

DRAFT REPORT ON THE PREPARATORY CONSULTATIVE MEETING TO THE EXPERTS' CONFERENCE ON AN OBSERVATORY OF CULTURAL POLICIES IN AFRICA

(Kinshasa, Hotel Memling, Monday 14 August 2000)

On Monday 14 August 2000, a consultative meeting was held on the creation of an observatory of cultural policies in Africa. Participants to this meeting included representatives from the University of Kinshasa, large African cultural institutions and organizations, the Ford and Hicter Foundations, the OAU and UNESCO.

The full list of participants is attached to this report.

MEETING PROCEEDINGS

OPENING SESSION

The UNESCO regional representative, Mr Mbuyamba Lupwishi, gave the opening speech. He expressed his thanks to Professor Mpcye, the Rector of the University of Kinshasa for his participation, which was evidence of his commitment to the cultural cause. He saluted Marcel Diouf of the OAU, whose presence lent a Pan-African dimension to the meeting. The meeting would benefit from his solid experience in the sphere of cultural policies in Africa through the exceptional and fruitful mandate that he has had within the OAU, which spans more than twenty years.

Mr Mbuyamba also expressed his pleasure that personalities whose activities in African cultural affairs had been particularly outstanding were present amongst the distinguished guests invited to the meeting.

After this brief introduction, the Rector of the University was given the floor. He, in turn, thanked the UNESCO representative for his introductory remarks, and for having involved the University of Kinshasa and other Congolese institutions of higher learning represented in the meeting.

He stressed the convergence between the perspectives held by UNIKIN's projects and those of the meeting objectives, and promised his personal, scientific contribution and that of UNIKIN to ensure the success of the Observatory project. He pledged to lobby for the project vis-à-vis the Minister of National Education.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Mr Mbuyamba spoke about the development of the Observatory project, situating it within the framework of a series of international meetings on CULTURAL and DEVELOPMENTAL issues (Conferences on cultural policies in Accra, Lomé, Mexico,

Stockholm, etc ...) These meetings, and the discussions which have sustained them, demonstrated how vital culture is in each and every man's quest to master his space and his destiny.

The speaker expressed the view that the Observatory project should federate, render more visible, and reinforce several projects - relating to activities, management and cultural training - currently underway in Africa.

From a methodological point of view, the meeting should be viewed as a phase of collective consultation in preparation for the actual experts' meeting.

At the end of the session, a document would be drawn up justifying the validity of the Observatory from a practical, strategic and prospective standpoint.

Point I PROJECT PRESENTATION

1. WORLD CULTURAL FORUM

Taking the floor, Dr Pwono, representative of the Ford Foundation talked about his attempt to establish a nucleus for training in cultural management at Pittsburgh University. In his view, this project would have reinforced the proposed establishment of regional and international networks of cultural experts.

The World Cultural Forum - whose objective is to bring together professionals from all parts of the world -should respond to three types of needs: a network of working professionals, interdisciplinarity, and operating international markets.

This forum should be able to take account of the general state of culture throughout the world.

2. REGIONAL CENTRE FOR CULTURAL ACTIVITY (CRAQ)

Mr Diouf was then asked to make a presentation on CRAC. Originating from ICAM (the Cultural Institute of Africa and Mauritius) then ICA (African Cultural Institute), CRAC initially functioned as a centre for training cultural personnel, fulfilling the role of an intergovernmental body, with combined support from the French, Swiss and Belgian governments.

As is the case with all African intergovernmental organizations, this institute has been faced with very serious problems with respect to funding, and harmonizing the academic objectives and teaching programmes of the countries involved.

The Institute is currently reviewing its mode of operation, and modules have been programmed to benefit selected candidates, based on the needs expressed by States and their **consequent contributions**.

3. AFRICOM (African International Council of Museums)

In her presentation, the AFRICOM chairperson - Mrs SHAJE - remarked that the NGO was initially an ICOM programme. It gained NGO status during a meeting of African museum professionals in Lusaka in October 1999. In the course of this meeting, the **statutes of AFRICOM were adopted, the plan** of action for the subsequent three years was drawn up, and members of the administrative council were elected.

The principal objective of AFRICOM, in its capacity as an NGO, is to work for "the Africa of peoples", and for authentic cultural zones, transcending fictitious, administrative borders. AFRICOM is currently working towards consolidating mechanisms for protecting operations, setting down standards for the inventory of objects, standardizing technical terminology, and promoting and adapting pedagogical materials.

4. INADEP (Panafrikan Institute for Prospective Studies)

According to Professor YOKA, INADEP came into being in 1985, during the International Symposium in Kinshasa on "Africa and its future". This was held to commemorate, amongst other anniversaries, the centenary of the Berlin Conference. The central theme of the Symposium was the evaluation of established ideologies in Africa and of development strategies adopted by politicians. The diagnosis was harsh: lack of political vision, decline of national education, negligence of scientific and technological research, etc....

With regards to objectives, it had been decided that over and above the future and destiny of Africa, INADEP should:

Serve as a point of reference for any activity relating to development and regional integration

Serve as a forum of discussion for modern and revolutionary thought

Serve as a point of synergy for national centres through various forms of exchange Carry out further research and studies in Egyptology

With respect to achievements, INADEP has not fulfilled promises made at its inception, due to a lack of political will and the absence of an active and diversified partnership.

5. CICIBA (International Centre for Bantu Civilizations)

Mr Corneille Monoko, Permanent Secretary of CICIBA-RD Congo, focused his presentation on the following projects:

1. Promotion of cultural rights, with a projected Observatory of cultural rights in the Congo: exchange of information, inventory of cultural rights, denunciation of violations, pooling of legal instruments.
2. Establishment of a Laboratory of cultural policies, with a possible data bank and the publication of a magazine. As a priority, this laboratory should centre around Central African partners.
3. Consultation on cultural events, with the establishment of a platform of organizers of cultural festivals, and training sessions for the organizers of cultural markets.

It is with this in mind that CICIBA-RD Congo participated in the training session- held on August 2000 for management trainers, organized by the Belgian Marcel Hicter Foundation - and began organizing the Kinshasa "Booklovers" Book Fair. This Fair, which will be staged for the fourth time in 2000, has a sub-regional focus.

6. FESPAM (Pan African Music Festival)

Professor AKA-EVY, Commissioner-General of FESPAM, indicated that this institution was established by the OAU during its 1986 session in Port-Louis (Mauritius). Its headquarters are located in Brazzaville. It is organized in partnership with UNESCO, the International Council of Music (CIM) and CICIBA. It enjoys financial autonomy and is administered by a Management Committee. The General Commissariat constitutes its executive body.

In accordance with the framework agreement between the Government of the Republic of Congo Brazzaville and the OAU, the Management Committee is currently chaired by the Minister of Arts and Culture.

FESPAM intends to organize:

- A large festival of modern, traditional, vocal, instrumental and scientific music of Africa and the Diaspora;
- A scientific symposium on different aspects of music; An exhibition of traditional musical instruments;
- An African music market: the Musaf,
- The establishment of a Pan-African Museum of Music and a Pan-African Centre for the Study and Documentation of Music.

Professor Aka-Evy also announced that the next FESPAM event would be held in Brazzaville from the **P** to the 9th of August 2001, under the theme: "African music at the dawn of the 21st century. Historical development and modern tendencies."

The symposium will be on the theme: "The African drum: Historical documents and the source of world music"

A scientific committee will meet in Brazzaville, in November 2000, to set up the PanAfrican Museum of Music and the Pan-African Centre of Study and Documentation of Music.

7. BIENNALE DES LETTRES (Biennial Festival of Literature)

Having presented the outline on FESPAM, Professor Aka-Evy went on to do a presentation on the *Biennale des Lettres*, at the request of the Chairperson of the meeting. The *Biennale des Arts et des Lettres (Biennial Festival of Arts and Literature)* in DAKAR was not initially devoted to the "literature" aspect. From now on, this aspect of the event will be organised in Brazzaville. During the General UNESCO Conference in Stockholm in 1998, Congo announced the revival and hosting of this biennial event in Brazzaville.

Pre-consultation for the organization of this biennial event will take place at the end of 2001 in Brazzaville, while the event itself will be held in February 2002. The OAU, UNESCO and a large number of African and international

publishing houses will participate in organizing the event. Great authors and men of culture from Africa and the Diaspora will promote it.

8. IRES (Institute of Economic and Social Research)

With a view to revitalizing IRES, where he is a researcher- but particularly with a view to setting in motion the unit on "Dynamics'of Economic and Social Systems in Africa" which he heads -Professor KABEYA made the following proposals. These, in effect, constitute an entire plan of action:

- To make an inventory of the explanatory and prospective theories on African economics and societies, re-evaluating their pertinence in light of current developments;
- To increase empirical knowledge on Africa and contribute to setting up a database;
- To formulate proposals on social and economic policy to bring about development against a background of economic climate and based on socio-cultural specificities, and within the framework of current globalization;
- To reinforce the spirit of scientific precision and transparency in other areas of knowledge amongst researchers.

9. PAN AFRICAN CENTRE FOR CULTURAL TRAINING AND MANAGEMENT

According to its founder, M PWONO, the idea for the centre was conceived during the General UNESCO Conference in Stockholm in 1998. In his view, the cultural dimension of development should be made effective in theory and in socio-political practice.

The centre therefore upholds the objective of instilling within candidates an entrepreneurial and creative spirit of enterprise and creativity, and of precision in the conception, realization and evaluation of concrete projects.

Other information has been provided on socio-cultural projects of a Pan-African dimension. The projects are presented hereafter:

REGIONAL CENTRE FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY

This centre, to be established by the University of Botswana, would be principally concerned with culture and the prevention of conflicts, disasters (wars), catastrophes, AIDS

Project for the conservation and the sustainable utilization of biological diversity.

Mrs NGANDU BIBI who is piloting the project in conjunction with the UNDP has distributed an information leaflet to participants.

Point II PROJECTED OBSERVATORY OF CULTURAL POLICIES IN AFRICA

1. JUSTIFICATION

During discussions on the central theme of the consultative meeting, the essential elements upon which the project is founded were identified, namely:

- the synergy of cultural policies drawn up by governments and NGOs in Africa and in the world; the need for a place of reference, coordination and cultural support for Africans;
- the need for a place for the observation, follow-up and adjustment of experiences in all sectors of socio-cultural life;
- the need for a space in which to reflect upon and draw up a dynamic and audacious vision for an Africa headed towards progress and the future through its wealth, genre and cultural diversity

2. FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIVES

The principal objectives behind the Observatory have been to clarify and gather any useful information with regard to cultural activity and policy; to set up a data bank; to inventory and evaluate activities carried out by African cultural networks, and compare them with others elsewhere, in order to make them available to professionals on the ground and promote fruitful exchanges through an open, clear-sighted and effective partnership; to assist African policy-makers in drawing up more streamlined cultural policies; to follow up on any undertakings made by African states with respect to cultural development in an attentive and vigilant manner, paying particular attention to working conditions, protection of creative works, conflict prevention, respect for human rights; to promote the emergence of original niches of creativity and innovation; to defend heritage, traditions and collective memory against the overwhelming assaults of standardization and globalization; to develop a powerful vision to mobilize the Africa of today and tomorrow.

3. EXPECTED RESULTS

Several types of results may be envisaged for such a project.

4. PRACTICAL RESULTS

Governments and cultural professionals will have pre-drafted cultural policies at their disposal;

Having a point of co-ordination will render synergy among existing institutions and networks effective and efficacious;

Institutions and networks will have access to unpublished information and analyses; Institutions and networks will be able to rely on trained cultural practitioners.

5. SOCIO-POLITICAL RESULTS

Policy-makers and cultural professionals will be able to obtain concrete responses and solutions to priority questions and challenges relating to the survival and democracy of African culture;

In the long run, the Observatory will be able to provide target-groups with educational tools and real data for the promotion of a democratic culture, and consequently a culture of peace;

The Observatory will be in a position to promote a sense of creativity and an entrepreneurial spirit among professionals and artists. These are the driving forces behind an African society that is on the journey towards development;

Africa will have access to an explosive cultural space, where the African individual, normally confined by identity barriers and policies, may draw breaths from the invigorating air of diversity and universality.

What might the daily tasks of such an Observatory be?

6. ACTIVITIES

Four types of activities have been identified.

Investigations and research, with a view to setting up a data bank on the working conditions and know-how of professionals in the cultural domain, and in institutions, networks and governments;

Periodical dissemination of information through a specialized magazine; Training of cultural operators and organization of professional meetings; Consultation on major issues relating to geo-policies and cultural policy.

7. STRUCTURE

How would the whole project be structured?

An administrative council made up of a group of notables and personalities of a high social, intellectual and moral calibre, likely to influence professionals and policy-makers at the highest levels of States.

A technical, flexible, dynamic and bilingual secretariat made up of a team of 5 people: 1 coordinator, 1 assistant, 1 secretary, 1 information manager and 1 financial manager (as a guideline).

Added to this, there would be a team of consultants and a team of correspondents in Africa and throughout the world.

8. INFRASTRUCTURE

The issue of infrastructures was not discussed, as experts felt that this should be left to the discretion of the host country. The criteria relating to designation could be set down at a later stage.

9. PARTNERS

Experts initially targeted universities and personalities from cultural and political spheres as priority partners.

The following institutions have also been considered as priority partners:

- UNESCO
- OAU
- The Ford Foundation (USA)

- Organizations represented at the meeting who could contribute to the creation of the Observatory in a variety of ways, including by way of funding.

10. STRATEGY

Strategies relating to implantation were also not discussed. These will be drawn up during the experts' meeting.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Focus of the Discussions

During the course of the meeting, and in particular during the session on the actual Observatory project, participants placed emphasis on the following:

the need to ensure that the Observatory guarantees effectiveness and is an influencing moral force, these are guarantees that the institution is entitled to in terms of its competencies and performance on the ground; the need to promote a transparent, active partnership; the need for the Observatory to cultivate a Pan-African vision, making it a key partner on the international scene; the need for African policy-makers to show a clear political will for change, and a bold vision for development.

2. Closing Session

In his closing remarks Mr DIOUF expressed his pleasure at the success of the meeting, and his regret that Central Africa does not often promote meetings of such a high standard. This was despite the fact that positive initiatives had been undertaken during the meeting, and that it has been called upon to rediscover its vocation as the "heart" and motor of the continent.

In his view, the Observatory - as an NGO - is an indispensable asset, and not only because it fills gaps at various levels with respect to information, evaluation and cultural development.

In a courageous display of self-criticism, Mr DIOUF highlighted the responsibility of technocrats and cultural professionals for facilitating cultural policies.

Finally, he expressed the hope that the Observatory would also be the site of various exchanges in all directions, particularly south-south (for example with emerging Asian countries).

Kinshasa, 15 August 2000