

AFRICAN UNION

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UNION AFRICAINE

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DRAFT

**MISSION REPORT TO CAPE TOWN TO ATTEND
ILPAA STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
02 AND 03 OCTOBER 2005**

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A. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

1. Upon the request of Mr. Adama SAMASSEKOU, the current President of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) and a member of the Steering Committee of the Implementation of the Language Plan of Action for Africa (ILPAA)), the chairperson of the AU Commission has designated the Commissioner for Social Affairs, whose portfolio deals also with Culture, to represent the Commission at the ILPAA Steering Committee meeting scheduled for 02 and 03 October in Cape Town (RSA). Prof. C. A. JOHNSON from the Office of the Chairperson accompanied the Commissioner.

2. ILPAA is an initiative of NGOs, CBOs and Language professionals for bringing into concrete actions the Language Plan of action for Africa which was adopted by African Ministers of Culture at their meeting in Port-Louis (Mauritius) in June 1986 and approved by the OAU Summit in July 1986 in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). ILPAA was conceived as a Project which is overseen by a Steering Committee.

3. Since its inception, ILPAA has been dealing with ACALAN issues and the Steering Committee in Cape Town has on its Agenda various issues related to ACALAN and among which were; the finalization of the Draft Statutes and the Launching of ACALAN; the preparation of the programme of the Launching of ACALAN and the year of African Languages; working structures of ACALAN; preparation of the Tunis Round Table...

B. ISSUES DISCUSSED

4. During the two days Sessions, the meeting discussed the following issues and agreed as follows:

a) **The Statutes of ACALAN**

5. During the audience between the Chairperson of the AU Commission and the current President of ACALAN held on 20 July 2005, it was agreed that ACALAN will be built around the format of the Scientific and Technical Offices of the AU, such as the STRC/Lagos Office; to that effect, it was agreed that the Office of the Legal Counsel will review the Statutes of ACALAN for finalization in consultation with the current ACALAN structures and for submission to the Decision Making Organs of the Union.

6. The Draft Statutes prepared by the Deputy Legal Counsel has been reviewed by the Cape Town meeting and a number of amendments and editorial corrections were made, especially in the English version since the original was in French; most of the amendments of substance were related to the operational structures of ACALAN and the titles of the Heads of those structures.

Recommendation:

Ms. Diarra and Prof. Johnson will produce the final draft in close collaboration with the Commissioner of Social Affairs.

b) Structures of ACALAN

7. The meeting agreed that ACALAN will operate with the following four (4) operational structures at the beginning and could establish any other structure as it may deem necessary.

- **The Governing Board:** the Policy Body of ACALAN;
- **The Executive Secretariat:** the daily operational structure of ACALAN;
- **The Scientific Technical Committee:** will function as an Advisory Body to the Secretariat;
- **The Assembly of the Academy:** composed of Academicians (full members), Associate Members and Corresponding Members;
- **The Languages Commissions:** as working structures of the assembly.

8. The meeting felt that there was a need to define the functions, compositions and quality of members of all these structures, either in the Statutes or in the Rules of Procedure of ACALAN.

9. However, the meeting brainstormed on the above and made the following recommendations:

- It is not advisable to include NGOs in the Governing Board, but it should include the existing Regional Languages Centres; the Board should be of a small size (few members); NGOs will be included in the STC.
- The Scientific and Technical Committee (STC) will be composed of a maximum of twenty (20) persons as follows:
 - the Executive Secretary (01)
 - the Chairs of the Languages Committees (10)
 - Representatives of National Languages Committee per Region (05)
 - Co-opted Experts (02)
 - Representatives of NGOs (02)
- The function of the STC will include, among others:
 - to receive and evaluate projects proposals from the Secretariat;
 - to receive and review Progress Reports from the Secretariat;
 - to review the work of the Languages Committees;
 - to identify activities ;
 - to assist the Secretariat prepare the work of the Assembly.

- The Assembly of ACALAN will comprise the three category of Members as specified in para.7 above; it will, among other functions, validate the work of the Language Commissions;
- The Languages Commissions are Commissions established for each **VEHICULAR CROSS-BORDER LANGUAGE**; they constitute the working structures of the Academicians, and conduct research and scientific work for the Academy.

c) **Titles of the Head of the Various Structures**

10. Taking into account the new statutes of ACALAN as an Institution of the AUC, the meeting agreed that the titles of the Heads of the various structures of ACALAN should be aligned along those of existing structures.

11. After a lengthy debate, the meeting agreed that:

- The Head of the Governing Board be called: - **CHAIRPERSON OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF ACALAN**;
- The Head of the Assembly be called: - **PRESIDENT OF THE ACADEMY**;
- The Head of the Secretariat be called: - **EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF ACALAN**;
- The meeting did not discuss the title of the Heads of the STC and those of the Languages Commissions.

d) **Structure of the Executive Secretariat**

12. It was proposed that the Secretariat of ACALAN should have the core staffing as follows:

- Executive Secretary (1)
- Head of Documentation Services
- Documentalists
- Administration and Finance Officer
- Supporting Staff (Administrative Assistant; Secretaries; Drivers)

e) **The Year of African Languages**

13. In the Strategic Plan (2004-2007) approved by the Decision-Making Organs of the AU it has been approved that 2006 will be the YEAR OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES. ILPAA and ACALAN have prepared a Document for the meeting entitled: "**DRAFT PREPARATION PLAN FOR THE YEAR OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES**". The document compiled activities to be carried out at regional and continental levels by ILPAA and ACALAN, as well as at national level by Member States during 2006.

Recommendations:

14. The following recommendations were made:

- It was proposed to finalize urgently the activities for the year 2006 as well as the programme for the launching of the year and ACALAN.
- To that effect, it was proposed to establish urgently a **PREPARATORY COMMITTEE** composed of the following:

- AUC
- ACALAN secretariat
- ILPAA Steering Committee Members

For the purpose ILPAA Steering Committee will be extended to include all five African Regions with two Members per Region;

- ILPAA Steering Committee and ACALAN will prepare the profile of membership to enable the Commission, in collaboration with the Regional Deans to Complete the ILPAA Steering Committee.
- f) Steps toward the launching of ACALAN and the Year of African Languages.

15. The following are steps to undertake from now to January Summit which will be devoted to **EDUCATION AND CULTURE** and during which both the ACALAN and the Year of African Languages will be launched.

16. *ON ACALAN:*

- AUC will finalize the Statutes of ACALAN as per the agreements reached at Cape Town meeting.
- AUC, in collaboration with ACALAN, will prepare a presentation document on ACALAN;
- The document, together with ACALAN Statutes will be presented to the Cultural Congress, in Nairobi, in December 2005, for information and thereafter to the Conference of Ministers of Culture (Experts and Ministers) in December 2005 in Nairobi for consideration and adoption.
- The outcome of the Conference of Ministers of Culture will be submitted to the January 2006 Summit, through the appropriate channel, for approval.

17. *ON THE YEAR OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES*

- The Preparatory Committee will finalize the **PLAN OF ACTION** for the Year of African Languages as well as the programme for the launching; this will be submitted at the Cultural Congress for information.
- The Plan of Action will be further submitted to the Conference of Ministers of Culture for consideration and endorsement then to the January 2006 Summit for approval.
- The Preparatory Committee will also finalize the launching of ACALAN and the year of African Languages.
- The launching will take place during the January 2006 Summit.

C. **OTHER ISSUES CONSIDERED**

18. The following issues were touched upon during the meeting as issues for further consideration on or issues for information; these were:

- i) Operationalizing the African Linguistic Plan of Action; The Plan will be reviewed during the coming Nairobi series of meetings; Strategies for its implementation need to be put in place without delay;
- ii) The issue of an African Cultural Fund needs to be considered urgently and discussed within the general framework of already existing AU Funds and also within the framework of AU Resources Mobilization Strategy;
- iii) Reviving the existing African Regional Linguistic and Cultural Institutions to make them operational within a Network of Centres under the overall umbrella of ACALAN;
- iv) Honorary Members of ACALAN: it has been proposed to establish such membership: ACALAN and ILPAA define the concept, the criteria and modalities for selection;
- v) Tunis Round-Table:

The current President of ACALAN informed the meeting that, under the auspices of the AU and in collaboration with NEPAD Secretariat, ACALAN will organize a Round-Table in Tunis during Phase II of the WSIS; the Round-Table will address issues related to African Languages and ICT. Preparations are well advanced and a request for financial assistance from the AUC will be forwarded soon to the AUC Chairperson by the current ACALAN President;

- vi) The participation of the Preparatory Committee to the Nairobi meetings was also envisaged for the purpose of advocacy on the preparation of the launching of both ACALAN and the Year of African Languages; a decision needs to be taken;
- vii) An Interim Governing Board needs to be established before the launching of ACALAN, which will be operational during the interim period of establishing the various structures of the Academy; ACALAN and ILPAA will make proposals of Members of this structure to the Chairperson of AUC.

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Draft mission report to Cape Town to attend ILPAA Steering Committee meeting. 02 and 03 October 2005

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