasting career. With a prestigious degree in hand Richard began his pursuit in the engineering field; but like most people he had another passion, Animation. He made the bold decision to pursue his dreams and started off as a freelancer, gradually gaining the experience and the skills he needed to enable him to establish a network of other young people with a similar interest in the animation sector.

Richard then made the next bold decision to consolidate the network of young professionals and also to invest in his dream and become an entrepreneur; and on 5th of May, 2010 he founded Orange VFX.

The name of the company Orange VFX and the branding chosen is a convergence of yellow symbolising happiness or sunshine and red for fire, warmth, and energy a clear representation of the vibrancy and colours Nigerian and African heritage; with VFX being a play on the term "visual effects."



Watch the Agenda 2063 animations on <https://au.int/en/videos/760>

The company mission is to entertain, inform, and inspire, through unique storytelling that leverages creativity and innovation to build a better Africa.

Today, Orange VFX has an office located in the heart of Lagos that houses a team of over 20 experienced creatives specialised in different aspects of Computer Generated Imagery (CGI) production and prides itself as Nigeria's foremost Animation and Digital Content creator.

### **Interview with Richard Oboh CEO / MD of Orange VFX**

#### ***How was the idea of Orange VFX conceived / how was the company founded***

Orange VFX was created out of the desire to tell entertaining and informative African stories that are relatable using animation and visual effects as a medium. Over the years, there has been a steady increase in the demand for animation and visual effects in Africa. However, some challenges plague the Nigerian animation industry. Animation is time-consuming, expensive, and very few studios in Nigeria have the resources to produce them on a large scale basis. Thus, organisations and individuals who require animation services have had to outsource overseas. Orange VFX was created with the vision to meet the local need and became the pioneer in 3D animation in Nigeria. Through our viral video, "Oti clear e don show o", featuring famous characters, "Ovie and Wale" in 2013, Orange VFX gained acclaim, attracted both local and international audiences to the company.

#### ***What are the challenges you faced in forming your company***

The challenges faced in creating Orange VFX at the early stage was mainly the large capital outlay required. Animation is a largely capital intensive sector and because, at the time, a lot of local companies outsourced overseas and there were no established animation studios in Nigeria, it was difficult getting clients or even loans. There was also inadequate operating structure within the company as it was in its early stage and the industry had very few skilled animators. However, all that changed with time as companies started calling the studio for work after our "Oti clear e don show o" video went viral.



**Top: Orange VFX Teams at work, Bottom: Watch the Agenda 2063 animations on <https://au.int/en/videos/760>**

Eventually, we had to develop workflows, systems, and processes to meet these challenges and ensure we delivered the work

#### ***What skills does one need to become an animator***

To be an animator one ought to be able to combine practical and artistic skills ranging from design, creativity, analytical skills, planning and the ability to communicate clear. A good understanding of colour theory and technical skills like audio editing, video editing, and understanding of animation software is also vital.

#### ***What are some of the challenges young people face in acquiring these skills***

Animation is time-consuming, expensive, and requires a lot of patience and practice. The software and hardware used are sophisticated and expensive to acquire and maintain. Moreover, there are few animation schools in Africa and the tuition

is relatively expensive. If one wants to venture into animation, he or she must be patient, committed, passionate, and must be financially prepared too. Furthermore, since there are very few animation companies around, animators face job uncertainty. If I was to speak to Nigeria specifically, in parts of the country there is inadequate electricity supply combined with the high cost of living, data tariffs and other factors that affect production cost and may ultimately be discouraging for young individuals seeking to venture into the industry.

#### ***Why do you think Animation has grown as a form of messaging on the African Continent***

Over the years, the animation industry in Nigeria and Africa as a whole has grown as more people are now learning and creating their own animations. Studios are springing up around the continent and people are keener to explore the industry



To be an animator one ought to be able to combine practical and artistic skills ranging from design, creativity, analytical skills, planning and the ability to communicate clear.

**Richard Oboh CEO/MD of Orange VFX**

**Watch the Agenda 2063 animations on <https://au.int/en/videos/760>**

especially with more African-inspired animation stories being told. People are now seeing the relevance of animation in storytelling and it's something I believe has sparked more interest. Animation allows you to create anything limited only by your imagination. More African brands and organizations are using animation and visual effects to sell their products and services and people are now discovering that there's a strong untapped market for it in Africa

***Who are some of the clients you have done Animation work for***

Our clients include The African Union, DStv, MTN, Forte Oil, Airtel, Coca-Cola, Peak, Chi Ltd, to mention a few.

***Which of your works do you consider to be the most popular / successful***

Our most popular work so far is the Ovie and Wale Series with over 250,000 combined views on different social media platforms and the DStv adverts featuring Ovie and Wale, which was also a winner at the 2019 Lagos International Festival Of Animation (LIFANIMA)

Also popular is "Levelz" a satirical representation of trending topics and happenings within Nigeria. We wanted to highlight some trending social issues in Nigeria at the time and we created "Levelz" as a way of addressing these social issues using humour as a tool to relate the message and provide an emotional escape from reality.

Locally, these series had a big impact because the characters were relatable to Nigerians in terms of appearance and voice but the characters were also relatable to Africans in general. Through our work, our goal is to instill a deeper sense of pride in our African cultural heritage with a mix of entertainment and wit thrown in.

***What should African governments do to promote the creative industries***

The creative industry has witnessed a mega boom in recent times and the creative industry will become a major contributor to Africa's economic growth in the next decade or so. There is a need for African Governments to invest in and boost the creative industry through funding through medium and small enterprises (MSME) loan schemes, making data rates cheaper, creating empowerment programs for young people, recognising, celebrating, and promoting African creatives and their work all over the continent. Government's can facilitate foreign investment into our industry thereby catalysing economic growth considering that Africa has a huge largely untapped youth population that is in need of gainful employment. These are some ways in which the government can promote our industry.

***What are your future plans for Orange VFX***

At Orange VFX, we are looking to expand beyond the shores of Nigeria in the future. We are also big believers in making a largescale impact in our communities and that is why we have organised youth training and empowerment programs within Nigeria. We hope that with the right local and international collaborations and partnership we can organise more training around Africa in the future and establish our own training institute even as we continue to tell relatable African stories and showcase our cultural values and heritage to the globe




“  
**I MUST IDENTIFY MYSELF  
WITH AFRICA. THEN I WILL  
HAVE AN IDENTITY**

**Fela Kuti**



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# THE ROLE OF LITERARY COMPETITIONS IN THE REGENERATION OF THE AFRICAN LITERATURE MARKET

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Literature as a form of creative economy can be a tool for cultural expression and fighting class and neo-colonial exploitation

The 21st Century ushered in a new golden age in the African literature market. The era saw the emergence of young contemporary writers, increased publications of fiction work, and the establishment of indigenous publishing houses. Indigenous publishing reflects the culture, beliefs, and historical experiences of a given society.

The journey of African fiction literature began with independence age writers like Chinua Achebe, Ayi Kwei Armah, Ousmane Sembene, Amos Tutuola, and Ngugi wa Thiong'o. Then followed a dwindling period in the creative literature industry described as a literary desert in Africa. However, today, prolific writers like the late Binyavanga Wainana, Nansubuga Makumbi, NoViolet Bulawayo, and Chimamanda Ngozi, have emerged and dominate Africa's literary scene having been propelled into the creative sector by literary competitions such as the Ako Caine Prize for African Writers. Literary contests have thus had a far-reaching influence in the renaissance of the African literature market.

## **Africa's Creative Industry**

The creative industry is fundamental in developing the African political, social, and economic development process. The industry encompasses categories of individual creativity, talent, and skill

in design, production, and writing. The enterprise also features creative services such as copyright licensing and the creation of digital content for film and broadcast media.

In 2008, African Union (AU) ministers of culture adopted the African Union Action on Cultural and Creative Industries. More so, over two-thirds of African nations ratified the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. These commitments indicate a deliberate effort to expand Africa's creative industry and given the youth bulge and cultural diversity in Africa, the industry can leapfrog Africa into the world economy.

The relationship between economics and creativity gives rise to the concept of the creative economy. The creative economy can create employment, increase exports, and encourage social and cultural evolution. A UNCTAD report notes that the sector contributes to increased productivity, enhanced intellectual property, and cultural tourism. In particular, literature as a form of creative economy can be a tool for cultural expression and fighting class and neo-colonial exploitation. Therefore, the creative industry emerges as an alternative enabler to economic growth and cultural sustainability.

The publishing industry in Africa achieves a cumulative annual growth rate of 6% across all African countries and can therefore be a significant contributor to economic growth.



Globally, there is significant growth in the creative economy. The UNCTAD survey valued the global creative industry at US\$624 billion in 2011, representing an average growth rate of 8.8% since 2002. In comparison, Africa contributed less than 1% of the export of creative goods globally. South Africa recorded the most significant growth, at an annual rate of 3.7% from 2005 to 2012, accounting for US\$9.2 billion in revenue in 2012. The dismal performance, limited capacity and the informal nature of Africa's creative industry needs to be addressed and converted into an opportunity.

Publishing is a significant category in the creative industry. In 2013, the global publishing sector generated US\$143 billion in revenue and employed close to 3.7 million people. In comparison, publishing contributes up to US\$1 billion annually in Africa. The publishing industry achieves a cumulative annual growth rate of 6% across all African countries. Therefore, the publishing industry can be a significant contributor to economic growth in Africa.

#### LITERARY COMPETITIONS IN AFRICA

##### *Classical Competitions*

The concept of literary competitions is not alien in Africa. Since the 20th Century, African writers have competed in and won international literature competitions. The Commonwealth Short Story Prize is the most notable classical literary competition. Established in 1987, the prize is open to writers from any Commonwealth nation, with an award for the best entry of unpublished fiction per region. Though the Literature's Nobel Prize is not a competition, the process for getting it is competitive. Africa has produced 6 Nobel Laureates for Literature, namely Claude Simon, Albert Camus, Wole Soyinka, Najib Mahfuz, Nardine Gordimer, and J.M. Coetzee. Other international awards won by Africans include the Dorothy and Gillian Gish Prize, Orange Prize for Fiction, and Man Booker Prize for Fiction. To some extent, such literary awards afforded African writers international recognition and shaped the literary discourse in post-colonial Africa.

Nevertheless, the representation of African writers in such a contest has been negligible. Besides, the competitions attract criticism for favouring African writers in the diaspora. Also, the prizes support established writers and do not catapult emerging writers. Notably, these

competitions are domiciled outside the continent hence perceived through the lenses of neo-colonialism.

##### *Contemporary Competitions*

The most influential literary competition programmes in 21st Century Africa are the AKO Caine Prize and Kwani. Registered as a charity, the AKO Caine Prize for African Writing aims at creating a wider audience for African writers through a yearly literary award. The Caine Prize's relevance is evident in the number of new exciting African writers it has placed in the international literary market. Binyavanga Wainaina, a Kenyan writer and winner of the 2002 Caine Prize, became a founder at Kwani? a platform for East Africa writers. Since 2003, Kwani? has become an essential source of African fiction literature. In 2012, the Kwani Manuscript Award Project received over 250 manuscripts from 19 African countries with an opportunity for publication in The Kwani series. These two entities are dedicated to developing, publishing, and distributing quality African creative writing while establishing global literary networks.

There are other outstanding literary competitions in Africa. Firstly, the Brittle Paper Awards honours impactful fiction, non-fiction, blogs, essays, and poetry works published online. Secondly, the Quaramo Writers Prize considers unexposed talents that tell original African stories. Lastly, there exist national-based literary contests. The Kreative Diadem celebrates emerging young writers in Nigeria by awarding and featuring original works in poetry and flash fiction genres. In comparison, the South Africa Literary Award honours literary excellence depicting the national history and values from living practitioners and posthumously. These literary contests generate authentic narratives that feed the hunger for reading.

##### *Impacts of Literary Competitions on the Creative Industry*

Competition is a social construct. The construction of competition requires the presence of actors, relationships, scarcity, and desire. In the African Literature Industry, the main actors include writers, publishers, and readers. The relationships between these actors revolve on a scarce resource or opportunity, thereby creating competition. Award givers constitute the third party that stimulates a competition. In literary contests, competition surfaces through the third party's organisational efforts and the main actors' decision.

Literary competitions have profoundly enhanced the level of production in the African creative industry. The growth is evident in the output of creative goods and services, increased number of producers, and expansion of the market. Literary contests have encouraged the development of literature work with the motivation of cash, editing services, and publishing prospects. For example, Caine Winners Helon Habila (2001) from Nigeria published *Waiting for an Angel* (2002), *Measuring Time* (2007), and *Oil on Water* (2010) while South African Mary Watson published *Moss* (2004) and *The Cutting Room* (2013). The recognition motivates individual excellence. For instance, Makena Onjerika, the Caine prize winner (2018) for her short story "*Fanta Blackcurrant*," went ahead to develop a fantasy novel. Further, she founded the Nairobi Fiction Writing Workshop and edited the anthology *Digital Bedbugs* encompassing stories from the workshop. Makena's case study shows that the launch of one literary career can create a platform for other up-and-coming writers. Finally, the competitions stimulate demand for literature by encouraging a reading culture through literary festivals. Besides the Cairo, Algiers, and Casablanca festivals, Africa now boasts of new book fairs like Mboka (Gambia), Hargeysa (Somalia), Ake (Lagos), and Gaborone (Botswana). In comparison, past efforts focused on the student market.

There is a significant growth in sectoral linkages within the creative industry due to literary contests. Firstly, the competitions create backward industrial linkages by encouraging the development of indigenous publishing houses. AKO Caine Prize accepts entries from publishers attracting stories from publishers like Jacana Media (South Africa), Cassava Republic (Nigeria), Kwani? (Kenya), Sub-Saharan Publishers (Ghana), FEMRITE (Uganda), Gadsen Publishers (Zambia), AmaBooks (Zimbabwe), and Langaa (Cameroon). The expansion of NoViolet Bulawayo's Caine winning story into the

Etisalat Prize and PEN Award-winning novel *We Need New Names* exemplifies forward industrial linkages. The reading culture supported by new publishers like Kaficho in Nigeria, in turn, fuels a new market for e-books. To illustrate, the Worldreader organization involved 162 African publishers creating a library of 35,000 titles raking in US\$2 million in revenues. Secondly, the profiling of African literature has created a demand for the adoption of fiction books into films. An instance is the adoption of *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozie into a movie. Lastly, the sector provides content for the media industry. An assessment of calls for entries, award announcements, and literature review shows digital media capitalize on the literary contest to engage the audience.

Literary contests have enhanced cooperation among writers, and subsequent quality and variety of African literature. Cooperation among actors and an array of products is a significant outcome of a competition. The Caine Prize partners with writer's networks like Kwani? (Kenya), Storymoja (Kenya), Farafina (Nigeria), and FEMRITE (Uganda) through literary workshops and festivals. The partnerships influence literary production structures and processes. Alumni of Farafina annual workshops, facilitated by Binyavanga and Chimamanda, have been shortlisted for Caine. [Muthoni Garland, shortlisted in Caine, initiated the Storymoja workshop and Hay festival in Kenya. The winner of the Kwani Manuscript Prize, Nansubuga Makumbi, has served as a judge and mentor in Uganda's Writivism literary festival. Such examples demonstrate the linkages and collaborations ushered in by literary contests. As a social comparison process, competition improves performance and diminishes discrepancies among actors. Regarding variety, the African Speculative Fiction Society Nommos Award encourages the development of speculative fiction by recognizing writers on horror, magic, and

## Competitions stimulate demand for literature by encouraging a reading culture

science fiction. This initiative provides the transition from the dominant political and misery themes to African science fiction.

However, literary contests may result in zero-sum situations and hostility among actors. African writers need to view competitions as a catalyst for literature development rather than win-lose events. Finally, the competitions have given rise to the concept of biased narrative. For example, some upcoming writers for the Caine Prize stand accused of writing to sell to judges, while judges get critiqued for favouring writers who do not portray African stereotypes. In this case, these African writers write for judges rather than the market. The act of changing the story to fit the themes and values of competition limits authenticity and imagination.

## African writers need to view competitions as a catalyst for literature development rather than win-lose events

### Conclusion

Literary contests largely account for the growth of the creative literature industry in Africa. In demonstrating this correlation, the paper relied more on qualitative evidence. Future studies can utilize statistical data analysis approaches to characterise the relationship. The investigation found the impact of the literary contests on the creative industry assumes a threefold manifestation. These impacts include enhanced productivity, increased sectoral linkages, and cooperation among the industry actors. Despite the above, contests can create narrative bias as writers respond to competition themes instead of market needs. Importantly, literary competitions in Africa are primarily a private sector and civil society initiative. Governments and inter-governmental organizations should use their financial and legislation muscle to support literary competitions to grow the creative economy.

### Literary Competitions....

- create backward industrial linkages by encouraging the development of indigenous publishing houses.
- profiling of African literature has created a demand for the adoption of fiction books into films
- provide content for the media industry
- have enhanced cooperation among writers, and subsequent quality and variety of African literature
- as a social comparison process, competition improves performance and diminishes discrepancies among actors.



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# The Economic aspects of Africa's Creative Industry and the Promotion of Arts, Culture and Heritage

## An African Fashion Industry Perspective

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The Cultural and Creative Industry (CCI) in Africa is vast. This industry encompasses visual arts, crafts, cultural festivals, paintings, sculptures, photography, publishing, music, dance, film, radio, fashion and architecture (Bastos de Morais, 2015). This article will outline the general CCI in Africa but will give special attention to the fashion industry.

The CCI is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. According to an article by Lopes (2015), the entertainment and creative media brought revenue to the value of \$2.2 trillion to the global economy in 2012. Africa has an enormous pool of talent but lacks infrastructure and the ability to commercialize it (Bastos de Morais, 2015). In addition, there is limited supply capacity and low levels of intellectual property information, policies and regulations that exist but are not followed, and a lack of investment in the industry. In 2010, Africa's CCI contribution to the world was reported to be less than 1%.

However the CCI in Africa is witnessing gradual growth. The African fashion industry for example has been reported to bring in revenue of US\$31 billion (Ugwuede, 2020). The industry heavily reliant on model casting, runways and many other physical activities. has been negatively being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020; however there are innovative strategies that have been implemented especially by young designer. For instance, Anifa Mvuemba, a Congolese designer, used technology to showcase her designs and hosted a runway show on Instagram live through the use of digital models a runway (Salaudeen, 2020).

Article 3(1) of the Protocol on the Establishment of the African Monetary Fund (2014) provides that a fund was established that is responsible for economic stability and growth of the African economy. However, funds of this nature are hardly channelled towards addressing the challenges that the African CCI faces. In contrast, many countries in Europe and North America benefit economically from

African CCI (African Business Magazine, 2014). This has resulted in high levels of African cultural appropriation with limited knowledge about the origins and cultural significance of items from Africa. In recent years, many public figures from across the globe have been seen wearing the “Dashiki” shirt. Most of these people do not know its origins or cultural significance (Durosomo, 2017).

Various initiatives have been undertaken at institutional, country and continental level to address the challenges faced by the CCI in Africa and promote the growth the sector. Key amongst these is the African Union Charter for African Cultural Renaissance of 2006 a legal instrument based on the conviction that culture is a major factor for Africa’s economic and participatory development. The instrument emphasizes that economic development can be achieved through preserving and promoting culture, arts and heritage. Articles 3 of the Charter states that the objectives of the instrument is to promote, enable and preserve culture and heritage, and provide the people of Africa with resources for development as well as empower them to be able to withstand the effects of globalization.

### **Africa’s Creative Industries and Economy**

A report from The Cultural Times from 2014 outlined that the cultural goods that emanate from Africa are mainly produced by the informal economy which is estimated to provide working opportunities for 547,500 people and generates \$4.2 billion annually (Hruby & Annan, 2020). Commercializing this sector in Africa would ensure that there are more jobs created and significant revenue is generated. A report by UNESCO in 2015 highlighted the fact that the creative industry in Europe largely employs the youth (Glantz, 2019). The informal CCI in Africa has also been reported to employ many women and children (Bastos de Morais, 2015). The UNDP report in 2018 stated that many African women take a prominent role in the production of creative goods and services (Glantz, 2019).. However, women and children are some of the most vulnerable people in the African societies and given the unregulated nature of the informal sector there are so many human rights infringements involved and inappropriate procedures followed. Article 13 (e) of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and

Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003) stipulates the requirement of promoting and supporting the occupation and economic activities of women that operate in the informal sector. Enforcing this instrument would ensure that women can realise economic growth and become sustainable within the CCIs. In addition, Article 13(2) of the African Union Charter for African Cultural Renaissance (2006) recognises the importance of recognising and promoting the cultural expressions of the youth. thereby underscoring the need to ensure that the youth are protected and empowered within the CCIs.

### **The potential and progress made in the CCI in Africa**

The creative industries promote the availability of working opportunities, foreign exchange income, and provide support to various other industries such as leisure, tourism and transport (Glantz, 2019). However, there is a lot of potential that is remains untapped in Africa.

For example, Cape Verde has been reported to have the highest number of musicians per square km in the world (Lopes, 2015). The Nigerian film (Nollywood) and music industry contributes about 1.42% to the country’s GDP (Lopes, 2015). Nollywood was reported to be the second largest movie producer in the world in 2014 after India, based on the numbers of films produced (African Business Magazine, 2014) and brought in revenue of US\$7.2 billion in 2016 (Hruby & Annan, 2020). A 2014 study on South Africa estimated that the creative industry generated about 200,000 employment opportunities (Bastos de Morais, 2015). This amounted to 2.9% of the GDP. The South African music industry has been projected to generate revenue of US\$178 million in 2020 (Hruby & Annan, 2020). Morocco’s publishing and printing industry provides working opportunities for about 1.8% of the people in the country and the industry is worth US\$370 million (Bastos de Morais, 2015).

The innovative initiatives that are being undertaken at institutional, country and continental level to promote the growth of CCI.

There are various innovative initiatives that are being undertaken at the continental level in Africa. The African Union Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries advocates culture



So many people, including myself, did not appreciate African attire when younger because the Western ones were portrayed as superior.

African attire was perceived as primitive or old fashioned. This resulted in the loss of my sense of African pride and heritage. However, as I grew older I realised that these outfits represented me, my culture and heritage

**Chitsanzo Changa**

as a driver of economic development. The Plan of Action has the objective of ensuring that the economic and social potential that is presented by African CCI is tapped. This will be done through job creation, provision of income generating initiatives and introduction and strengthening of markets for cultural groups.

Articles 4(1), 11(1) and 20(1) (b) of the African Union's African Youth Charter informs that every young person has the right to free expression of ideas and opinion; right to participate in any category of society; and, identify and respect beliefs and traditional practices that promote development. This instrument serves to encourage and emphasize the involvement of the youth in Africa's CCI.



The AU Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (1991) was introduced to ensure that there is the promotion of economic, social and cultural development in Africa.

The Principles and Guidelines on the Implementation of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights enforces the rights of people to take part in cultural activities at all levels in order to promote their economic development and sustainability.

Article 9 of the African Union Charter for African Cultural Renaissance (2006) emphasizes that states are responsible for ensuring that they promote an environment where there is cultural innovation and development. Various governments in Africa are realizing the importance of the CCI to the economic development of their respective nations. They have started to pay attention to the industry and incorporated it into their national economic and development plans. Angola has created a hybrid innovation hub called Fabrica de Sabao that is made up of an incubator and accelerator hub (Bastos de Morais, 2015). Such an innovative strategy brings about an ecosystem that involves many creative people and influences creativity to grow and be supported.

Article 12(1) of the African Union Charter for African Cultural Renaissance (2006) promotes festivals, seminars, conferences, training that ensure the growth and sustainability of artistic, cultural and heritage activities. There are many festivals that serve as a preservation of

culture and heritage across Africa. These include AfrikaBurn in South Africa, Fez Festival of World Sacred Music in Morocco, Zanzibar International Film Festival across East Africa, Lake of Stars in Malawi and Bushfire in Swaziland (Duff, 2019). These festivals are important and have to be promoted. The uMkhosi Womhlanga festival in South Africa and Swaziland promote cultural aspects of womanhood.

Various institutions in Africa have introduced and implemented major initiatives as a strategy of promoting the creative and cultural industries. In Kenya an organisation called HEVA, that is dedicated to the production of cultural goods and services, sourced about \$500,000 in 2019 (Hruby & Annan, 2020). This fund has so far been used by 40 businesses, and has provided support for more than 8,000 creative personnel. Business and Arts South Africa (BASA) is a group of private organizations that work hand in hand in the support and promotion of art in South Africa through the provision of sponsorship, mentoring and teaching (African Business Magazine, 2014). The African Development Bank (ADB) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have been setting up and implementing policies that aim at providing information and financial support for the creative industries like fashion and art (Bastos de Morais, 2015).

The concept of creative cities has been adopted in South Africa in cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town (Oyekunle, 2019). Creative cities are cities that are designed in a way that promotes the growth of creative cultural goods and services (Oyekunle, 2019). The City of Johannesburg is the most well developed creative city in South Africa and has the largest number of creative engines at all levels. The creative cities are supported by government initiatives through policy guidelines and developmental plans. Such creative cities ensure that there is the creation of competent creative goods that promote economic development.

At a global level, UNESCO introduced the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in 2005 and most African nations adopted it (African Business Magazine, 2014). The instrument emphasizes the need for serious investment in the CCI from the global south to have preferential access in the global north.

### African Fashion Events

There are major fashion shows across Africa. In Lagos, Nigeria, there is the Lagos Fashion and Design Week that usually takes place in October and GTBank's Fashion weekend between October and November (Ugwuede, 2020). In Tanzania, there is the annual Swahili Fashion Week that takes place between November and December (Ugwuede, 2020). In South Africa there are the South African Fashion Week and Joburg Fashion Week that usually occur in October. However, these fashion shows do not have the required big presence or major stage that they need to be influential. The Fashion Week that occurs in global fashion cities like Milan and New York showcases different haute couture and avant-garde outfits from across the globe. These are then commercialised and sold globally. African designers can benefit from African initiatives that are similar and on a large scale or platform like the global Fashion Week. Manufacturers would be motivated to make African designs to be sold worldwide. However, the African fashion industry must advocate for production in Africa to create employment opportunities and ensure export of value added fashion items to ensure higher revenue.

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**MUSIC IN AFRICA OFTEN CONTAINS MESSAGES. MUSIC IN SENEGAL, AND AFRICA, IS NEVER MUSIC FOR MUSIC'S SAKE OR SOLELY FOR ENTERTAINMENT. IT'S ALWAYS A VEHICLE FOR SOCIAL CONNECTIONS, DISCUSSIONS AND IDEAS.**

**Youssour N'Dour**



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# GLOBAL TRENDS AND THE VISUAL VOCABULARIES OF AFRICAN FABRICS AND COSTUMES; THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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African Print signifies something more than a fashion statement". African print is literally our culture as Africans, because when we were born, we were wrapped in a wax print. It is a major part of every African's heritage and every wax print tells a unique African story.

**Behinder  
Compah-Keyeke,  
Ghanaian designer**

African fabrics and costumes are media through which Africans communicate to their kindred and the wider world. The vocabularies are inherent in the motifs, colours, style and mode of rendition of the fabric designs. Communication has different dimensions. It can be expressed orally, through gestures, writing, music and visual arts. This paper focuses on communication of vocabularies on fabric and costumes.

Ochigbo (2015), asserts that there are many complex feelings which cannot be expressed through verbal means, so people all over the world, use the arts, particularly fine arts, in order to express their individual experiences and creativity. Textile designs on fabrics and other material costumes are one of the ways, artists use to express their visual vocabularies. The visual vocabulary contents in African fabrics, carries, philosophical, cultural, religious, social, royalty, vocational and every day life's aphorism. Akwete, Adinkra Adire, Ukarra etc are some of the fabrics conceived and produced by African fabric makers. Raffia, sea creature shells, wooden and plastic beads, stones, cast iron, tree barks, burnt clay, calm wood,





African Print signifies something more than a fashion statement.

**Behinder Compah-Keyeke, Ghanaian designer**

charcoal, indigo, soot and other natural derivatives are used for costuming, tattooing, incision and other body decorations and adornment, depicting moods, styles, class and events, aimed at showcasing Africa's belief, ideology, rustic lives, worship, origin, rite of passage and the like.

Williams (2015) observed that fashion in a particular locality depends on the belief, norms and values of the people rooted in the community. However, the costumes and culture affects the living situation of the place to the very extent that, they were born to see unconsciously. Fashion is expressed through dress code, and Africans are peculiar in their ways. The early dwellers of African continent had their dress code on nudism, to partial body coverage with plant and animal hide and skins, and graduated to woven raffia to discarded fibrous sacks etc. As life progressed, Africans learned the western technology and later carved a niche for themselves through incorporation of intricate designs and process.

Interestingly, most of the materials, methods, and designs are sourced and inherited from the indigenous environment. The fabrics were crafted with materials found within the environment by the people who handed the craft to younger ones (Cyril-Egware, 2011).

The contemporary African Fabric designs, shows the fashion of barrowed ideology and the indigenous mentality which is a way of integrating into the global community speaking universal languages, through Africanised vocabulary. However, Afro-centric passion is still upheld by many African designers and producers.

Ghanaian designer, Behinder Compah-Keyeke, said, "African Print signifies something more than a fashion statement"

African print is literally our culture as Africans, because when were born, we were wrapped in a wax print, the designer added. It is a major part of every African's heritage and every wax print tells a unique African story.

### **Global trends**

Fashion today is more than a lifestyle, it is big business too. Class struggle is inherent in fashion. People don't just dress as a way of responding to one of the basic needs of life or to protect self against environmental or climatic effects, people also dress to show class and boost their egos. African fashion pattern encourages this phenomenon, because of it elaborateness and expression.

However, the contemporary generation imbibes global trend in fashion, which carries African fabric as a background on the western style. The younger generation believes in globalisation and are excited to live and speak a global language through Africa's visual vocabulary. Abstract nomenclature are designated to the prints to suit their intentions, as a way of visual communication.

Surprisingly, most of the so-called African prints are produced by people who don't wear them, for example, wax, lace and Ankara prints. They simply seize the African market, taking advantage of our idea and passion, without any "memorandum of understanding". It is what we like, so where it comes from don't matter?

In 1846, Dutch entrepreneur Pieter Fentener Van Vlissinger learned that, there was a high demand for printed cotton,



with the big boom of the industrial revolution at that time, he discovered that he could mechanise the method used to make prints on batiks, a popular cloth worn in Indonesia. His company Vlisco introduced the printed materials to the Gold coast (now Ghana), where it exploded on the scene and immediately took off throughout the continent.

The Western print, with machinery, showed superiority in terms of precision of designs and material quality.

Nevertheless, the indigenous producers of wax print continued in their production, albeit, low quantity because of the localised process. Their methods, style, peculiar motifs, suffice today, despite the western dominance.

Today, “Ankara” print is popular amongst Africans, but African textiles aren’t African. It is a price for the power of technology. The world is a global village, Africa as a member of the global community, should be a team player and contribute to the universality in fashion, by acculturating it vocabulary.

The 2021 declaration of the year of African Art, Culture and Heritage by the African Union is a viable avenue through which key players in the fashion can seize the opportunity for the market in the fashion ecosystem and establish their vocabulary, through visual medium in textile design.

#### **The Vocabulary**

The visual vocabulary are better expressed through the basic stimuli principles of see, touch and feel. The images in this article are some of Nigeria’s, expressions in the fashion world, which aimed at encouraging African Cultural Renaissance and contribution to the global creative economy.

The Fashion unit of the creative economy is receiving global attention and is supporting the economies of various African countries, in terms of per capita income, employment, socio-cultural and other support factors. At the continental level, promotion and support to the key players had begun but at a very insignificant level, considering the enormous potentials in the continent. However, the contemporary characters in the industry are making strides to speak the visual vocabulary through the concepts that goes beyond Africa’s Cultural Values.



#### **SUGGESTIONS**

- African Union and its member states are encouraged to support the fashion and textile industries through grants, subventions and loans to the producers of local fabrics, producers of the industrialised prints, the researchers and fashion houses and educational institutions.
- Fashion shows, carnivals, exhibitions should be promoted and supported for regular activities.
- There is need for fashion academy and research institutions into local and contemporary fabric production and promotion.

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# THE ROLE OF CULTURE AS A DRIVING MECHANISM FOR EFFECTIVE REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA

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Culture can contribute to bringing together what politics has separated as well as to the hastening and consolidation of the process of restructuring in the economic field.

The AU Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries in Africa clearly stipulates, "Culture can contribute to bringing together what politics has separated as well as to the hastening and consolidation of the process of restructuring in the economic field." For effective regional integration to occur, a common culture (common goals, values and converging interests) is an imperative aspect that should exist. The African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 Aspiration 5 is in synch with the aforementioned as it ascertains and calls for an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics. According to the AU, this is a key actor, amongst others, and a precondition for Africa's development and for effective regional integration to be attained. In line with this, universally, the significance of a common culture for effective regional integration cannot be underestimated. In fact, it is recognized that culture is often a tool for cooperation amongst states and even regions (AU, 2012; ASEAN, 2009; EU, 2015).

Opposing this verdict, in the past four decades, Africa has witnessed severe diverging interests and opposing goals in the context of regional integration. As if this is not enough, the Africa Regional Integration Report (2016) also indicates

evidence of the low intra-Africa regional integration (trade) which only accounts for 17% of Africa's exports compared to 59% in Asia and 69% in Europe. This has negatively impacted on the economic and social development of most African countries, if not all of the region at large. This paper is thus of the view that although Africans may have different values and interests, common, agreed goals and values termed as "common culture" can be a driving mechanism for effective regional integration and Africa's development.

Regional integration studies have side-lined the role of culture for effective regional integration yet culture is the backbone of the African society.

## **Background to the issue**

For a long time, the international community has ignored the concept of culture as a condition for effective regional integration. Regional integration has been more focused on the outcomes which include resources, investment and wealth distribution. In fact, African

culture is at best ignored and at worst viewed simply as a negative obstacle to regional integration. This is the reason this study wants to address this issue. The concept of culture, an element of social science analysis, was prominent in the 1940s and 50s. Within the study of regional integration, it remains unrecognised and out of the picture as a condition for regional integration. Regional integration studies have side-lined the role of culture for effective regional integration yet culture is the backbone of the African society. This study aims to highlight the oft overlooked relationship of cultural familiarity as a possible condition for successful regional integration. The hypothesis of the paper is that shared and common culture is imperative for effective regional integration.

### The Concept of Culture

The concept of culture is deeply contested. Between 1920 and 1950 alone, at least one hundred and fifty seven definitions were presented (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952, 149). But what is culture? Does it really matter in regional integration? Gullestrup (2003:31) defines culture in the classical meaning of the word, which entails education, refinement, arts inter alia. He continues by defining culture in its broadest form. He views culture as the worldview and the values, rules, moral norms and beliefs, material and immaterial products and symbols. This is usually dynamic and is determined by a given context and a given time usually passed from generation to generation and which in one form or the other, differentiates people from human beings belonging to another culture. Porter (2000:15) also defines a culture as a complex system, a set of interacting variables, tools, burial customs, religious beliefs, social organization that function to maintain a community in a state of equilibrium with its environment. In the context of this work "culture" is hereafter defined as a group of people, individuals, nations with common values, goals and interests integrating to achieve a common goal i.e. socially, politically or economically to mention a few. Huntington and Harrison (2000) support that culture matters when they state that if people can learn anything from the history of economic development, it is that culture makes almost all the difference. Inglehart (2000:80) is in agreement with this assertion as he argues that distinctive cultural zones exist and they have major social and political consequences, helping shape important phenomena from fertility rates to economic and democratic institutions.

However, it is important to note that when people of different cultures meet towards achieving one goal, they carry with them many thoughts, values, norms, emotions, and beliefs that were nurtured and planted in them by their different cultures. This work acknowledges that forming a common culture and shared values is not an easy task but also that it has proved elsewhere to have contributed to economic development, stability and security (see EU; ASEAN). It thus becomes a prerequisite to accommodate oneness and several cultures towards a common goal in order to achieve effective regional integration, Africa's economic development and perfect interactions and interrelations.

If people can learn anything from the history of economic development, it is that culture makes almost all the difference.

### The Concept of Regional Integration

Like most parts of the world, there has been strong interest in regionalism in Africa. The motivations for regional integration on the continent, especially in 1963 (formation of Organisation of African Unity, OAU) were perhaps characterised by a strong motivation towards facing a common challenge. But what is the concept of regional integration and why does it matter?

Regional integration does not just occur, there has to be preconditions. Lessons from other parts of the world show that a common culture and shared values play important roles in regional integration including regional development and security

Wallace (1999:9) defines integration as the creation and maintenance of intense and diversified patterns of interaction among previously autonomous units.

Mattli (1999:190) defines integration as the process of internalising externalities that cross borders within a group of countries. Deutsch (1968:159) again defines integration as a relationship among units in which they are mutually interdependent and jointly produce system properties which they would separately lack. He gave four elements which would determine this cooperation which includes maintaining of peace, accomplishing specific common tasks, achieving high multipurpose capabilities and gaining a new self-image and common identity. Kevin (2014) defines regional integration as the process or situation where countries in a defined geographical area voluntarily surrender their sovereignty in one or more areas to carry out specific transactions, in view of achieving a goal(s) or enjoying specific benefits to a higher degree than they would individually. All definitions and their outcomes contain a more or less clearly stated cultural element, compared to other definitions. (Wallace, 1999) as his definition assumes that integration begins, when important groups, primarily economical, face problems in the cross-border transfer of e.g. goods and services.

### Preconditions for Regional Integration and role of Culture in Regional Integration

Regional integration does not just occur, there has to be preconditions. Lessons from other parts of the world show that a common culture and shared values play important roles in regional integration including regional development and security (EU; ASEAN). Several theories have been used to study the phenomenon of regional integration. Theories that have been widely used to study the phenomenon in Africa include: federalism, functionalism, neo-functionalism, transnationalism and country similar theory. This piece of work will focus on the country similar theory by Linder (1961).

Culture is not static, it develops, but slowly. This implies that cultures of several nations that were once opposing may in the long run overlap, resulting in a positive outcome.

Linder (1961) in his country similar theory/ theory of overlapping demands, looks at

how countries in same cultural milieu trade more amongst themselves. He argues that they will have similar demands for cultural products/services like family functions, rites, rituals, entertainment, religious ceremonies and so on. Countries with no similarity either by cultural, technological or other basis may not trade. According to him, most trade today occurs among related countries, same per-capita income, comparable communications/allocation systems, same languages, traditions, belief, tastes etc. Countries within the proximity of geographical locations would also have greater trade compared to the distant ones. This can also be explained by various types of similarities, such as cultural and economic, besides the cost of transportation.

The country similar theory clearly outlines the role of culture in regional integration specifically trade, but does not clearly define the extent to which culture contributes to the aforementioned. Moreover, within that mentioned "culture" by Linder are various heterogeneous cultures, but he did not outline how these various cultures may resolve their differences and come together to have shared values and goals to benefit them all. Thus, this work argues that the manifest of two or more cultures may serve to work together in some form of a "cultural homogeneity" towards achieving one goal. Culture is not static, it develops, but slowly. This implies that cultures of several nations that were once opposing may in the long run overlap, resulting in a positive outcome.

This paper thus assumes that shared core and manifest cultures are imperative for the success of regional integration. A shared and common culture can lead to durable and effective integration in Africa.

### **Relating to the AfCFTA**

The 18th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2012 endorsed the Framework, Road Map and Architecture for fast Tracking the Establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The aim of the AfCFTA was to create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of business persons and investments and thus pave the way for accelerating the establishment of a Customs Union, harmonisation and coordination of trade liberalisation across Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Africa at large (AU, 2012).

## Effective regional integration can be achieved with shared values and common culture. The starting point would be through the existence, acceptance, recognition, respect and tolerance of several cultures merging into common goals to achieve the end goal of regional integration.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) estimates that the AfCFTA has the potential both to boost intra-African trade by 52.3% by eliminating import duties, and to double this trade if non-tariff barriers are also reduced. However, notable challenges have been noticed in the implementation of the AfCFTA with actors from the 55 countries of Africa. Challenges vary from the dependence of African economies on commodity production and exports, a lack of diversification resulting in a mismatch between supply and demand, tariffs and non-tariff barriers (NTBs), inefficient transport infrastructure and poor trade logistics.

Along the way, the role of diverging cultures, values and interests has been underestimated and ignored, and yet it so imperative. Thus, an environment where there is a common culture and shared values can be a starting point as a solution to Africa's regional integration. The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) agrees with this assertion as it strongly argues how integration cannot be achieved by relying only on political initiatives or focusing narrowly on economic dynamics, as had been the case with previous undertakings- (CODESRIA, 2003).

### **The Road Ahead**

Africa has re-started on a positive note by drawing comprehensively from the experiences of the European Union and ASEAN in re-drawing the strategies of

the AfCFTA. The AfCFTA, with its benefit, entails in the long run an Africa which is successful economically, socially, culturally inter alia. This effective regional integration can be achieved with shared values and common culture. The starting point would be through the existence, acceptance, recognition, respect and tolerance of several cultures merging into common goals to achieve the end goal of regional integration.

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**I THINK CINEMA IS NEEDED THROUGHOUT AFRICA, BECAUSE WE ARE LAGGING BEHIND IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR OWN HISTORY. WE NEED TO CREATE A CULTURE THAT IS OUR OWN; IMAGES ARE VERY FASCINATING AND VERY IMPORTANT TO THAT END.**

**Ousmane Sembene**



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# TOWARDS A NEW PARADIGM OF CULTURE AND DEMOCRACY

*By Fofi Assegid*

**C**ulture defines who we are, cradles our values, our way of being, what we hold to be most precious. Culture is our unifying human creation; an ever-flowing river of ideas, customs and social traditions. It is the music that defines a generation, a play rhyme we listened to as we were growing up, the colors of our dresses, and the magic ingredients in our food. Culture is what we take with us when we leave our land, a small cassette tape of our favorite singer, a precious bag of spices, a poem in our heart and vibrant memories of images, sounds and smells from our homeland. In the words of the writer and philosopher Aimé Césaire "Culture is everything. Culture is the way we dress, the way we carry our heads, the way we walk, the way we tie our ties – it is not only the fact of writing books or building houses. "As stated in the African Union (AU) Charter for African Cultural Renaissance, our communities rely on rules and principles based on culture encompassing the arts, our ways of living and our traditions. Our language, traditions, knowledge, and beliefs are what we can openly and freely share with humanity. The arts and cultural activities can both help us celebrate what makes us unique as a people, bring forth our common and individual histories to bond us in a common goal to move forth towards a prosperous and promising future.

## **Culture as a vehicle for economic prosperity**

One of the key goals of the African Champions for the Arts, Culture and Heritage is to develop the creative industries with the aim of generating economic wealth. Indeed, culture is also a potent source of influence; it can greatly impact the business world and economic prosperity at large. A vibrant cultural sector, one that is part and parcel of a national as well as international outlook is a sign of a prosperous and finely attuned society. Economically prosperous nations recognise the value of a vibrant cultural sector. Culture is a key pillar of their outlook because they understand (1) it is a form of dissemination and exchange at the international level (2) it supports innovation and influences major trends in sectors such as fashion, architecture, design with a direct incidence on the financial success of these sectors (3) it directly supports sectors such as tourism and commercial sectors reliant on the cultural heritage of the country; (4) it allows them to gain visibility on international platforms.

Emboldened by various public and private cultural initiatives, Africa and its artists have come a long way. In terms of economic promise, contemporary art from Africa is a great example as it has made great leaps in a few decades. For a long time, contemporary art from Africa was a non-subject outside of the continent. Slowly this position shifted and



artists from the continent were able to make their way to international venues and art platforms. Sometime in the late 90's, the market started to take notice. Thereafter, the market for contemporary art from Africa continued emerging. Today, art lovers, private collectors, museums, and art institutions have fully engaged this region. They are recognizing the investment potential and are securing major works by African artists.

Leading contemporary African artists are commanding top dollars. A painting by Julie Mehretu, "Renegade Exhaustion," sold for a record US\$4,603,750 at Christies. One of Ghanaian sculptor El Anatsui's tapestry recently sold for US\$1,445,000 at Sotheby's. Ibrahim el-Salahi's paintings, a leading artist from the Khartoum School of African Modernism, are now priceless. In fact, the market for contemporary art from Africa has been soaring in the past decades. Experts agree that this may be a new window of opportunity for investors. With the surge of economic growth on the continent, African buyers are leading the group of collectors investing in this sector. There is a definite effervescence on the African art scene. The Biennale of Dakar as well as Le OFF attest to the magnitude and far reaching influence of contemporary artists from Africa. In 2018, the Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden (MACAAL) opened its doors in Marrakesh. Young African curators and gallery owners are actively seeking to lead, advance the conversation and forge new pathways for art and artists from the continent.

International collectors are also chiming in. London-based auction house Bonhams is now holding sales exclusively reserved for contemporary art from Africa and prices are continually rising. Sotheby's is now considering following suit with its own specialized sales dedicated to contemporary art from Africa. In 2015, it reported that sales for its African and Oceanic Art department rose from (US\$4 million to US\$84 million. Artists from Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa currently bring in the higher numbers, but others from countries like Kenya are also fiercely sought after. Experts now predict that the market for contemporary art from Africa is offering investors an opportunity to buy-in early where values are set to increase in the same way it did for the Chinese market.

Communities and individuals are engaging the system. In this light, African artists may be poised to become a major player in the transformation of the continent. They are commenting, projecting, promoting, and even when they stay silent, they are contributing to the advancement of Africa. Even in the midst of urgent crises and challenges, a true African Renaissance is taking place. For contemporary art from Africa, this shift has been engaged on the world stage.

But we can go further, now that we have established a foothold and garnered worldwide attention, it's time we turn our focus to expanding this momentum to our continent by bringing all art to all people. Beyond monetary value, culture and artistic expression can help us establish a cultural democracy in Africa.

### **Culture and Democracy**

While many African nations have answered the call to action for the development of the cultural sector, it is undeniable that we must contend with the competition for scarce resources with more immediate needs. Against these essential demands, it becomes hard to argue for the inclusion of culture as a priority or even area of focus. But what if culture was a vehicle to achieve one of our most important priorities, i.e. democracy? A modern democratic society where the contribution of each individual is valued for its own sake and incorporated into the whole while still maintaining its individual and intrinsic value?

Democracy is a wide concept and can hardly be summarised in this short article. At the very core, democracy is the power of the people. As such, it goes hand in hand with culture and is the basis for a modern prosperous society. The new African Renaissance will rely on the power of our culture and our people thriving in a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic society.

While a lot of research has been done on the subject of Art and Democracy, this short article proposes a new discussion point for Africa – Culture has to incorporate the ideals of democracy to benefit a wider group of individuals, and as Africa looks to the future it must include this higher aspiration of democracy in thinking and building its own cultural sector: one that is modern, universally inclusive and wide-reaching. Indeed, this is underlined by the goal of



the African Union Champions for Arts, Culture and Heritage **“to promote culture as a tool for peace.”**

As stated in the aspirations of the African Union, a strong cultural identity, our common heritage and ethics empower our continent and propel us forward. Based on this declaration, we can invest in a fair and modern society where people can celebrate their common and individual cultures. Moreover, while recognising the unity of Africa rests first and foremost on its history, the aspirations underline the importance of cultural identity, unity and diversity in creating **“equilibrium, strength in African economic development, conflict resolution and reducing inequality and injustice to promote national integration.”**

Indeed, a modern approach to culture is an expression of a democratic society where the creative contributions of every citizen is magnified and supported. In this paradigm, the value of artistic creation and cultural activities are intrinsic to the right of every citizen to contribute to the national, regional, and continental cultural scene actively and equally. Monetary value or income generating potential, while important, should remain secondary to this intrinsic value of all artistic creations, expressions and cultural activities.

Professional art, or art deemed worthy of support cannot be the only focus of public funding. Inequalities, especially

when it comes to public funding and support, must be addressed in order to fully adhere to a cultural democracy. Cultural democracy entails diversity and inclusiveness. All versions and expressions of culture wherever they emanate on the continent are de facto worthy of support.

One form of artistic expression and cultural activity is not held in higher esteem over another following the old and antiquated view of “high art” vs. “low art”. Cultural democracy is not democratization of culture where we inspire “the people” with “high art”. Here the “highly curated” and “refined” tastes and preferences of the few is imposed on those deemed in need of “culture”.

Instead we must create and feed a symbiotic relationship that supports, nourishes all forms of art and culture. Cultural democracy must recognize all ways in which all people interact with culture and creativity.

Through cultural democracy, cross-pollination of ideas, wider public understanding and appreciation, artistic creations, expressions, and cultural activities from all member countries and beyond can be widely disseminated and promoted. Empowered cultural agencies can encourage a collaborative approach with a view to expanding artistic and cultural networks. A rich network can encourage and fuel the generation of new ideas and practices in the artistic and cultural sector.

Seldom is it possible for an artist not to be affected by his/her environment. Even if the artist chooses not to comment, portray or promote a view, however little, he/she chooses a position, even by absence. This affects not only African artists but all African citizens. Cultural democracy encourages this call to service through art and culture where all citizens equally engage in this self-reflecting practice.

According to the AU’s African Charter for Cultural Renaissance, the new African Renaissance is imminent. In fact, we can go even further and propose that since the writing of the Charter, the African Renaissance has emerged across the whole continent. Vusi Maviembela referenced the African Renaissance as the “third moment” in post-colonial Africa. This movement follows decolonisation and democratisation in the quest for the continent to access its full potential. To meet this challenge, ultimately, the new African Renaissance would dawn where culture and associated activities are available, accessible, and widely distributed equally amongst all people of the continent and fulfills the creative potential of every citizen.

This article is part of the author’s MFA Master’s Thesis titled **“Taking our place at the big table: a reflection on contemporary art from Africa”** presented at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels, Belgium.



# THE GREAT AFRICAN MUSEUM.

Preserving and Promoting  
our Cultural Heritage

A Flagship Project of  
Agenda  
2063 The Africa  
we Want

## THE VISION OF THE GREAT MUSEUM OF AFRICA

To educate and inspire generations of Africans and others to harness the continent's history, heritage and endowments for advancement

**T**he African Charter for African Cultural Renaissance recognises the important role that culture plays in mobilising and unifying people around common ideals and promoting African culture to build the ideals of Pan-Africanism; and Africa's Agenda 2063, Aspiration 5 envisions "An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics". To achieve this aspiration, the framework further calls for all African Union (AU) member states to inculcate the spirit of Pan Africanism, by tapping into the continent's rich heritage and culture, to ensure that the creative arts are major contributors to Africa's growth and transformation; while restoring and preserving Africa's cultural heritage, including its languages.

The Great Museum of Africa (GMA) is one of the flagship project of Africa's development framework Agenda 2063 and it aims to promote and preserve African cultural heritage by creating awareness of the continent's vast, dynamic and diverse cultural artefacts and

Africa's continuing influence on world cultures in art, music, language, science, amongst others.

The GMA will be a dynamic and interactive contemporary museum for the collection, preservation, study and engagement with Africa's history, material and non-material culture and heritage. It will feature a strong emphasis on African genealogy along with a Slave Trade Memorial. It will also be the continental hub for promoting and negotiating the return of illicitly trafficked cultural heritage back to the continent.

The Mission of the Great Museum of Africa will be: To systematically collect, preserve, study, interpret and exhibit African cultural properties and heritage for integration, intercultural engagements and economic prosperity

As a pan African Cultural Institution, the GMA will reflect African values and principles at all levels of its operations. These core values and principles include: a Pan-African ethos, Ubuntu, Oneness/interconnectedness, Cultural Diversity, Collaboration, Youth-centeredness, Inclusivity, Accessibility and Openness

#### **Specific objectives of the Great Museum of Africa include:**

- Collect, document, conserve and exhibit unique artworks and indigenous arts from Member States;
- Nurture a sense of unity and togetherness among Member States through sharing of information that builds bridges of understanding between Africans;
- Foster awareness of African heritage and its potential contribution to the continental and global economies;
- Tell the African story, promote research, publications, and disseminate indigenous knowledge through innovative concepts and technology;
- Serve as custodian, where possible, of repatriated African cultural property and heritage, in collaboration with the Member States;
- Support the preservation and development of diverse African and diaspora cultural expressions, traditional craftsmanship, and culinary arts;

- Keep and maintain a single register of GMA holdings of African cultural property and heritage, indicating the origin, location, and description of the holdings using the Object ID for cultural property.
- Collect, protect, and preserve African cultural property and heritage in line with relevant provisions of the AU Model Law on Cultural Property and Heritage (2018).
- Protect intellectual property rights and human rights with regard to conservation of African cultural property and heritage by the GMA.

The GMA will allocate enough spaces for permanent and temporary exhibitions on a variety of themes such as:- Africa's Territory, Population; History of African Civilizations, Colonisation and Post-Colonisation of Africa; African Cultural and Creative Economy; The Africa We Want by 2063; Underwater heritage

The GMA Museum will be located in Algiers, Algeria. While plans are ongoing for the permanent location of the museum, a temporary location has been availed by the Algerian government in Villa du Trait which is located in the heart of Algiers. The Villa Du Trait will host the first continental exhibition of the GMA which will mark the launch of the GMA in 2021 which will showcase Africa's rich heritage to the continent and to the world at large.

The creation of the African Museum is one of the key initiatives being undertaken by the AU in the area of promoting African culture. Other initiatives include partnerships with the African World Heritage Fund and the Observatory of Cultural Policies in Africa (OCPA) as well as supporting the organisation of the Pan-African Film Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO) and the Pan-African Music Festival (FESPAM) and organising the annual Pan-African Cultural Congress.

The development of the AU Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property / Heritage will go a long way in ensuring Africa protects and preserves its cultural assets.

#### **Guiding Principles & Values for the Great Museum of Africa**

- Pan-African ethos
- Ubuntu,
- Oneness
- Interconnectedness
- Cultural Diversity
- Collaboration
- Youth-centeredness
- Inclusivity
- Accessibility
- Openness

*Find out more about  
The Charter for African Cultural  
Renaissance and the status of  
ratification by visiting  
[www.au.int/en/treaties](http://www.au.int/en/treaties)*

“  
I KEPT MY CULTURE.  
I KEPT THE MUSIC OF  
MY ROOTS. THROUGH  
MY MUSIC I BECAME  
THIS VOICE AND IMAGE  
OF AFRICA AND  
THE PEOPLE

Miriam Makeba



**ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE:**  
Levers for Building the Africa we Want

**#AfricanHeritage**

[www.au.int](http://www.au.int)   

# INAUGURAL EDITION OF THE AFRICA FACTBOOK INTENDS TO BUST NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES ABOUT AFRICA

*This article first appeared in the AU Echo 2020 edition and is reprinted with some updates in text following the launch on African Union Day, September 9th 2020*

The Africa Factbook project is an initiative undertaken under Agenda 2063 Aspiration 5 which seeks to enhance the strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics of Africa. The Africa Factbook is designed to contain useful facts about Africa and the African peoples for the purpose of information dissemination, education, entertainment, reference, statistics and documentation.

The premiere edition of the Book of African Records was presented to African Heads of State and Government during the 27th AU Summit in July 2016 in Kigali, Rwanda and in December 2016, a MOU between African Union Commission and the Book of African Records (BAR), for the research and production of a publication titled The

For centuries, the history of Africa has been told by others, most often by people who have subjugated the continent, The African Fact Book is a response to more than 600 years of silence while others spoke on our behalf.

**H.E Cyril Ramaphosa  
African Union Chairperson  
& President of South Africa**

African Factbook was signed. The MOU was renewed in January 2019.

To set the ball rolling on the project, a stakeholders fundraising conference was held in Harare, Zimbabwe in March 2018 attended by representatives from the AU, Member States and International development partners. Seed funding and office space was provide by the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe to support efforts for production of the first edition.

Between September and October 2019, 35 researchers from diverse African countries were brought on board to work on the first edition over 60 day non-stop in camp "International Convention for the Africa Factbook Making Process." A High Level Editorial Board has been incorporated in the process whose role shall be to review the publication before its presentation to organs of the African Union. This board will consist of 1 former head of state and government in good standing, 7 internationally recognised scholars of African history and 5 editors of international news organisations in Africa.

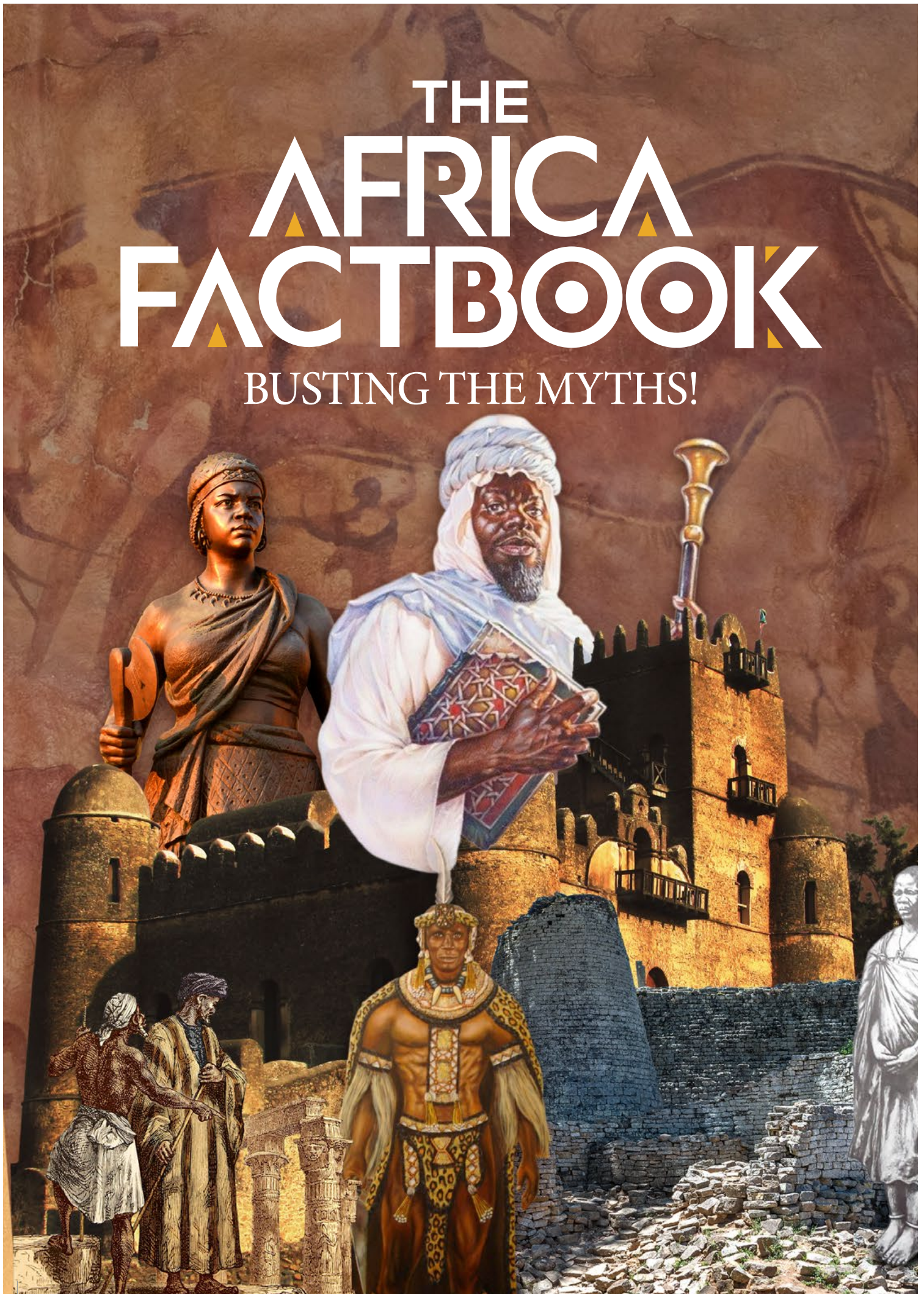
Africa's fight back against fake news about the continent and its people got to a resounding start with The Factbook's editorial team selecting "Busting the Myths" as the theme for the inaugural edition, capturing the intention to correct wrong information that over the last 500 years has negatively impacted on Africa's image.

On September 9th 2020, which is also the day we commemorate African Union Day, the 1st Edition of the Africa Factbook was launched H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa the African Union Chair and President of the Republic of South Africa.

The Africa Factbook is one of the tools that will be used to demonstrate new knowledge that points to the fact that many views and opinions about Africa, including the various wars and conflicts that have occurred in Africa have been caused by artificial misunderstandings of our cultures and history. The goal is to position the Africa Factbook as a publication will become an official source of reference and facts about Africa as stated in the decisions of the November

# THE AFRICA FACTBOOK

BUSTING THE MYTHS!



2017 2nd Ordinary Session of the AU's Specialised Technical Committee on Communication and ICT (STC-CICT-2), wherein the Ministers reiterated the African Union's commitment to the African Fact book project and called upon "Member States to adopt the Africa Factbook as an educational tool, to enhance their knowledge of and pride in Africa."

The 1st Edition of the Africa Factbook was supported by the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe who provided material and financial resources to ensure completion of the publication. With the Africa Factbook now a reality the subsequent editions will call for a continental effort to ensure its continuity as highlighted during the Ministerial meeting of the 3rd STC-CICT held in in October 2019 in which ministers of communication and ICT called upon Member States to fund subsequent publications on a rotational basis.

There are too many myths about Africa that have actually made it into textbooks in schools around the world. Myths such as Africa has no history, or that there are no inventors and discoverers from Africa. The Africa Factbook will show that Africa was and remains the backbone of world civilisation and it's about time we unapologetically push for our right place in the annals of world history.

**Amb. Kwame Muzawazi,  
CEO of Book of African  
Records.**

**Some purport that the people of Africa have no history and that our colossal monuments were not built by us indigenous local people. The continued narratives and myths which must be debunked vary from time to time and across generations. The Africa FactBook will contribute towards the cultural, educational and mental emancipation of the African people**

H.E. Emmerson Mnangagwa  
President, Republic of Zimbabwe

Visit [www.au.int](http://www.au.int) and download your copy of the Africa Factbook

I'VE GOT TO WHERE I AM IN LIFE  
NOT BECAUSE OF SOMETHING  
I BROUGHT TO THE WORLD  
BUT THROUGH SOMETHING  
I FOUND - THE WEALTH OF  
AFRICAN CULTURE.

Hugh Masekela



**ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE:**  
Levers for Building the Africa we Want

**#AfricanHeritage**

[www.au.int](http://www.au.int)   



# Bringing The AU Anthem to Life: Profile of Nyundo Music School Muhanga Campus

In 2018, a group of young talented musicians partnered with the African Union to record the African Union Anthem in Swahili, English, Spanish, Arabic, French and Portuguese. They were students of Nyundo Music School, Rwanda.

**T**he Nyundo Music School is the first vocational public music school established in Rwanda in 2014.

The establishment of the school was as a result of the recognition by the Government of Rwanda to develop and implement professional programmes that would empower individuals through skills development and promote Human Resource Development pillar of Rwanda's Vision 2020.

Under the leadership of Mr Jacques Murigande, the school Director, Nyundo Music School offers a three-year music program that supports professional development and enhances capacity and transferable skills in all aspects of the Rwandan music industry. The school teaches



entrepreneurship, music theory, music production, vocal music, use of instruments languages and music history among others.

Citing the worldwide success of the Malian, Senegalese, Jamaican, Ghanaian, Nigerian, Ethiopian and South African music industries amongst others, the school acknowledges the necessity of embracing and cultivating musical, cultural roots and traditions as the foundation of a successful international branding of a national identity; and recognises how essential the bedrock of Rwandan music traditions will be in the success of this mission. Like other countries that have successfully branded themselves through music, Nyundo music school aspires for the Rwandan brand to be known internationally as a rich, varied and innovative musical nation that embraces its cultural heritage.

The School's ultimate goal is to tap into Rwanda and Africa's musical potential. It encourages confidence and musical expression, support professional development and edifies existing traditions and musical instruments.

Since its launch Nyundo Music school continues to achieve its objectives which includes

- Offering a wide-ranging music theory and practice course to cultivate music and musicians.
- Tapping existing musical traditions and edifying them without disturbing the grassroots.
- Attracting budding musicians.
- Broadening the scope and widening the horizons of aspiring musicians.
- Developing and graduating artists to an international standard.
- Upgrading and devising a modern music curriculum which includes: Music Theory; Music production using Professional software and equipment; Instrumentation, Vocals, Instrument development; Craftsmanship, Commercialism / entrepreneurship / Music Business, Marketing, Authorship, Recording techniques, Sound engineering and Intellectual property

### **Student Life at Nyundo Music School**

The school has 100 students at various levels of study (30% female, 70% male). Students are recruited through a rigorous audition process which includes amongst other things, a performance before a panel of 4 peer assessment jurors who judge the auditions.

Once enrolled at the school, the students affirm and communicate a sense of individual and collective identity leading to a coherent and unified portfolio from which the graduates can project

and further the development of the Rwandan Music industry.

Their learning is supported by group of well trained instructors in an environment that provides various educational facilities which include: Performance and recording space, Recording Studio, Library, Computer lab, Production Lab Manufacturing wing and various musical instruments

***Listen to the AU Anthem as recorded by Nyundo Music School and download the lyrics by visiting <https://au.int/en/about/symbols>***





*Ndlovu Youth Choir  
first appearance  
on America's Got  
Talent in 2019*

## From LIMPOPO to the world... NDLOVU YOUTH CHOIR TAKES THE WORLD BY STORM

**F**rom the small rural town of Moutse in Limpopo province of South Africa, a group of talented young Africans have captured the hearts of people all around the world and brought hope and recognition to their community.

Ndlovu Youth Choir first instant of international fame was when they performed a Zulu rendition of Ed Sheeran's "Shape of You" with Wouter Kellerman, a grammy award winning flutist. The video of their version was uploaded onto YouTube rapidly going viral gaining over 4 million views when it was first uploaded and has since been over viewed 6.2 Million times.

The popularity of the video led to the choir being noticed by the producers of the popular American competition show, America's Got Talent (AGT). The producers invited the choir to audition for the talent show competition in 2019.

Accompanied by their choral director Ralf Schmitt, Ndlovu Youth Choir regaled viewers with their blend of traditional South African vocal styles mixed with modern genres of music and advanced through each stage of the competition performing to a worldwide television audience, winning support both at home in South Africa, on the African continent and internationally. Their success was even celebrated at the highest level by the President of South Africa, H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa. The choir which was the first African act to ever reach the finals

of AGT ended their journey in the top five and received a hero's welcome usually accorded to sports teams and athletes when they arrived back in South Africa.

The new found fame led to sold out performances across Europe and the USA and even led to a recording contract under a music label of the world renowned music producer, Simon Cowell within the Sony Music Group. With the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2020, the choir had to put their plans on hold but with the resilience of African youth quickly adjusted to the times continuing to write music and even converting their open air stage in Moutse into a television studio with green screens so that they can shoot their own videos locally and pass on their message of joy and hope through online performances which are posted on their social media channels. They also gave of their time during the lockdown by volunteering to package and distribute food parcels to their local community.

With diverse backgrounds, some laden with hardship, the members of the Ndlovu Youth choir have banded together to give each other hope and with discipline and focus have grown into a musical group of international acclaim, following in the steps of another famous choral group from South Africa, Ladysmith Black Mambazo.

The amazing young people of Ndlovu Youth Choir not only remind us of the amazing human potential to have an impact in spite of difficult social and economic backgrounds, but also the need to invest in vocational training centres across the continent that can enhance the talents of Africa's youth in the realm of arts and culture as well as recognise and celebrate Africa's talented youth in the African Union Year of Arts, Culture and Heritage.

*30 years ago, Hugo and Liesje Tempelman of Ndlovu Care Group set up a clinic to provide health services to the local population of Moutse in Limpopo province. Overtime they realised that the community did not have a recreational facility that would cater for the youth in the area and decided to set up the Miracle Theatre where young people could assemble to participate in drama, arts and culture as a means to express themselves and develop and enhance their life skills. Ndlovu Youth Choir an offshoot of the programmes run at the theatre was formed in 2009 and is also a part of the wider Ndlovu Care Group's childcare community programme. The choir was set up to provide disadvantaged youth access to the same level of musical education as that provided to children from more well off segments of society.*



# CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY IN AFRICA: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

**By Michelle Moreira**

*Universidad Europea del Atlántico*

*Professor - Communication Department*

**T**he struggle for representativeness is not a trivial action, but an extremely necessary and complex one in our society, conceived through a colonialist process that systematically excludes non-European thought and aesthetics. This representativeness, which is a continuous search to resist the dominant discourse, has been progressing historically and begins to create new spaces, among others, in the contemporary art market.

Photography owes a debt to this struggle. By virtue of its origin and technique, it has emerged and developed as an accomplice to the construction of the dominant discourse, whose narrative contributed to a partial perception of reality in the world. In this sense, photography has historically been a fundamental tool of colonisation and has contributed enormously to the distorted representation of African cultures from a single perspective, that of Europe.

But there is a possibility of re-establishing this representativeness, and this requires self-representation, i.e. the ability and opportunity

for a group to create and disseminate its own representation. In the current context, new initiatives are emerging and the number of African photographers standing out on the international scene is increasing.

However, it is still insufficient. According to the study "The State of News Photography 2018" (World Press Photo, 2018), among the 5,000 photographers taking part in one of the largest international photography competitions, more than 80% are men, 10% reported being Latin Americans, and only 1% reported being black.

This leads us to the question: why are so few people claiming to be "black" in one of the biggest documentary photographic competitions?

One of the questions is whether people want to be tagged from their skin colours. In fact, the study reveals one participant's perception of this research variable in the report:

“I don’t see any reason why you need to know if I am Black or white, yellow or green,” wrote one photographer. The researchers do argue that however complex, inadequate or contested these classifications might be, there is value in understanding the broad racial and/or ethnic composition of our participants, and of the industry as a whole. Our hypothesis was that, like gender, there would be significant disparities worth noting. So it proved. (Hadland e Barnett, 2019)

The fact is that the study revealed ethnic disparities among the participants that coincide with what is known about the African photographic industry, i.e. that it is poorly represented in a global context.

In recent years, African photography has gained space in specialised art fairs, galleries and photographic foundations in Europe. For example, we can see photographers such as Malian Salick Sidibé winning the Hasselblad Prize in 2003, and South African David Goldblatt receiving a retrospective of his work at the Centre Pompidou in Paris and work printed in magazines such as the BBC Magazine by Mozambican photographer Mario Macilau.

What then is needed to increase the visibility of African photographers and encourage their participation in the international market? From the creative economy, groups and initiatives can think of strategies to occupy spaces and discourses. These initiatives are following a growing trend.

This new spot is strengthened by social networks and globalisation, which allow for greater connection between photographers and pan-African movements. In addition to previous actions that have enabled the development of networks within Africa to strengthen photographic production on the continent, to improve the visibility of photographers and encourage new productions.

One of the first movements can be traced back to 1994, with the Bamaki Biennial of Photography in Mali. This event succeeded in promoting private and collective initiatives, mainly in West Africa. Overcoming several challenges over the years, the festival remains active and is a world reference for so-called “African photography”, or for this construction of African identity or African aesthetics in photography. Nowadays LagosPhoto and Addis Photo Fest are festivals that also take place around the art of photography.

Another known initiative is the creation of a database of information on African photographers, The African Photojournalism Database (APJD), launched in August 2016 by the World Press Photo Foundation and the Everyday Africa art collection. From this database, professionals interested in documenting the continent can choose African photographers rather than send photographers from other regions. Another similar initiative is the creation of agencies and media focused on lesser-known photographers, such as the Native Agency in London and the African Photography Network in Denmark. The collaborative platform Afrique in Visu shows contemporary photographers, and is a reference for the most current photography, made in the continent. The latter has become an important tool to stimulate the sector and promote contemporary African photography.

These actions have considerable merits, which extend over time, but can be reinforced with specific strategies to promote photography in the region. Due to financial, climatic and structural difficulties, the sector’s development possibilities must be considered in the field of international cooperation, especially through networks that are supported and strengthened regionally.

Considering the specificities of the creative sector, a programme of promotion and development of photography should work in all three objective fields:



- training, qualification and instrumentalisation of photographers;
- stimulation to experiment with new languages and techniques;
- training and encouraging a diverse audience.

In the first case, it would be important to facilitate the development of training courses, access to photographic equipment and materials and offer opportunities to participate actively in professional photographic creation. In this sense, a partnership with educational institutions, photographic material manufacturers and experienced photographers could meet the region’s training and infrastructure needs. In this project, traditional knowledge and materials, which are capable of exploring alternative and environmentally related structures in a sustainable way, should be taken into account. In addition to these courses, broader training activities such as university and vocational training. In the field of education, with the development of distance education, it is possible to offer up-to-date, quality curricula everywhere,

which would lack access to technology and basic computer knowledge. More specifically, on the social networks themselves, it is possible to offer courses through live broadcasts with proposals based on varied themes or approaches.

In the second objective area, from the practice of promotion, art and photography institutions play a fundamental role as guiding centres and promoters of actions and projects, and for this reason they are recognized as sources of legitimacy and diffusion of the creative industry processes. But it is important to recognize pluralism as an important element in the agenda of discussions, allowing for experimentation and creative freedom of their own, which escape from European styles and trends. The search for identity requires space for a deeper research of languages and techniques, free from market pressure. With this fostering action, the formation of talent is stimulated that may have space and differential in the artistic market and offer real answers to the question of representativeness. It is certain that the photographic language is very much associated with a more positivist technology, which has developed as a representation of reality. However, in the artistic field, the possibilities of experimenting with formats and narratives are elaborated with more freedom, giving flow to the construction of identity from more traditional resources or references, avoiding the aesthetic patterns established by the Europeans. Thus, through research and the encouragement of novelty, it is possible to encounter an original photograph, and therefore more representative of African realities.

In the third objective, we have a key issue which is the education of the viewing public. It is necessary for the consumption and diffusion of photographic work done in the continent, besides being the main focus of the communication process which is to reach the receivers. Training the public, both continental and international, requires specific educational actions both in schools and in exhibition centres and foundations that encourage research and collection, and also preserve the work of photographers for knowledge and the education of a broad audience. In this scenario, the media also have a fundamental responsibility for legitimising and honouring photographers. Some of the most international news chains such as the BBC, The Guardian, New York Times and El País, as well as Reuters, Getty Images and AFP, the mass media

can collaborate with the dissemination of African photographic work and assume this responsibility with representativeness. It is understood here that the promotion of photography must involve a broader visual literacy, focused on the plurality of mediations, i.e., allowing different re-reading of present and old production. Thus, in addition to the mass media, bringing photography into schools and exhibition centres is fundamental to thinking about and understanding this art

In the case of old photographs, it is important to take care of the collections, which is a challenge for many African countries as they would hardly be able to maintain old photographic collections properly preserved without suffering the wear and tear caused by fluctuations in climate, humidity and temperature. Much of the photographic work is in private collections, and with cooperation efforts, photographs have been digitised, for example, in the Cape Verde National Archives. Some countries like Senegal and Gambia offer a large collection of photographs and photographic postcards available through the internet, although in some places, such as Guinea Bissau and Equatorial Guinea, there is slow progress in the process of digitisation of the photographic collections (Santana, 2012).

Finally, of course, social media is fundamental in this process of training the public and promoting photographers. This type of media allows a more diffuse, diverse and popular visibility and visual discourse. Through online platforms, photographers are able to broaden access to the work and create their own consumer audience and viewers who sustain a status and influence on the work done. But work on social networks can be ephemeral and results are lost in the long run. To establish this prestige in a more perpetual way, it is necessary to act collectively and with classical institutions, such as the aforementioned media and agencies, art galleries, photographic festivals, and art collectives.

### **International cooperation: cultural challenges for sustainable relations**

In order to develop a programme to encourage the internationalisation of photography in Africa, there is the challenge of integrating the role of the state into these actions. Having a heavier, more systematic and protectionist structure, often variable due to national political issues, integrating governments

can make the regional process more difficult considering the relations between countries. However, if the focus is on ambitious cultural policies that seek to promote and leverage through the policy agenda, particularly in facilitating legal frameworks and technical support, governments could then collaborate on the growth and results of transnational efforts to develop African photography.

The African Union, aware of the challenges of establishing effective programmes in the field of cultural cooperation, is currently trying to renew efforts for the development of cultural policies and cooperation in the region, building on what was said at the AU Conference of Ministers of Culture (Nairobi, December 2005).

These policies must take into account the various entities and collectives that have been operating in this sector, which are very varied in size and resources. Photography as a cultural industry has always been an internationalised market, and thus requires a global effort, not only within the African continent, but also in all corners of the planet, so that the representation of pan-Africanism is true and powerful.

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# How Cultural Identity Culminates Into Power to Effect Social, Economic and Political & Change

## A look at the life of Katherine Dunham: An African - American Cultural Icon

*By Professor Anita M. Williams Diop*

Katherine Dunham (1909-2006), an anthropologist, dancer, and choreographer, social activist, civil rights fighter would spend her life attempting to eradicate the colour line, through the artistic form of dance.



**T**he Africans of the Diaspora in North and South America share a history of the transatlantic as well as domestic slave trafficking. From the beginning, their presence in these new lands created a struggle for citizenship, public and private civil rights. Their plight would be a recurring theme throughout the history of early America. Even as America matured and released her enslaved Africans, she still had not resolved her racial hatred, inequities, and social injustices against the descendants of the formerly enslaved. W.E.B. DuBois prophesied that the problem of the 20th century in America would be the colour line.

Katherine Dunham, an anthropologist, dancer, and choreographer, social activist, civil rights fighter would spend her life attempting to eradicate the colour line, through the artistic form of dance. Throughout her life's work, it was the purpose of Katherine Dunham to uplift, in still pride and self-esteem in African youth while simultaneously educating and enlightening non-African people, assisting them with skills, to racially accept, respect, and tolerate people having a different cultural ancestry, heritage, and religion. She is a pioneer in American Modern

Through dance, Katherine Dunham used the human body as a functional tool to stage a protest and make demands for social change. As an effective mode of communication, she used dance as a source and reflection of history.

Dance, which is a true American art form. Katherine Dunham is to American Modern Dance, what W. C. Handy is to Jazz. She is the Mother of American Modern Dance.

Amiri Imamu Baraka, also known as Leroi Jones, characterised African-American art as an expression of dissent within American society.

Katherine Dunham dedicated her life to bridge the racial, social and cultural gap between the races of the world. Utilising the stage to teach her audience, she did not hesitate to draw upon all of her talents as an anthropologist, choreographer, dancer, writer, songstress, activist and humanist to do whatever needed to be done to create a more humane and beautiful environment. She created her art in order to communicate to others that which could not be communicated, or communicated as effectively, through other means; it is a potent medium through which to communicate an alternative ethos and to express dissent.

She also stressed the fundamental African mode of Haitian dance and its role in maintaining cultural identity among the Haitian people. She believed that dance is a primary factor in the unification of the Haitian people in their successful revolt against their colonial masters; she affirmed its revolutionary potential for blacks in the United States.

Katherine Dunham danced and developed a technique that was beaten from a different drum. As a pioneer in modern dance, she sought to elevate not only the masses of African-American youth, but also to elevate all races by creating performances rooted in African religion, dance, and culture.

Studying as an anthropologist, she learned that there were many kinds of dances. Each dance had a particular place and role to play in society. It was during that period of her study

that earmarked the Dunham technique, which would be the foundation of American Modern Dance. The "Dunham Technique" included the anatomical bases of ballet and modern dance and emphasized the torso movements of the ritual of Caribbean-American dance and jazz rhythms.

Dancing is good for the body. It promotes physical fitness and healthiness. Dancing is also good for the soul. The act of physically engaging the body in exercise relieves stress. Just like a good cry, dancing is cathartic. When you dance African dance, you feel your spirit. It is as though a prayer is being answered inside your body. You experience the glory of creation, the gift of life and joy emanating from within. Dunham asserts that, alone or in concert, man dances his various selves and his emotions and his dance becomes a communication as clear as though it were written or spoken in a universal language.

Dance – African-rooted dance – is one part of the "secret of the symbology of Africa," of the black peoples of the world. Holding the keys for improved racial and social conditions, she unlocked respect for African Dance, African-based religion and the African people themselves fulfilling the goals of her peers who foresaw that enhancing and uplifting the African people of the world through the vestiges of art would be a great act for all of humankind.

The talents of Katherine Dunham as an activist and humanist had a powerful impact on racial and social changes around the world. Her performances were filled with embedded messages that could not be silenced and made the world attentive to social injustices waged against Africans



**Katherine Dunham is awarded the National Medal of Arts by US First Lady Barbara Bush and President George HW Bush during a ceremony in the White House's East Room, Washington DC, November 19, 1989.**

of the Diaspora "Southland" was one of her more potent works; a ballet that depicted lynching in the southern region of America. She was inspired to produce Southland as a means of exposing the terrorist tactics of the white American south that was being waged against African-Americans in the '40s and '50s while she was traveling abroad. Lynching of African-Americans in the south had to be addressed and, like many artists from the Harlem Renaissance era, Dunham used her art to promote social change.

Katherine Dunham believed that, "Through the creative artist comes the need to show this thing to the world, hoping that by exposing the ill, the conscience of the many will protest." While on tour in Sao Paulo, Brazil, the Grande Hotel denied Katherine Dunham hotel accommodations. To prove that she was being discriminated against because of her ethnicity she asked her husband to reserve a room in the same hotel. He was given a room. Her secretary, who was white also was given a room on the spot, but she was denied even though she had reservations. She proceeded to perform and her outcry for human rights was presented elegantly in her performance. She pursued a lawsuit. Upon winning the lawsuit against the hotel chain and causing public embarrassment, the president of Brazil made a public apology and banned discrimination in public places.

African women's voices are being heard, African women's life work are being celebrated. Because this African woman dedicated her life's work to researching, writing and presenting the African Woman's History and Literature. Embracing that Cultural Identity that Culminates into Power to effect Social, Economic and Political Change.

The art of dance with an African base transmits embedded messages of racial pride, cultural history and protests against social injustices with the hope that the broader society will learn racial tolerance and justice.



**At the height of her career in the 1940s and 1950s, Dunham was renowned throughout Europe and Latin America and was widely popular in the United States. The Washington Post called her "dancer Katherine the Great". For almost 30 years she maintained the Katherine Dunham Dance Company, the only self-supported American black dance troupe at that time. Over her long career, she choreographed more than ninety individual dances.[3] Dunham was an innovator in African-American modern dance as well as a leader in the field of dance anthropology, or ethnochoreology. She also developed the Dunham Technique, a method of movement to support her dance works**  
Source: Wikipedia

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#### **BIOGRAPHY – Professor Anita M. Diop**

Professor Anita M. Diop is currently teaching African American and American History at Hopkinsville Community College and serves as the Adviser for the Minority Student Union and the History Club. She is also the Founder and Executive Director for the African Roots and Heritage Foundation (ARHF). ARHF is a non-profit

organization with a mission to share African Culture through public programs such as the African Roots and Heritage Festival which drew 19 African Nations together to plan and participate building the bridges between the Diaspora and the African continent. Their Motto is "Celebrating Our Heritage, while confronting the Challenges of being Black."

Professor Diop specializes in the Culture and Arts and her scholarly works, include, *Katherine Dunham: An African American Cultural Icon* and various essays and articles. Professor Diop also is a travel photographer and has exhibited her photographic essay, entitled *Eyes of the African Princess*, at Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History and many other government sites, colleges, and universities. To her credit she is also an award winning short film Director and Producer of "Concrete Roses."

In 2010 Anita was elected at the Ohio Representative for the Sixth Regional Diaspora Caucus and later became the International Representative to the African Union. She has sat on the 3rd and 4th Pan African Cultural Congress, and the 3rd Minister of Culture (CAMC3) and the Youth, Culture, and Sport (STC-YCS2). Her most recent accomplishment includes participating in The 1st African Union Pan African Writer's Conference, and was elected as representative of the Diaspora for the Bureau's Meeting.

She is known as the Spirit of Africa because of her passionate works on bringing cultural awareness and participating in the ongoing Africana Renaissance and uplifting African people no matter where they dwell.

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**Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**



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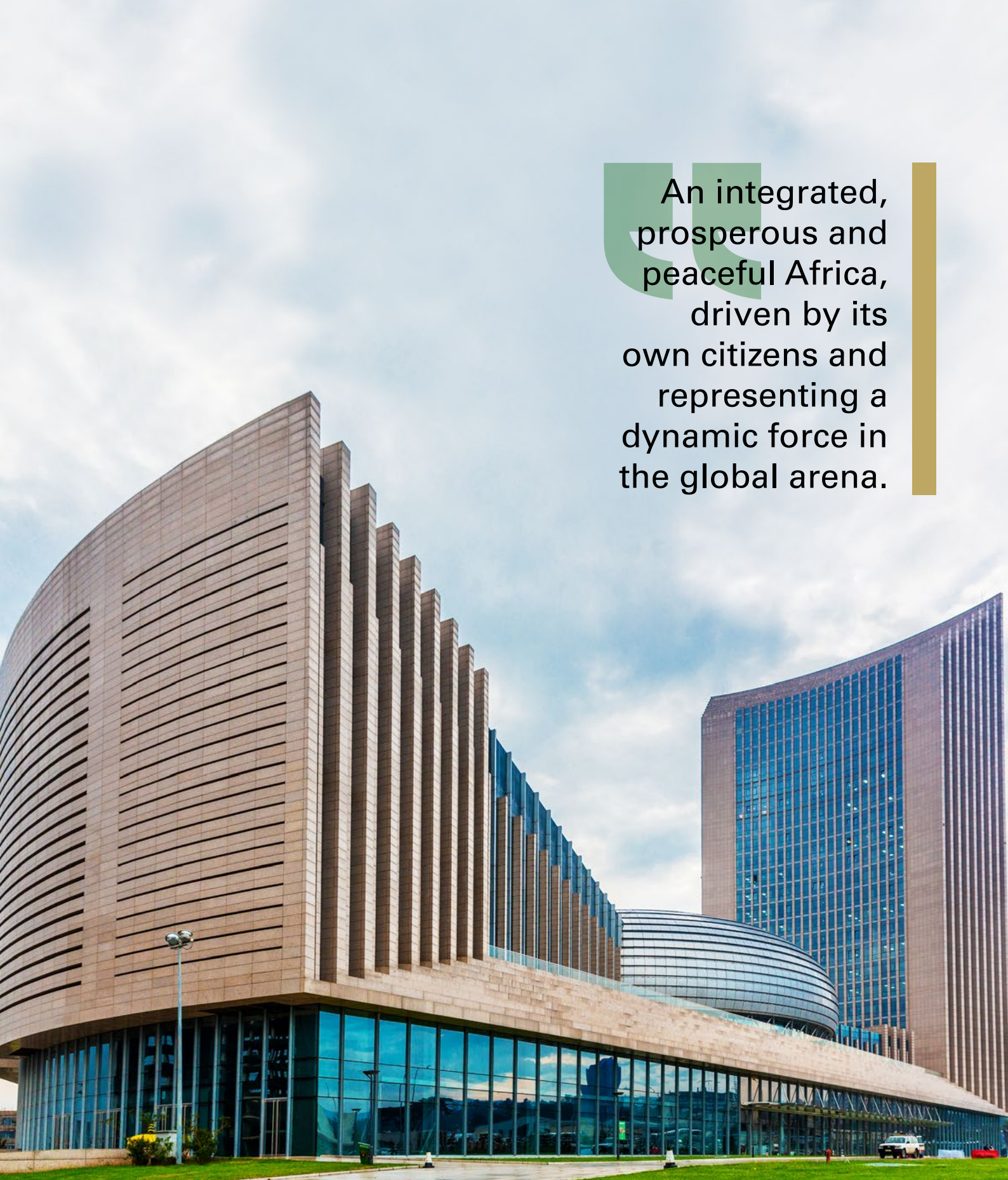
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