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**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES ON THE  
ROADMAP OF THE AU THEME OF THE YEAR FOR 2021  
FOR THE PERIOD FEBRUARY – MAY 2021**

**Theme: ‘Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building  
the Africa We Want’**

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. Following the launch of the AU theme of the year for 2021 by H.E. Felix Tshisekedi, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Chairperson of the African Union during the 34<sup>th</sup> African Union Assembly held from 06<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> February 2021, the AU Commission embarked on the implementation of activities and programmes outlined in the roadmap of the Concept Note of the year of arts, culture and heritage. The activities and programmes implemented were aimed at popularizing the theme of the year within the AU Member States, arts, culture and heritage partners including with Pan-African Cultural Institutions, in the international level and the African citizenry at large.

2. The engagement, enthusiasm and interest of all stakeholders mentioned above in the implementation of the activities and programmes of the year of arts, culture and heritage shows clearly that the need for Africa to dedicate a year to the arts, culture and heritage sector was long overdue. The implementation of Assembly Decision 772(XXXIII) on Arts, Culture and Heritage which calls upon Member States to allocate at least 1% of their national budgets to the sector by 2030 will without doubt increase the profile and visibility of the sector coupled with the golden opportunity provided by the year of arts, culture and heritage.

3. The role that the arts, culture and heritage can play as catalysts for the socio-economic development and integration of the African continent, cannot be overemphasised and the testimony to that is the overwhelming participation of all in the activities of the AU Theme of the Year for 2021 despite the challenging situation and restrictions on face-to face meetings and events posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. Some of the achievements in the reporting period include: The launch of the entry into force of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance of 2006; The recognition of H.E Kenneth David Kaunda, former President of Zambia for his contribution to African cultural renaissance and the spirit of Pan-Africanism; The validation of the revised AU Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries; The renewed commitment by Member States through ministries responsible for arts, culture and heritage and partners on galvanizing the sector using the golden opportunity presented by the AU year of arts, culture and heritage; Thirty-five (35) young people trained in entrepreneurship and heritage sustainability; Enhanced popularization of the African World Heritage Day; Enhanced resolve for the protection of cultural property and heritage on the continent using continental and international legal instruments as guides for strengthening of national legislative frameworks in this area; Prizes awarded to six (6) children related a context on dictation and promotion of African Languages; Draft Statute of the Centre for Linguistic Studies and History by Oral Tradition (CELHTO) validated.

5. This mid-year report is a summary of the activities undertaken in the period between February and May 2021 and it is in five (5) sections including the introduction. Section II presents activities undertaken by the AU Commission and AU specialized institutions and organs; Section III presents activities carried out by the AU Commission in collaboration with AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and partners; Section IV outlines major activities on the theme

of the year for 2021 for the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of 2021 and Section V highlights major recommendations, challenges and the way forward.

## **II. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE AU COMMISSION AND AU SPECILIAZED INSTITUTIONS**

6. The activities undertaken by the AU Commission and AU Specialized Institutions on the implementation of the roadmap of the AU theme of the year for 2021 include:

### ***Official Mission to the Republic of Mali***

7. In order to brief the leadership of the Republic of Mali on the implementation of the AU theme of the year for 2021, H.E. Amira Elfadil, Commissioner for Health Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development undertook an official mission to Mali from 18 to 19 March 2021. Her Excellency the Commissioner was received by H.E. Bah N'daw Interim President of Mali who reiterated Mali's commitment to lead on the AU theme of the year for 2021 as the AU Champion on Arts, Culture and Heritage. The Commissioner was also received by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism and Minister of Malians Abroad and Integration.

### ***2<sup>nd</sup> Virtual Meeting of Ministers' responsible for Arts, Culture and Heritage***

8. On 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021 the 2<sup>nd</sup> Virtual Forum of Ministers' responsible for Arts, Culture and Heritage was held. The main aim of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Virtual Forum was to present, discuss and launch the Concept Note and Roadmap of the AU Theme of the Year for 2021. Specific objectives of the Forum included: Discuss key activities and timeframes contained in the roadmap; Reflect on contributions of AU Member States on the implementation of the roadmap; Share planned activities and programmes by AU Member States in line with the theme of the year for 2021.

9. After very interactive and lively presentations and contributions, the Ministers adopted a communique which highlighted the following main actions: to promote the AU theme of the year in national events; to implement legacy projects at the national level during the African Union year of arts, culture and heritage in order to continue developing and promoting the sector; to fast track the processes of ratification of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance (2006) at national level to ensure that the Charter enters into force and it is launched this year as part of the activities of the year of arts, culture and heritage; to fully engage on the establishment of the Great Museum of Africa (GMA) a Flagship Project of the AU Agenda 2063 and participate in the launch and Media Event of the GMA Temporary Site to be held in Algiers, Algeria; to advocate for the ratification of the Statute of the African Audio-Visual and Cinema Commission (AACC) and support the Republic of Kenya on the operationalization of the Temporary Secretariat of the AACC which will boost the development of the creative industry of audio-visual and cinema on the continent; to commit to establish national mechanisms and initiate negotiations for the restitution/return of cultural property and heritage illicitly stolen and trafficked from the continent.

***Meeting with Partners' on the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector on the AU Theme of the Year for 2021***

10. A Meeting of Partners' in the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector was held on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021 aimed at popularizing the AU theme of the year for 2021 and reflecting on synergies and collaboration for the implementation of its roadmap. Partners' in the arts, culture and heritage sector applauded the AU for dedicating the 2021 theme to this important sector. They reiterated their commitment to work in collaboration with the AUC in the implementation of the very ambitious but comprehensive roadmap on theme which will without doubt increase the profile of the arts, culture and heritage sector on the continent.

11. Partners were requested to send their contributions to be included in the roadmap of the Concept Note on the AU Theme of the Year for 2021. The meeting was further informed that there were limited resources to implement the activities and partners were requested, where possible, to offer support to the AUC for the implementation of planned activities.

***Joint African Union Commission (AUC) and Pan-African Parliament (PAP) Virtual Workshop on the AU Theme of the year for 2021***

12. A Workshop jointly organized by the African Union Commission and the Pan-African Parliament on the AU Theme of the Year for 2021 was held on 06<sup>th</sup> April 2021. The aim of the workshop was to share information about the AU theme of the year and provide highlights on the activities within the roadmap. The workshop also provided an opportunity to discuss key roles that PAP Member of Parliament can play in contributing to the implementation of the roadmap on the theme of the year for 2021.

13. Key recommendations of the workshop included: the acknowledgement of the important and critical role that PAP Members of Parliament play at national and constituency level in the ratification, accession and implementation of AU treaties, charters and protocols; Members of Parliament were called upon to fast track the ratification and/or accession of the following instruments in line with the AU theme of the year for 2021: The Charter for African Cultural Renaissance, the Treaty on the African Medicines Agency (AMA) and the Statute of the African Audio-Visual and Cinema Commission (AACC).

***Validation Workshop of the Revised AU Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries***

14. A Validation Workshop of the Revised AU Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries was held from 31<sup>st</sup> March to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. The aim of the Workshop was to gather inputs into the revised version of the AU Plan of Action on the Cultural and Creative Industries by Member States, prior to its presentation and adoption by the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Youth, Culture and Sport (STC-YCS4). About 60 experts from member States attended the validation workshop.

15. After an extensive review of the document, the participants of the validation workshop recommended among other the following: Extensive popularization of the

document to Members States in order to facilitate its approval by the relevant AU policy organs; strengthen the formal and informals sectors of Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs); Create a Public Private Partnership (PPP) model in the CCI sector; Undertake assessment on the Impact of the COVID -19 pandemic on CCIs in Africa; strive to close the huge gap in technology that exists between Africa and western countries through investment in technology with the purpose of promoting CCIs in Africa; investment in ICT infrastructure; create CCIs database and inventories to provide basic knowledge on their existence. The workshop concluded with the endorsement of the validation for the Revised Plan of Action for the Cultural and Creative Industries whose validation was proposed by Zimbabwe and seconded by Egypt.

***5th High Level Dialogue: “Leveraging Arts and Culture to Increase Girls and Women's Participation in STEM Education”***

16. In line with the AU theme of the year for 2021, the African Union International Centre for Girls and Women Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA) organized a high level dialogue on leveraging arts and culture to increase girls and women’s participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education. The objectives of the session were: to contribute to combating gender-based stereotypes and harmful social norms through arts, culture and heritage in order to increase retention and completion rate; to leverage different components of culture to disseminate the message on protection and promotion of girls’ and women’s right to education in Africa; and lastly to contribute to the promotion of the use of culture and arts to demystify and de-stereotype the sciences and mathematics especially for girls & women.

***Celebration Africa Day and Continental Launch of the Entry into Force of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance***

17. The celebration of Africa Day was held online on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and it was an opportunity to reflect on the gains of the continent since the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) now African Union (AU), celebrate our arts, culture and heritage and launch the entry into force of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance. The highlight of the celebration was the presentation of an Award of Excellence to H.E. Dr. Kenneth David Kaunda (b.1924), Former President of Zambia (1964-1991) for his contribution to the promotion of African Cultural Renaissance, the spirit of Pan-Africanism and in building the Africa we want. Dr. Kaunda is known to be the only surviving President who participated in the launch of the Organization of African Union (OAU) in 1963.

18. The keynote address was delivered by H.E. Dr. Monique Nsanzabaganwa, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission on behalf of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission. H.E. Monique Nsanzabaganwa stressed that the African Union is aware of the role that the arts, audio-visual and cinematic expressions as well as other creative industries can play in the African integration process as a factor of peace, understanding and conflict prevention as well as socio-economic growth and it is committed to ensure the development and sustainability of the cultural and creative sectors on the continent.

19. In his Statement, the Chairperson of the Permanent Representative Committee (PRC) H.E. Ambassador Jean-Léon Ngandu Ilunga applauded the progress which the continent has made since the formation of OAU in 1963 particularly in improving people's lives. H.E. Ambassador Ilunga further mentioned that it was through collective efforts that Africa managed to do away with colonialism and apartheid and now Africa stands as one continent. He urged Member States to use the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance to progress further, unite, establish peace on the continent, grow economies and improve people's lives.

20. In her address to the event the Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (HHS) of the African Union Commission H.E. Mrs. Amira Elfadil expressed gratitude to the fifteen (15) Member States that ratified the Charter namely: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Chad, Congo, Cote'Ivoire, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal and South Africa. She further informed the participants that in order to facilitate the implementation of Charter or African Cultural Renaissance, the AU Commission developed an Implementation Guide with support from Members States and partners. She called upon Member States that have not yet done so, to fast track the process of ratification and accession of this important cultural policy tool.

21. In his Statement of Support which was delivered through a video Mr. Firmin Edouard Matoko, UNESCO Assistant Director General for Africa reiterated UNESCO's commitment to promote culture and diversity in line with the implementation of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance. He further stressed that the continental launch of the entry into force of the Charter for Cultural Renaissance will increase the visibility of the sector and enhance the preservation and the use of arts, culture and heritage for development. He concluded by saying that "We are in a common alliance for culture and a common alliance for Africa".

22. The Statement by H.E. Mrs. Kadiatou Konare, Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism of Mali, AU Champion on Arts, Culture and Heritage which was delivered by H.E. Fafre Camara Ambassador of Mali to the African Union and Ethiopia called upon Africa to take charge of its African cultural renaissance. H.E. Ambassador Camara highlighted that Africa has been deprived of its identity for many years and called upon Africans to be proud of their Africaness, identity and shared values.

23. A Statement of Support from the youth was delivered by Mr. Bahdon Daher Ismael who is a Manager, Youth Engagement Centre. Mr. Ismael said that, it is important to include the youth in the policymaking, strategy implementation for the African cultural renaissance agenda because Africa has the highest percentages of young people in the world and they are eager to make a difference. He insisted that the continent needs to find ways to take that energy and natural ability and collectively provide to young people the tools and pathways they need to succeed.

***Interactive Conferences on Language Policy, the State of African Languages in the Education System and the Role of African Languages in Combatting COVID-19***

24. ACALAN, and the Club of Friends of National Languages in Mali (CALAN-MALI) jointly organised a series of three interactive conferences from 16 to 29 May 2021, in

Bamako, on language policy, the state of African languages in the education system and the role of African languages in combatting COVID-19 in Member States, two dictation contests in national languages, a one hour Walk for African Languages in which a number of institutions and organisations participated, and a football match with commentary done in African languages (Bamanan Kan). The outcomes of the events are that the population is sensitised on the importance of national languages in national development. Six children have been awarded prizes and school materials for winning the dictation contests.

### ***Consultative Meeting on the International Decade of Indigenous Languages***

25. ACALAN and UNESCO organised a consultative meeting on 25 and 26 May in accordance with the United Nations declaration of 2022 – 2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, Africa Day commemoration and the theme of the year, to prepare the African Chapter of the Global Action Plan for the IDIL2022-2032. Participants of the consultative meeting came from government institutions, UNESCO entities at headquarters and cluster offices, African Union specialised institutions and organs, regional institutions and organisations dealing with culture and languages, academia and members of the Global Task Force for the IDIL2022-2032. The outcomes of the consultative meeting were that matters concerning the African region that require further evidence and analysis were identified, and better understanding of the potential role of Indigenous languages as a development tool for the preparation of the Global Action Plan of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages IDIL 2022-2032 was sought. In addition, outputs and outcomes and shared knowledge about best practices, particularly with respect to the implementation and evaluation of the IDIL 2022-2032 were identified, and monitoring at national, regional, and global levels of the initiatives was improved.

### ***Celebration of World Book and Copyright Day***

26. On 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021 the the Centre for Linguistic and Historical Studies by Oral Tradition (CELHTO) (CELHTO) celebrated the World Book and Copyright Day by organizing a CELHTO open house called "ONE VISITOR, ONE BOOK". CELHTO publishes a lot books and the celebration of this important day was an opportunity for the Center to welcome many visitors, to be visible and to distribute many of its publications.

### ***Virtual Workshop to Validate the Statute of CELHTO***

27. In order to strengthen its institutional framework and improve its governance, the Center for Linguistic Studies and History by Oral Traditions is in the process of adopting a new statute which define its organs and their mandate. On 26 April 2021 a Virtual Workshop was organized with professionals from the five (5) regions of the continent to review and validate the draft statute. After slight modifications and clarifications which were requested from CELHTO, the draft statute was validated for its presentation and adoption by the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Youth, Culture and Sport (STC-YCS4).

***Celebration of International Museum Day, 18 May 2021***

28. On Tuesday, May 18, 2021, CELHTO celebrated International Museum Day (IMD) 2021 with fifty (50) African museums by organizing a webinar on the theme: "The Future of Museums: Recover and Reimagine" with the participation of ten national museums from the continent who reported on the difficulties their museum encountered during this covid-19 crisis and the strategies put in place to deal with it

**III. ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY MEMBER STATES, REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES (RECs) AND PARTNERS IN COLLABORATION WITH THE AU COMMISSION**

***2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of the AWSAN Forum on Sustainable Peace and Development***

29. The Arab Republic of Egypt organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of the ASWAN Forum on Sustainable Peace and Development from 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021. In line with the AU Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the Forum champions Africa led-solutions and efforts for peace building both at strategic and operational levels. The celebration of 2021 as the AU Year of the Arts, Culture and Heritage provided a valuable opportunity to examine means of strengthening the contribution of arts and culture to sustaining peace and development in Africa. In this regard, the promotion and use of existing AU continental policy instruments, especially the AU Agenda 2063 and the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance (2006) for peacebuilding, reconciliation, conflict-prevention processes and social cohesion was stressed during the ASWAN Forum.

***Virtual Meeting on Sites of Memory and the World Heritage Convention***

30. A Virtual Meeting on Sites of Memory and the World Heritage Convention was organized by the Government of South Africa in collaboration with the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF), the World Heritage Committee and its Advisory Bodies. The meeting was aimed at reflecting on how to inscribe more African Sites in the World Heritage List including sites of memory of recent conflicts in Africa. The outcomes of the meeting included: A recommendation that the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Committee, should be revised to accommodate sites associated with the memory of recent conflicts, broadening the interpretation of the World Heritage Convention; the African World Heritage Fund and African States Parties should facilitate a scientific study on sites of memory and World Heritage Convention in Africa in order to support the African perspective on the topic and contribute to the global debate; The meeting further recommended that States Parties, World Heritage Committee, Advisory Bodies and the African World Heritage Fund should facilitate capacity building for heritage professionals and experts regarding the World Heritage process of sites associated with the memory of recent conflicts in Africa.

***2<sup>nd</sup> Creative Africa Advisory Group (CAAG) Meeting***

31. The Africa Import and Export Bank (AFREXIM Bank) organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Creative Africa Advisory Group (CAAG) to brief the CAAG members on the AU theme for the year for 2021 "**Art, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the**



***Africa We Want***” and to call for collaboration by CAAG members to implement the roadmap. The CAAG meeting focused also on the preparation of the Creative Africa Nexus (CANEX) Summit to be held during the Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF2021) planned for December 2021 In Kigali. The meeting discussed and reiterated AFREXIM Bank commitment to support the growth of the cultural and creative industries for the development of Africa. The AU Commission expressed gratitude to AFREXIM bank for their support and involvement in the promotion of the creative sector on the continent.

### **ECOWAS Virtual Meeting on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage**

32. The ECOWAS secretariat organized in March 2021 a virtual meeting focusing on the steps taken for the ratification of international instruments related to the return of cultural property to their countries of origin. The meeting was an opportunity to establish synergies between all partners working in the area of the protection of cultural property and heritage including the AU, UNESCO, UNIDROIT, OSIWA, IRCC among others. The need to replicate to other regions of the continent the ECOWAS Action Plan (2019-2023) on the Return of Cultural Property to their Countries of Origin was underscored.

### ***Celebration of the International Day for Monuments and Sites***

33. On 19 April 2021, the Centre for Linguistic Studies and History by Oral Tradition (CELHTO) organized, in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Handicrafts of Niger, a study day to celebrate the 2021 International day on Monuments and Sites. The celebration was organized under the theme "**Complex Pasts: Diverse Futures**". The day was an opportunity to discuss the conservation issues faced by sites and monuments in Niger and the propose solutions such as the need for the establishment, of preventive archeology services, the need for training of parliamentarians and local elected officials, as well as the sensitization of the competent authorities on issues related to preservation and conservation of monuments.

### ***African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) Youth Forum***

34. The African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) organized the 5<sup>th</sup> African World Heritage Youth Forum from 29<sup>th</sup> April to 05<sup>th</sup> May 2021 under the theme: ‘**Youth Entrepreneurship and Heritage Sustainability: Building the Africa we Want**’ The Youth Forum was a capacity building exercise focusing on leadership and entrepreneurship within the current training programmes of the African Word Heritage Fund on World Heritage. It brought about thirty-five (35) young people from AU Member States. Outcomes of the Youth Forum included: Gaining of innovative and entrepreneurship knowledge and skills in business opportunity identification and evaluation, business management, financial resources mobilization for business start-ups and/or expansion, entrepreneurial mindset and skills, communication and networking, business plan development amongst other. The Youth Forum concluded with the presentation of projects on creative ideas by the young people of which the three best ones received awards.

### ***Celebrations of the African World Heritage Day***

35. The African World Heritage Day was established by the 38<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in November 2015 to be celebrated on the 05<sup>th</sup> of May each year. The African World Heritage Day is an opportunity for the continent as well as people around the globe to celebrate Africa's rich and unique cultural and natural heritage. The 06<sup>th</sup> Edition of the African World Heritage Day was celebrated under the theme: '***World Heritage as a Lever for the Africa we Want.***'

36. The AUC joined the African World Heritage Fund, Member States and UNESCO in the celebration and congratulated all heritage practitioners, experts and workers including museum personnel and managers for the celebration of the day for the excellence work they are doing on the continent for the promotion, conservation, preservation, profiling and popularization of Africa's rich and unique heritage. In her message for the celebration H.E. Amira Elfadil, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development stressed that celebration could be made more meaningful if it was coupled with reflections on critical, concrete and implementable actions by policy makers, cultural experts, our Member States and all interested parties for enhanced protection and preservation of our heritage including enhance popularization of the African World Heritage Day, development and implementation of legislative frameworks at national, regional and continental levels.

### ***Celebration of African World Heritage Day by the CELHTO and ICESCO***

37. On the occasion of the African World Heritage Day celebrated on 05<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the CELHTO participated on May 6, 2021 in a webinar organized by the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) on the theme: "***International organizations serving African heritage: advocacy for fruitful cooperation***". CELHTO presented a communication on the Centre's partnership policy accompanied by proposals to strengthen the synergy of collaboration between Pan-African institutions specializing in heritage.

### ***Celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property***

38. The AU Commission joined UNESCO for the celebration of the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property which highlighted key issues related to the protection of Africa's cultural property and heritage. The need for coordinated and joint efforts in capacity building of museum personnel and law enforcement agents and inclusion of heritages issues in the school curricula to strengthen African identity was emphasized. These provisions are also part of the AU Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage.

### ***Joint Webinar Organized by the ICRC, AU and the IPSS on the AU Theme of the Year for 2021***

39. The AUC in collaboration with ICRC, and IPSS organized on 06<sup>th</sup> May 2021 a joint webinar on the protection of cultural property and heritage. The specific theme of the webinar was: **'Impact of Armed Conflicts on Cultural Property: Ensuring protection of our shared heritage under International Law'**

40. The objectives of the event were to: (a) promote the protection of Cultural property through International law instruments and mechanisms such as the 1954 Hague Convention, 1970 UNESCO Convention, AU Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage and encourage ratification and domestication of those instruments (b) bring key stakeholders in Africa together and enhance their overall understanding of what protection of cultural properties entails under the convention and its two protocols in advancement of the overall objectives of the 2021 theme of the year (c) influence key AU policies and member states practices when it comes to protecting cultural property, at all times.

41. The event brought in the intrinsic impact of conflict on cultural property and the legal framework provided by The Hague Convention, Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols, the UNESCO Convention, the Rome Statute, the AU Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage and the ECOWAS 2019 - 2023 Action Plan for the Return of African Cultural Property to their Countries of Origin. An enhanced resolve to protect African heritage through the use of international law was overemphasized.

#### ***Africa Day Celebrations Organized by the Africa Group of Ambassadors in Various Countries***

42. In line with the AU theme of the year on arts, culture and heritage various countries including Italy, Germany, New Zealand, Greece and Slovenia organized the African Day celebrations. The AUC participated actively in these Africa day celebration events which promoted the visibility of the AU theme of the year at the international arena.

43. CELHTO co-organized with the Permanent Mission of the African Union and the African Group of Ambassadors in Brussels in partnership with the African diaspora online presentations and debates on issues of interest to the African continent and in line with the African Union's 2021 theme: **"Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa we Want"**. During this day, the CELHTO led a session on the theme of the year and also presented the activities of the Center.

#### ***UNESCO Workshop on New Approaches for Renovating of History Teaching and Learning About Africa***

44. The AU Commission participated in the UNESCO Workshop aimed at discussing new approaches for the teaching of history on the continent. African History together with our rich and unique heritage, shared values, African languages and oral traditions represent the backbone of our Africaness and they need to be harnessed and promoted to effectively assist shaping the profile of the continent's youth. The AU strongly supports the revival of the Project of the General History of Africa being spearheaded by UNESCO. The need to strengthen collaboration between UNESCO and the AU Specialized Institution which has the mandate to

promote the teaching of history on the continent, the the Centre for Linguistic and Historical Studies by Oral Tradition (CELHTO) was emphasized.

***Africa Dialogue Series Organized by the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) on the AU Theme of the Year for 2021***

45. The Africa Dialogue Series (ADS) for 2021 was organized by the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) under the theme '***Cultural Identity and Ownership: Reshaping Mindsets***'. While addressing the Opening Session H.E. Amira Elfadil, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, on behalf of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission, highlighted that in Africa, the concept of a Culture of Peace is rooted in the values, belief systems and forms of Pan-Africanism, local knowledge and technologies, traditions and forms of cultural and artistic expression that contribute to the respect of human rights, cultural diversity, solidarity and the rejection of violence to build democratic societies.

46. The Commissioner also stressed that the idea of having May as the Month of Africa in the UN context and the specific session on "***Cultural Identity and Ownership: Reshaping Mindsets***" will add to the ongoing AU initiatives to showcase Africa's rich cultural heritage as well as opening to the world opportunities available in the continent in the areas of arts, culture and heritage. She concluded by saying the AU recognizes the role of the youth in changing mind sets of societies. The AU Youth Division in collaboration with partners across the globe has invested in providing education and skills development to young people on the continent.

47. As contribution to the Roundtable on '***Harnessing Culture and Heritage for Economic Transformation***', the AU Commission outlined the following key issues to contribute to economic transformation on the continent: Mapping out the cultural potential and the value chain of the cultural and creative industries in AU Member States; Including cultural and creative sectors in national development plans in order to monitor their performance; Making sure that the communities where cultural and creative products and services originate benefit collectively from the income generated from the sector.

**11<sup>th</sup> African Border Day Celebration Organized in collaboration with the African Union Border Programme (AUBP).**

48. In line with the AU theme of the year on arts, culture and heritage CELHTO and with the African Union Border Programme (AUBP) produced and presented a series of short animated videos on the theme "***Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want***" from the different regions across the continent. Each 3-minute video illustrates a cultural practice, a heritage, or art shared across the boundaries of two or more Member States or a cultural cross border cooperation initiative. The objective of the 11th ABD celebration day was to showcase the culture, heritage and arts found in border areas across the continent and to highlight socio-cultural cross border cooperation initiatives and their impact.

#### IV. MAJOR ACTIVITIES FOR THE 2<sup>ND</sup> SEMESTER OF 2021.

49. Major activities to be carried out in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of 2021 and are included in the roadmap of the AU theme of the year for 2021 include:

##### ***Launch of the Temporary Site of the Great Museum of Africa, a Flagship Project of the AU Agenda2063***

50. The launch of the Temporary Site of the Great Museum of Africa at *Villa du Trait* in Algiers, Algeria is planned to take place in July 2021. Member States and partners are called upon to grace this occasion which will be held in hybrid format and it will feature a Media event and the launch itself. The Great Museum of Africa will have the mandate to be the continental hub for the return of illicitly trafficked cultural property for the continent as decided by the ministers' responsible for arts, culture and heritage.

##### ***2<sup>nd</sup> Luanda Biennale on a Culture for Peace***

51. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Luanda Biennale on a Culture for Peace October 2021 will be held from 4 to 8 October 2021 in hybrid format in Luanda and virtually. The aim of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Luanda Biennale is to work towards a daily and sustainable individual and collective appropriation and implementation, on the continent, of the concept of a culture of peace which consists of "**values, attitudes and behaviours**" that reflect and promote conviviality and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights tolerance and solidarity.

##### ***Development of the Continental Arts Education Policy***

52. Arts Education is the cornerstone for the development of the creative economy on the continent. The AU Commission in collaboration with AUDA-NEPAD will be embarking on the process of developing a continental policy on arts education. The continental policy on arts education will be in line with the Revised African Union Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries. The process of drafting of this continental policy instrument is planned to kick start in July 2021.

##### ***Continental Workshop on the restitution/return of Cultural Property and Heritage***

53. The restitution, repatriation of cultural property and heritage is a key program which forms part of the Roadmap of the Concept Note of the AU Theme of the Year for 2021. Looting of cultural property and heritage impacts on our dignity and honor. The Workshop is in line with the popularization of the AU Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage. The AU Model Law was finalized in 2018 as per the AU Agenda 2065 target on the development of a standard/model law on cultural antiquities. The workshop is aimed at starting the development of an Africa Common Position on the Restitution of Cultural Property and Heritage and drafting of a Framework Policy Paper on Negotiations on Restitution of Cultural Property and Heritage. The workshop is planned to be held in November 2021.

### ***Virtual Forum for Traditional Leaders***

54. Traditional Leaders have always been key players and custodians of our culture and heritage. The continent and the world at large is still grappling with the COVID-19 Pandemic. The main aim of this Forum is to empower traditional leaders on the protocols on the pandemic and tools to combat misinformation of COVID-19 vaccines and use of traditional medicine in communities. The Forum will also advocate for the ratification of the Treaty of the African Medicines Agency (AMA) to ensure its entry into force soonest. It is expected that the Traditional Leaders Forum will assist in revitalizing their important role, as custodians of African culture, in communities. Participants of the Traditional Leaders Forum will include Traditional Leaders from the continent, Traditional Leaders Associations, Community Leaders, arts, culture and heritage experts and health workers. The Forum will be held in November 2021.

### ***Study on the Endogenous Mechanisms of Conflict Prevention, Management and resolution in Central and East Africa***

55. The African continent is often the scene of armed conflicts that undermine the way societies live together. The damage caused by war is considerable. Faced with this situation, many international interventions are made to find solutions to these conflicts. But for a 'lasting' peace, African solutions could be found to African problems. They would consist of drawing on the continent's traditions, whose cultural heritage can play a significant role in maintaining peace. Indeed, in Africa, there are endogenous mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts that rely on traditional and customary authorities in their respective communities. The study aims to make an inventory and study of traditional systems of conflict prevention management and resolution in Central and Eastern Africa methods in order to facilitate their understanding and their links with African cultures and to guide the development of an African strategy (based on the methods highlighted) for conflict prevention and resolution.

## **V. MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS, CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD**

56. Despite the major challenges posed both by the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of financial resources, no financial resources were allocated by the AU, for the implementation of the roadmap of the theme of the year for 2021, the AU Commission in collaboration with Member States and partners were able to successfully implement a number of activities inscribed in the roadmap of the theme of the year for 2021.

57. The approved theme of the year for 2021 on arts, culture and heritage has helped to further ascertain that the sector can be revitalized and its contribution to continental integration, African identity, peace building and socio-economic development is unquestionable.

58. The entry into force of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance, the main AU policy instrument in the arts, culture and heritage sector provides a distinctive opportunity to maximize the potential of the sector on the continent by the implementation of specific programmes and initiatives. Member States that have not yet done so are called upon to ratify and or accede to this continental arts, culture and heritage instrument to achieve universal ratification.

59. The operationalization of the Temporary Secretariat of the African Audio-Visual and Cinema Commission (AACC) to be hosted by the Government of Kenya will galvanize the development of the creative economy of audio-visual and cinema on the continent and ensure its contribution to the economy.

60. Approval of the requested supplementary budget for the implementation of critical activities inscribed in the roadmap of the theme of the year for 2021 will enable the AU Commission to achieve more on the increased profiling of this important sector.

**DRAFT DECISION ON THE MID-YEAR REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE ROADMAP OF THE AU THEME OF THE YEAR FOR 2021**

**The Executive Council,**

1. **TAKES NOTE** of the mid-year Report on the Implementation of the Roadmap of the African Union Theme of the Year for 2021 titled: '**Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa we Want;**'
2. **APPLAUDS** the AU Commission for honoring H.E. Kenneth David Kaunda, Former President of Zambia for his contribution in promoting African Cultural Renaissance, the spirit of Pan-Africanism and continental integration;
3. **COMMENDS** the organization of Africa Day Celebrations on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and the Continental launch of the entry into force of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance. **FURTHER COMMENDS** all Member States that have ratified and are implementing the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance and **CALLS UPON** all Member States that have not ratified/acceded to this instrument to finalize the process of ratification of this instrument to uplift the arts, culture and heritage sector on the continent;
4. **FURTHER TAKES NOTE** of the planned activities inscribed in the roadmap on the theme of the year to be implemented in the second semester of 2021 and beyond including the launch of the Temporary Site of the Great Museum of Africa, a Flagship Project of the AU Agenda 2063 and the continental workshop on the restitution/return of illicitly trafficked cultural property and heritage from the continent;
5. **CALLS UPON** all AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), UN Agencies and partners in the arts, culture and heritage sector to continue supporting the implementation of activities and programmes in line with the AU theme of the year for 2021;
6. **REQUESTS** the AU Commission in collaboration with the Republic of Mali as the AU Champion on Arts, Culture and Heritage to present a comprehensive report to the 35<sup>th</sup> AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government to be held in February 2022 on the impact of the AU theme of the year for 2021 highlighting key achievements, challenges and strategic direction on moving the arts, culture and heritage sector on the continent forward.



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2021-09-27

# Report on the Implementation of Activities on the Roadmap of the AU Theme of the Year for 2021 for the Period February – May 2021

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