

TO  
C R E D E C (DAKAR), E A C R O T A N A L (ZANZIBAR)  
A N D C E L H T O (NIAMEY) W I T H A V I E W  
T O S T R E N G T H E N I N G E X I S T I N G  
D O C U M E N T A T I O N C E N T R E S.

(2 to 28 October 1984)

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du B.P. 3788

↳ DAKAR (SENEGAL)

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REPORT OF A UNESCO MISSION TO CREDEC (DAKAR), EACROTANAL (ZANZIBAR)  
AND CELHTO (NIAMEY) WITH A VIEW TO STRENGTHENING EXISTING  
DOCUMENTATION CENTRES.

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2-28 OCTOBER 1984.

1 - INTRODUCTION

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By virtue of Contract CLT/BREDA 716.506.4 of September 1984, the undersigned cultural consultant was invited by UNESCO to visit three African regional documentation and research centres, assess their present situation and describe "in descending order, those of them with potential for achieving international status for cultural documentation and research". As originally planned in May, the mission was to include a fourth centre, CERDOTOLA of Yaoundé. However, all efforts to elicit a response from Yaoundé between June and September failed. Consequently, the mission got confined to the following three centres :

- Regional Clearing-House and Research Centre for Cultural Development (CREDEC in Dakar) ;
- Eastern African Centre for Research on Oral Traditions and African National Languages (EACROTANAL in Zanzibar) ;
- Centre for Linguistic and Historical Studies by Oral Tradition (CELHTO in Niamey).

In the presentation that follows, these three centres will be discussed in turn but in the opposite order, after which a comparison of their potential will be presented. In the final conclusion and recommendations, the consultant will highlight the factors that have led to his choice of the centre with the greatest potential for development (cf "descending order ..."), in the light of the data presented and in the spirit of UNESCO's desire (paragraphs 11470 and 11471 of Approved 22/C5) :

- to develop cultural cooperation among developing countries at subregional, regional and interregional levels with regard to the exchange or pooling of activities, experiments, manpower and resources ;
- to promote studies on the contribution of culture to international cooperation and on the role of cultural cooperation in action to combat prejudices, intolerance and racism and on behalf of human rights and the strengthening of peace.

It is evident that these ideals cannot be attained without fruitful cultural exchanges, based on scientific studies of salient aspects of various world cultures. African research and documentation centres have a big role to play in this regard. To the extent that a regional centre is able to promote research and publications within its area of operations, to that extent will it foster mutual understanding across the various regions of the world, and facilitate thereby the fight against racism, bigotry, and prejudice.

The first centre, the CREDEC, being in the same city as the consultant, and given the four-month gestation period of the mission, this Centre was studied in depth before the consultant's departure to the EACROTANAL and CELHTO. Each of these latter two became the object of a week's intensive discussions, in Dar-Es-Salaam and Zanzibar for the EACROTANAL and in Niamey for the CELHTO, during the month of October.

Each Centre was studied from the point of view of its history and evolution, its finances and personnel, its data bank and equipment and finally its capacity to play a regional role in relation to the countries within its geographical zone. If one may anticipate the conclusions, the CELHTO appeared to have the most solid financial and personnel capacity but was rather weak as to its data bank (especially printed matter) and activities. EACROTANAL battles on courageously in the area of manuscript collection and training activities, but is threatened by financial asphyxiation unless the Council of Ministers' meeting scheduled for Addis Ababa at the end of October 1984 results in greater commitment to its future by its member states. As to the CREDEC, it has the

richest data bank of the three but, at the time of this study, it was virtually devoid of staff or activities, for this is a crisis-management and assessment year for its parent institution, the African Cultural Institute (ICA). Indeed, the Centre at this time could only boast of two watchmen and a gardener.

The reasons for establishing this descending hierarchy of CELHTO - EACROTANAL - CREDEC will find their justification as the centres are examined in detail turn by turn, in the following sections.

## 2 - CELHTO (NIAMEY).

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### 2.1 - History

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From 20 to 28 October, the consultant visited the Centre for Linguistic and Historical Studies by Oral Tradition in Niamey, and held discussions with the Director and his staff. He had the full cooperation of the latter, as indeed was the case with a neighbouring institution with which it shares a wall, the Institute for Research in Humanities of the University of Niamey, of which more will be said below.

The evolution of CELHTO may be summarised as follows. In 1968, UNESCO and the Government of Niger established a Regional Documentation Centre for Oral Traditions (CRDTO), as part of the General History of Africa project. Its specific task was to collect, preserve and publish oral traditions common to West African states; a project which came to be known as the Ouagadougou Plan of 1968. This was the first phase : a national institution, established with the help of UNESCO.

Secondly, in mid-1972, a ministerial meeting in Niamey led to a decision by 9 countries present to transform the CRDTO into a regional centre serving 17 countries in West Africa.

The third phase was marked in 1974 by the integration of the Centre into the Organisation of African Unity. It then changed its name to the "Centre for Linguistic and Historical Studies by Oral Tradition of the Organisation of African Unity". It remained however a regional centre until last year, when the OAU charged it with a continental mission, assigning it the role of co-ordinator of the work of all African regional research and documentation centres dealing with oral traditions and national languages.

The tasks assigned to the Centre consist of :

- the establishment of a regional plan for the collection and study of oral traditions and the promotion of African Languages, in consultation with the member states ;
- coordination of the activities of national research institutions, and granting appropriate financial aid to the latter ;
- organisation of various types of meetings, and training personnel ;
- centralisation of sound tapes, films etc collected by national institutions, as well as documents within its field of competence ;
- publication and diffusion of all materials susceptible to promote African languages, history and culture.

x Evidently, even at the regional level, these tasks are by no means easy to accomplish. They require considerable financial, technical and human resources. Now that the Centre's attributions have been extended, it faces even greater challenges.

## 2-2 - Personnel and Finance.

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The fact of being absorbed into the OAU structure in 1974 gave the Centre a unique character. It is the only Centre which obtains an operating budget from the continental organisation. This shields it from the vagaries and uncertainties that afflict several inter-African organisations which depend for their livelihood on contributions by member states. In many cases (and this is the case with EACROTANAL and ICA/CREDEC), less than one-third of the member states make any regular payments. In consequence, planning of activities becomes hazardous, and much time and energy has to be expended to fend off creditors.

The CELHTO therefore has a guaranteed budget, even though in the nature of things it could, like Oliver Twist, always do with more than it gets. Whatever problems confront the OAU, it manages to contribute substantially to CELHTO's welfare. In 1982-1983 and 1983-1984, the Centre received the following grants (in US dollars) :

	<u>1982-83</u>	<u>1983-84</u>
OAU	275,000	642,053.52
UNESCO	16,976.27	5,971.42
ACCT	5,932.20	2,142.86
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	297,908.47	650,167.80

In the current financial year (1 June 1984 to 31 May 1985), the grant from the OAU is expected to be the same \$642,053.52. Recurrent expenditure is therefore assured, even though the Director and his staff feel the need for greater allocations for activities, notably those that would lead to greater liaison and feedback within the region covered by the Centre. The Centre needs at least \$100,000 extra for research this year, and an augmentation of the \$13,000 usually granted for missions.

As to the staff, the Centre has 5 cadres and 19 other staff members. If the number looks large in relation to the activities organised currently, the explanation lies in the fact that this staff was inherited when the OAU took over the Centre. It has been felt that it was best to retain them all. When vacancies occur, however, the recruiting officers at OAU Headquarters take quite some time before filling them. Such is the case at the moment, when the post of Translator is among 4 vacant ones. Yet the Centre has no anglophone on its staff.

As has been indicated above, CELHTO is unique in having no problems with the payment of staff salaries, with the maintenance of a sizeable stock of equipment and materials and the organisation of a few important international meetings, thanks notably to its links with the ACCT. For instance, in February 1984, the Centre and ACCT organised in Niamey, a meeting of regional coordinators of linguistic cooperation projects

#### 2-3 - Data Bank and Equipment.

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The sound archives of CELHTO are quite impressive, in contrast to the stock of printed materials (400-odd) which is totally unworthy of the Centre. As to equipment, thanks to gifts from UNESCO (over 80%) and ACCT, the Centre has almost all it needs to function well.

*ne pourront être utilisés que dans la mesure où ils sont publics*

The sound archives consist of recorded tapes and cassettes. There are also two films. These materials are under-utilized because so few researchers visit the centre. On the other hand, if the Centre could expedite the transcription, translation and publication of the oral tradition texts, these would reach a wider audience. This alas is not yet the case.

The stock and equipment consist of :

- 605 oral tradition tapes in 7 languages (Peulh, Tamacheq, Gourmâché, Bambara, Yoruba, Hausa, Zarma).



- 46 18 cm Revox tapes of miscellaneous content (music, drama...)
- 92 13 cm tapes                   "                   "                   "
- 73 cassette tapes               "                   "                   "
- 13 15 cm tapes                   "                   "                   "
- Conférence Interpretation set, with 18 microphones and 78 headsets.
- 12 high-performance tape recorders with accessories.
- Over 670 new tapes and cassette tapes.
- 11 cassette recorders in good condition
- 2 Professional ASAHI Cameras with accessories and a stock of 34 unexposed films.
- 2 documentary films of 2 reels each.

There were, however, a few items of equipment that were out of order and could not be repaired by the resourceful young technician : an air-conditioner, 8 cassette players, 2 reel to reel tape recorders, 4 transformers.

One can say that the Centre's equipment for field research is quite adequate. The main limitation on its maximum exploitation is that it receives so few visits from researchers, part of the reason for which will become apparent when we examine the problem of the signature of a headquarters agreement with the host government.

As to the situation in the library, it must be frankly said that the full-time Documentalist, through no fault of his, is under-employed. When he arrived late in 1981, the

library contained only 78 titles. Since then, the new accessions have been :

101 titles bought

203 titles received as gifts

20 titles acquired through exchange.

Of these new titles, we may note their subdivision by content :

167 titles on History and Oral Tradition

130 titles on Linguistics

27 titles on Culture.

Since the financing organisation (the OAU) has shown itself so indulgent towards the CELHTO in other regards, the Consultant strongly urged the Director to seek to ameliorate this state of affairs.

#### 2-4 - The Institute for Research in Humanities of the University of Niamey (I.R.S.H.)

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The Director of CELHTO, Mr Diouldé LAYA, was the founding Director of IRSH which is next door, and is the government's central agency for the co-ordination of all social science and humanities research in Niger. As CELHTO has not yet signed a headquarters agreement with the host government, it finds itself marginalised in relation to IRSH. While the latter receives between 65 and 75 researchers per year, CELHTO can hardly count 5 per year.

The data bank of IRSH (purchases, exchanges, studies deposited according to government rules...) should be the envy of CELHTO : 15,000 titles, 170 periodicals.

It is indeed a blessing that such an impressive stock should, as it were, be within arm's reach. It complements beautifully what is lacking in CELHTO. But the latter has a specialised field of activity and must feel an obligation to build up

its stock to an acceptable level so as to complement in its turn the resources of IRSH.

Until a headquarters agreement is signed, CELHTO will continue to lose face in relation to its neighbour. The Director's annual report for the year ended 31 May 1983 expressed the hope (Section 2-2) that the agreement would surely be signed in the first half of 1984. This has not happened.

#### 2-5 - Co-ordination of activities

The Consultant shares the dissatisfaction of the Director of CELHTO with the level of co-ordination that has been achieved in the region. Ideally, liaison should be assured through personal contacts, various types of meetings, exchange of publications, the re-enforcement of links with Directors of National Research Institutions ... For the moment, none of these elements gives satisfaction.

As regards possibilities of CELHTO's staff visiting countries in the region, the main limitation is a fixed budget of \$13,000 per year, over half of which covers statutory missions of the Director. Both he and his collaborators count on attendance at conferences (necessarily spasmodic) to maintain links with colleagues. Ideally, they would want a large enough allocation so as to be able to represent the Centre in a bigger number of encounters in the region.

On the other hand, the Centre's desire to promote more active participation in its programme of activities by Directors of national institutes of research has not materialised through lack of funds. The Centre's aim is to be able to convoke such meetings once every two years. The Centre's impact on the region may be measured in terms of some of its realisations, such as :

- the sending of some specialists in the pedagogy of African Languages to some countries in the region ;

- receiving some officials for training in the transcription, conservation and exploitation of tapes of oral traditions ;
- co-ordinating work on the translation into Hausa of an abridged version of the General History of Africa
- granting a modest financial aid to some national institutions ;
- awarding prizes for some competitions in literature in African Languages ;

The Centre has made an effort commensurate with its resources.

2-6 - CELHTO's needs.

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XX Although CELHTO is privileged in comparison with other regional centres as regards regular appropriations from to the OAU, the Centre feels the need for a few more items of equipment. Although the request submitted by the Director to UNESCO on 3 June 1983 (CELHTO/82-83/289) has not been fully satisfied, the Centre limits its current demand for UNESCO assistance to the following items :

- Photocopying machine  
Gestetner 2005 R at 1 850 000 FCFA duty fr
- Cyclostyling machine  
Gestetner 1520 at 880 000 FCFA duty fr
- Sound Recording Equipment  
Sharp Stereo Cassette Deck RT 350 H 858.460 FCFA  
Sharp Optonica BSLT with cassette duty free.  
deck (RT 104) and Amplifier (SM 104)  
(429.230 x 2 = 853.460)

- Typewriter

Top-Tronic 15-1 at

450.000 CFA duty free

- Dictaphones for Standard Cassette Recorder

60.000 x 10 at

600.000 FCFA duty free

It would seem that the provision of such equipment will help to enhance the centre's effectiveness. To the above must be added the detailed request the Centre is preparing for UNESCO assistance in enriching the stock of the library. Another desire of the Centre is that the annual research grant of \$30,000 provided by UNESCO up to three year's ago for regional projects should be resumed.

In the opinion of the Consultant, these requests (save one) are worthy of urgent sympathetic attention. The only one which does not appear to be urgent is the stereo cassette deck. When plans are eventually made to set up a listening room where the rich stock of recorded oral traditions may be heard by researchers, as recommended by the Consultant, attention will have to turn to the requisite equipment. It is arguable if a cassette tape deck is the most appropriate item.

2-7 - In summary of CELHTO's situation.

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From 14 to 28 August 1981, the Senegalese linguist Pathé DIAGNE undertook a consultation and evaluation mission to CELHTO in the context of the cooperation that exists between the Centre, UNESCO and the OAU. A copy of his report was given to me by the Director of CELHTO who felt, quite rightly, that the recommendations of the Consultant about the medium term and long term programmes of the Centre had not been followed up by UNESCO.

In discussions of the issue, it became clear that the primary responsibility for CELHTO rests with the OAU and that UNESCO's role is a supportive one. In that connection, UNESCO has given generous assistance in the past and will doubtless continue to do so, within the limits of its possibilities.

What is required, as in the past, is a continuing dialogue between the partners.

Pathe DIAGNE's recommendations fall into 3 periods: 1981-83, 1984-90 as the medium term, and 1991-2000 as the long term. The elements of this plan are still pertinent; however, one cannot escape the feeling that the Centre has fallen back on its implementation for instance, an Information and Communication programme should have been established by 1983, which is not the case. Six years from the end of the medium term period, one can hope that the means will be found to execute his recommendations as to Pure and Applied Linguistics, Training Seminars, Seminars on National Languages, Training of Communicators, Production of Pedagogical and other materials.

On the whole, and with the exception of the Centre's library, one can conclude that CELHTO is meeting the challenge of its vocation with courage, imagination and hope. The Centre needs re-enforcement of funds for its programme of activities so as to increase its impact on an expanded geographical zone. Only thus will it stand a credible chance of "representing" the whole continent in an international network of documentation centres.

One says this not because another African Centre stands a better chance. None other does. One's concern is rather that CELHTO, the strongest centre overall today, should prove itself a worthy representative of the continent in this global network.

### 3 - EACROTANAL (ZANZIBAR)

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#### 3-1 - History

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Discussions of the situation in EACROTANAL took place in Dar-Es-Salaam from 5 to 6 October and from 13 to 16 October. The interim period (7 to 12 October) was spent on the island of Zanzibar where the programme comprised sessions on the various sections of EACROTANAL as well as a visit to the Archives of Zanzibar. The consultant received the full cooperation of personnel in all the institutions visited, for which he expresses his gratitude.

EACROTANAL was born of the desire of the international community in general and of African countries in particular to establish regional research and documentation centres for the promotion of oral traditions and African Languages. Like CELHTO, its line of descent can be traced to the adoption by the UNESCO General Conference in 1972 of the Ten Year Plan for the Systematic study of Oral Traditions and the Promotion of African Languages as a media of culture and as Instruments of Life-long education.

After a preparatory phase of some six years, the Centre began operations at the beginning of 1979. Its inauguration took place in April 1980, thus putting the Eastern African Centre for Research on Oral Traditions and African National Languages firmly on the world map. Six of the potential 14 member states of the sub-region signed the Charter, but participation in the finances and programmes of the Centre has in some cases been lukewarm, if not absent.

The objectives assigned to the Centre by its Charter are :

- to initiate, promote and co-ordinate regional research pertaining to oral traditions and African National Languages ;

- to assist in training of appropriate personnel and help to equip national centres with adequate technical means in their work ;
- to develop means of collection, analysis, conservation and diffusion of Oral Traditions and African National Languages ;
- to encourage research on Oral Traditions and African Languages by the organisation of Seminars and international conferences as well as local competitions and the attribution of prizes and awards in order to encourage research and cultural activities ;
- to edit, publish and disseminate cultural documents related to languages and traditions of Eastern Africa.

In its first phase, the Centre concentrated on the acquisition of basic equipment and materials, and the establishment of a programme of activities. It has since developed slowly but surely, within the limits of the resources placed at its disposal by its member states and of the grants and equipment so far received from donor organisations such as UNESCO and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

### 3-2 - Personnel and Finance.

The Centre has 3 cadres and 8 other staff members. The post of Librarian is vacant, as is that of Technician. On the departure of the substantive officers, the means for their replacement were lacking. This obliges other staff members to cumulate functions, with all the inconvenience that this entails.

Unlike CELHTO, EACROTANAL is obliged to count for the major part of its funding on its member states, of which no more than three make regular contributions. Thus it was that the Extraordinary Session of the Council of Ministers held



in Antanarivo in May 1983 was informed of outstanding debts at that date of US \$142,050.01. For the 1983-84 financial year, there was a prospect of US \$90,800 of aid from SIDA, UNESCO and Saudi Arabia, as against expected recurrent expenditure of US \$162,297.50 and activities budget of US \$189,000.00. A year later, given the reticence of some member states, the Secretariat is proposing to the Council meeting due to be held in Addis Ababa an activities budget of only US \$86,730, a reduction of about 55%. Unless member states replenished the coffers, there was a prospect of a break in payments of salaries before the end of 1984.

Add to this the fact that the Centre's main benefactor to date is SIDA (US \$65,800 in 1983-84 as part of a 3- year aid package), which threatens to drop its aid programme unless member states show greater proof of commitment. With the three main defaulters owing as at October 1984 respectively US \$79,000, US \$62,000 and US \$70,000, one can appreciate the rather gloomy clouds hanging over the future of EACROTANAL. The Council of Ministers has proposed the payment of part of member states' contributions in local currency (May 1983) to reduce the problems of foreign exchange. A year later, none appear to have taken advantage of this measure.

The problem of finances being linked to the survival of the Centre, much was expected of the Addis Ababa Council meeting, due also to be attended by as many as four prospective member states. Unless the meeting gives the Centre a shot in the arm, it will face a difficult period of near-atrophy in 1985.

### 3-3 - Data Bank and Equipment.

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The data bank well illustrates the dangers of depending on gifts or exchanges for acquiring new titles. There were a few curious titles such as Algebraic Geometry by S. Likata, Theory of Financial Decisions by C.W. Haley and An Outline History

of Moscow

by Yuri Shirokov. Fortunately, such titles were few. Acquisitions before March 1983 totalled 1113 and after that date 358.

Of the acquisitions after March 1983, 40 (including 22 issues of Jeune Afrique) were bought, 46 were gifts and 51 were acquired by exchange. This imbalance finds its explanation in the financial <sup>situation</sup> provided earlier. There is also an imbalance in the language of expression of the new accessions. Despite the fact that publication in African Languages is not abundant, one would have hoped that the Centre would be granted the means to build up a specialised stock of books in Eastern African Languages. Alas, this is not the case, given that the acquisitions since March 1983 were :

31 works in English  
4 works in Kiswahili  
1 work " Malgache  
1 work " Amharic  
9 work " Arabic, and  
1 work " in another (African) language..

Evidently, this rate of growth in a period of almost 20 months is unsatisfactory. The Centre's library needs help, and urgently too.

As regards equipment, the Translator who doubles as Technician was able to show the consultant the following :

- 1 UHER Studio Recording Equipment, lacking only a cassette tape deck.
- 5 UHER Portable Tape Recorders, one of which was out of order.
- About 50 seven-inch tapes (new)
- 10 cassette tapes (new)
- 4 new air conditioners, of which 3 were delivered out of order.

- 2 professional CANON F1 cameras
- 1 enlarger with detachable stand
- 1 GESTETNER 1592 Scanner for Electronic Stencils
- 1 New SHARP photocopier, damaged by the former technician and yet to be commissioned.
- 1 REVOX seven-inch tape recorder.

Despite problems of supplies and maintenance the Centre is doing its best to produce a minimum of logistic technical support for the training seminars which feature prominently on its programme. The recording studio, for instance, has had to be evacuated because it was taken over by ants. The means are lacking for restoring it. Given the value and quality of the installations, it can only be hoped that a rescue operation can be mounted soon.

#### 3-4 - Co-ordination of activities.

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EACROTANAL deserves commendation for the resourcefulness that has enabled it to publish regularly its studies and Documents series, the annotated catalogues of its old Arabic manuscripts collection (of which the second one is due soon), the regular issue of its collected data (due in 1984-85). The Centre participates equally in many regional and international networks, such as :

- AIRDOI (Association des Institutions de Recherches et de Developpement de l'Ocean Indien) ;
- INFOTERM (International Information Centre for Terminology, Vienna) ;
- CIRELFA (International Research and Studies Council in Fundamental and Applied Linguistics, ACCT) ;

- AELIA (African Linguistics and Cross-Cultural Studies Association of AUPELF).

Lexicography and Terminology have become subjects of special interest to the Centre.

The Centre has managed to hold annual training seminars, sometimes in association with foreign partners. Three past and one future one are :

- 1981 - Oral Tradition Research and Collection.
- 1982 - Lexicography and the Writing of Dictionaries.
- 1983 - Terminology and Computerized Linguistics in the service of Terminology.
- November 1984 - Introduction to the methodology of collecting, conserving, analysis and diffusion of oral traditions.

Through a series of workshops organised by the Centre, selected trainees from the sub-region are led to acquaint themselves with the Centre's work while improving their technical skills. One innovation is the workshop in photography, conceived as an aid to field research on oral traditions.

The Centre also participates in a variety of international and regional colloquia, seminars and meetings. In 1984-85, it plans to launch two competitions in national languages, one for original work and the other for translations or adaptations of foreign works into African Languages.

#### 3-5 - Joint Conservation Development Project (Old Arabic Manuscripts).

This project illustrates the Centre's strategy for regional action. With financial contributions from UNESCO, the Centre began a collection of Old Arabic manuscripts in Zanzibar

in 1980. These dealt with history, religion, current affairs;. 25 were selected for annotation, and a catalogue was published in 1982. The next year, with a further UNESCO grant of US \$5000, about 100 pages of manuscripts were translated and annotated.

With these manuscripts as a centre-place, EACROTANAL launched a Joint Conservation Development Project, along with the Zanzibar National Archives and the Kiswahili Institute. On their invitation, the British Royal Geographical Society sent a 7-man team to run a 6-week workshop on conservation in July-August 1984. One multiplier effect of this workshop is a new plan to run a 12-month course as from March 1985, thanks among others to a grant of US \$25,000 expected from UNESCO.

The Zanzibar collection was undertaken by a sexagenarian, Mr Muhamed Burham MKELLE, now resident in Zanzibar. An Arabic scholar and researcher, he appears to have been offered a fairly casual contract which left fluid the borderline between his interests and those of the Centre. So it is that, today, the Centre claims that he has appropriated some of its manuscripts, after the organisation of an exhibition. Mr MKELLE, whom I met in Dar-Es-Salaam on 15 October, explained to me that his collection of 70-odd manuscripts are his private property, separate from the collection he made for EACROTANAL.

### 3-6 - EACROTANAL's needs

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Now the depository of over 100 precious Arabic manuscripts, the Centre has no Arabicist on its staff. This Consultant considers it unsatisfactory for the Centre to proceed with the training of conservators who will handle these manuscripts in the absence of a scholar with knowledge of the language..Besides,

the exploitation of the manuscripts is as urgent as their conservation. One expert has already raised doubts about the quality of some of Mr MKELLE's translations. All the more reason to give the centre a permanent specialist in Arabic studies.

Be that as it may, the most urgent need of the Centre is an operating budget. If the member states do not provide it with a life-line, it may be threatened with closure. This would be a great pity, given the dynamism and courage so far demonstrated by the Centre to date. It is evident that the main impetus to safeguard the Centre from disappearance will have to come from the member countries.

This sword of Damocles which hangs over the Centre is largely responsible for its placing second to CELHTO, in the "league" to identify the potentials of the three centres visited to play an expanded role in a world-wide network of documentation centres.

## 4 - THE CREDEC (DAKAR)

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### 4-1 - History

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An annex organisation of the African Cultural Institute (ICA), the CREDEC (otherwise known as the Regional Research and Documentation Centre for Cultural Development) was set<sup>up</sup> by a decision of ICA's Council of Ministers in 1976. After several months of preparatory studies, a formal convention was adopted in 1979. It gave the CREDEC functions in four distinct areas, namely documentation, research, diffusion and technical aid.

The Centre grew steadily in staff, stock and activities, notably from 1980 when it moved into its own premises. However, its fortunes have been intimately linked with those of the mother institution, ICA, with which it share some staff and the major part of its operational life. At the time of this study, the CREDEC was bereft of all staff save two watchmen and a gardener. The considerable data bank has therefore been hidden under a bushel for the major part of 1984. Its future, like that of ICA, remains to be decided when the Council of Ministers meets in December 1984.

It must be pointed out that comparisons between the CREDEC on one hand, and CELHTO and EACROTANAL on the other, are not easy. The reasons for this are as follows. Whereas the two latter centres specialize on African languages and Oral Traditions, the CREDEC is concerned with the broader area of cultural development. Whereas the two centres are virtually autonomous as regards staff and funding, the CREDEC operates within the organic structure of ICA from which it is practically indistinguishable in many respects. For instance, the undersigned consultant served from 1980 till January 1984 as Acting Director of CREDEC, cumulatively with his more important function as Deputy Director General of ICA. CREDEC's budget

was subsumed by ICA, while the Centre had access to the logistic infrastructure of ICA. Being in the same city as ICA and having no legal statutes of its own, it became technically a "department" of ICA, with all the advantages and disadvantages that this implies for the purposes of the present exercise.

This particularity of the CREDEC has to be kept in mind in assessing what follows. If the Centre's data bank is richer than those of the other two, it is partly because its "catchment area" of subjects is wider. An inventory of its technical services and equipment would be misleading, since it has access to ICA's logistic services. Its annual budget would be difficult to isolate from that of ICA, seeing that so much staff and operational activities were shared...

With this series of factors disposed of, we may now examine the objectives of the Centre, which may be summarized as follows :

- promoting the spread of knowledge on cultural development on the basis of a multidisciplinary reflexion, through the creation of a network of exchanges between divers organisations and administrative structures as well as through contact with private individuals interested in African cultural development;
- permitting the rationalisation of cultural planning through judicious analysis and dissemination of all specialised documentation pertaining to the cultural domain ;
- advancing, through documentary analysis, conceptualisation in cultural development, and contributing to the elaboration of an AFRICAN THESAURUS which would help to determine and translate new concepts for research on African cultural patrimony and its impact on contemporary African development ;



- helping in the evaluation of different actions in progress in the member countries of ICA, by furnishing the necessary methodological instruments for this purpose ;
- providing occasional assistance to any member country which so wishes, in the different areas of its competence.

#### 4-2 - Personnel and Finance.

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As has already been explained, these two aspects of the Centre's life were integrated into the life of ICA. What may be called the full-time staff of the Centre consisted in June 1983 of :

- a documentalist
- a sub-documentalist
- an assistant documentalist
- three typists
- two watchmen, and
- a gardener.

Besides the above, the Centre obtained from ICA the part-time services of a Director, a technician, a service car with chauffeur, a messenger, and ICA's accounting staff.

The financial crisis that overtook ICA in December 1983 affected equally its two annex organisations, the CREDEC in Dakar and the Regional Cultural Action Centre (CRAC) in Lome. The result for the CREDEC has been that, as of June 1984, the only staff that remained were the two watchmen and the gardener. The Centre is therefore temporarily closed to users, pending the recruitment of staff after the December 1984 meeting of ICA's Council of Ministers.

The finances of the Centre have been unsteady for the past few years. The minimum guarantee of its good health,

the salaries of its staff, could not be regularly assured. In each of the last three years, the staff have had, like their colleagues within ICA, to receive between 3 and 5 months' salaries in arrears. Now that they have been laid off, all but the most junior are still awaiting the settlement of arrears and benefits reaching millions of CFA francs per person. It would therefore be misleading to quote figures. All that one can say is that the CREDEC's finances have been precarious, and are likely to remain so in the immediate future.

#### 4-3 - Data Bank and Equipment.

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Here we get to the Centre's strength. Thanks to donations and grants from UNESCO, UNDP, France among others, the Centre can boast of a reasonable amount of infrastructure. Its data bank grew rapidly, as can be seen by comparing these statistics from 1980 and 1983.

##### 1980 :

- 1,220 books
- 72 periodicals
- 6 films
- press cuttings
- photos

##### 1984 :

- 2,300 books
- 130 periodicals
- 170 tapes (reels)
- 26 cassette tapes
- 12 films
- 51 records
- 9 dossiers of press cuttings
- 13 documentary dossiers (1 per theme)
- 25 dossiers of international organisation
- 31 dossiers of states
- photos

1984,

By May, over 300 new books were awaiting processing to augment the stock. In comparison with the other two centres, and notwithstanding the disciplinary divergence that we have signalled, one can see that the rate of growth of the data bank is encouraging. A 100% increase in the stock of books and periodicals in three years is indeed remarkable.

The present stock may be sub-divided as follows, figures being rounded up to the nearest 50 to take account of new accessions already being processed :

0 - Generalities	600
1 - Culture and the Human Environment	450
2 - Cultural Policies and Cultural Development : Financial Aspects	250
3 - Structure, supports and organisation of cultural action	100
4 - Knowledge, conservation and Use of the natural and cultural environment	250
5 - Support and protection of artistic creation, artistic training	100
6 - Contemporary Architecture, Plastic Arts, Artistic Professions, Handicrafts	250
7 - Books, Literature, Librairies and Public Reading	200
8 - Shows, cultural animation, cultural action, new forms of cultural action	200
9 - International Life, cultural coopera- tion and international organisations	150

As to equipment, the Centre's own meagre units are supplemented by the stock of ICA (vehicles, photocopier, "composphere" type setting machine, Gestetner offset printing machine in partial service ...) Furthermore, the centre received in January from the Government of France, 20 million CFA worth of equipment, including a video camera and colour television set, several circular rotating filing cabinets, other furniture and equipment, all of which are awaiting staff for their exploitation.

Here as in other aspects of the life of the Centre, salvation must come from within the member states, through self-reliance. External aid agencies have given enough proof of their readiness to help, once the member states show proof of their commitment.

#### 4-4 - Co-ordination of activities.

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One of the Centre's main achievements was the convening in CELHTO (Niamey) in November 1981, with financial assistance from UNESCO, of the first concertation seminar of African Regional Centres dealing with National Languages and Oral Traditions. The occasion was used to attempt an evaluation of UNESCO's Decennial Plan for African Languages (1972).

With a view to diversifying its programmes, the Centre adopted in 1983 a very ambitious transdisciplinary programme of research into the cultural dimension of development which now awaits the availability of human and material resources so that it may be launched.

Liaison is otherwise assured through participation in international and regional exchanges. Unfortunately, a bulletin which the Centre had planned to launch in 1982 still lies on the drawing boards. No effective liaison functions can be assumed by the Centre until its financial health is restored.

#### 4-5 - CREDEC's needs.

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The CREDEC has been blessed with a remarkable amount of international help. Ultimately, however, its survival and active life can be guaranteed only if the member states of ICA decide to "feed their baby". International assistance must necessarily play a secondary role. Everything now remains in suspense until the ICA Council of Ministers pronounces itself on the Centre's fate in December 1984.

Despite the CREDEC's rather impressive data bank, its state of near-atrophy during the period of this study must place it third, behind CELHTO and EACROTANAL.

#### 5 - A COMPARISON OF THE THREE CENTRES.

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An attempt is made in what follows to evaluate the capacity of the regional centres to assume regional coordination functions so well as to merit a role in an international network of documentation centres. Three key factors have been isolated for this purpose, in the light of the state of being of the centres during the month of October 1984. These are finance, data banks and programmes of activities. A scale of scores ranging downwards from 10 to 0 is used, so as to give numerical expression to the factors that are employed in the assessment.

As to finance, it is the life-line of any documentation centre. CELHTO is in the privileged position of having a guaranteed budget that covers regularly all staff salaries, a minimum of liaison missions, and a minimum of activities at the Centre, usually in collaboration with other agencies. Indeed, the Director affirmed that the Centre last year obtained almost 100% of its financial needs, and is likely to do so again this year. This merits a score of 8.

EACROTANAL is not so well off. A crisis looms ahead

for the payment of November 1984. Provision for future training and other activities is not certain. Much depends on a Council of Ministers' meeting due to be held in Addis Ababa in late October 1984. The negative effect on staff morale was evident, a factor which bodes ill for the flourishing of the Centre. A score of 4 appears to us reasonable.

As to the CREDEC, it has been empty of all operational (documentation) staff since May 1984. Its fate also hangs in the balance, pending a ministerial meeting in December 1984. A score of 2 for finance would seem appropriate, seeing that the departing staff are still owed considerable sums.

The second factor is the data bank. A documentation Centre worth the name must possess a respectable stock of reference data, be this in the form of printed materials, or audiovisual data. On this score CELHTO has a good stock of recorded tapes, but its printed data bank base is very weak. A score of 6 is, one hopes, not over-generous.

EACROTANAL has a stock of medium strength, but it has not grown much in recent years. In view of the value of the old Arabic manuscripts and even in the absence of a strong base of recorded materials the Centre we think merits a score of 5.

The data bank of the CREDEC is its strongest point. Apart from a book stock of nearly 3,000 titles, the Centre's dossiers of press cuttings present a particularly interesting aid to researchers. A score of 7 seems to be well merited.

The third and final factor is the programme of activities the Centres have been able to mount in the last year or two. Without such activities, these regional centres would tend to get marginalised, and therefore not responsive enough to national needs within their area of provenance to be able to play an effective role in an international net-work of documentation centres.

On this factor, CELHTO scores 4, EACROTANAL 6 and the CREDEC 2. EACROTANAL is to be congratulated for the energy and resourcefulness it has shown in holding at least one workshop a year, despite the looming shadows which threaten to compromise its future. By contrast, CELHTO's activities happen somewhat irregularly, and CREDEC seems to be denuded.

all capacity of taking any initiative in this area, at least for the moment.

The above discussion may be illustrated on a chart as follows :

	) CELHTO	) EACROTANAL	) CREDEC
FINANCE	) 8	) 4	) 2
DATA BANK	) 6	) 5	) 7
PROGRAMMES	) 4	) 6	) 2
	) 18	) 15	) 11

The OAU Centre in Niamey emerges as the strongest of the three centres visited. Its strongest point is the solidity of its financial base, compared to the precariousness of the positions of the other two centres. CELHTO needs to increase its stock of printed matter, and re-invigorate the financing of its programme of activities on a regular basis. All in all, it is best placed to "represent" Africa in an international network of documentation centres.

EACROTANAL, second in this ranking, is strongest in its programme of activities. Would that it could be assured of greater financial security, for instance by the OAU releasing the amount of US \$50,000 per year for which the Centre has waited in vain since 1981.

The CREDEC, despite its impressive data bank, comes bottom of the league table because it has spent 1984 in a state of suspended animation.

The above ranking represents, in our view, a fairly faithful assessment of the state of being of the three documentation centres which were the object of the Consultant's mission. What remains now is to thank the Directors and Staff of the respective institutions for their whole-hearted cooperation.

It is to be regretted that it was not possible to include CERDOTOLA in this survey, owing to a lack of response by that Centre to UNESCO's invitation to receive a Consultant.

In so far as the study reveals the major weaknesses of each of the Centres, our main recommendation to UNESCO is to sustain its efforts to supplement the resources available in the African region by providing as far as possible the elements that have been signalled as the needs of the Centres.

The Consultant finally renders his sincere gratitude to the Regional Adviser for Culture in Africa, and through him to UNESCO, for having given him this opportunity to serve the interests of cultural development in Africa.

E.O. APRONTI

Consultant

Dakar, 3rd November 1984.



## A P P E N D I X

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### L I S T O F M A I N O F F I C I A L S M E T

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- 2 - Mr Albert DIOUF, Acting Accountant of ICA

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- 1 - Mr Diouldé LAYA, Director of CELHTO
- 2 - Mr Abdelkader BENCHEIKH, Deputy Director of CELHTO
- 3 - Mr Mangone NIANG, Head of Linguistics Section, CELHTO
- 4 - Mr A.M. TRAORE, Documentalist, CELHTO
- 5 - Mr Mohammed Ben LAMINE, Technician, CELHTO
- 6 - Mr SIDIKOU, Director of the University of Niamey's Institute of Research in Humanities (IRSH)
- 7 - Mr Seydou HAROUNA, Librarian of IRSH
- 8 - Mr Albert FERRAL, Director of the National Museum, B.P. 248, Telephone 73.43.21.
- 9 - Mr Pascal MAKAMBILA, Director of the UNESCO Regional Museographical Centre, B.P. 248, Telephone 73.43.21. Ext. 23.

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- 1 - Mr Hapte Meriam MARCOS, Director, Home Telephone 32704
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- 4 - Mr Waziri JUMA, Administrative Officer, Home telephone 31412
- 5 - Miss Lynda BLACK, Book Conservator (on short contract)
- 6 - Dr Martha MVUNGI, Secretary of the National Commission for UNESCO
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1984-11-03

TO CREDEC (DAKAR),  
EACROTANAL (ZANZIBAR) AND  
CELHTO (NIAMEY) WITH A VIEW TO  
STRENGTHENING EXISTING  
DOCUMENTATION CENTERS.

APRONTI, E. O.

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