Forty- one Vehicular Cross-Border Languages have been identified (see pages 16 / 17) Comprehensive information could be found in the ACALAN November 2009 bulletin on pages (13 – 17)

Out of the 41 Vehicular Cross-border languages identified, 12 have been chosen according to certain criteria to put in place the first Vehicular Cross-border Language Commissions:

1. Standard and modern *Arab* and *Berber* for North Africa;
2. *Fulfulde, Hausa* and *Mandenkan* for West Africa ;
3. *Kiswahili, Somali and Malagasy* for Eastern Africa ;
4. *Chichewa/chinyanja* and *Setswana* for Southern Africa;
5. *Lingala and Beti-fang* for Central Africa.

The following criteria have been used for the choice of the VCBLs:

1. Number of regions in which the language is spoken
2. Number of countries in which the language is spoken
3. The total number of speakers of the language
4. The percentage of speakers using the language or learn it as a second language in relation to the total number of speakers.
5. The state of development of the language shown by the expansion of vocabulary, terminological innovations as well as publication.
6. The amount of literature available, including fiction and all the books written in the language.
7. Domains of usage, particularly in education, the media both paper and electronic versions, and the usage as a working language.
8. International recognition via foreign radio programmes and translation, such as the General History of Africa by UNESCO.

Terms of Reference for the Language Commissions

Professor Bamgbose, the Chairperson of the Assembly of Academicians, laid down 12 Terms of Reference of the Language Commissions as follows:

1. **To encourage sponsor and undertake research on the language.** Accordingly the basic idea behind establishing Language Commissions is to work on the language and that the outcome of such work would be to provide quality material for the use and learning of the language as a by-product of the research work that is supposed to be done.

2. **To harmonise differences in orthographic practices.** The Cross-border languages ACALAN is dealing with have dialectal differences in the different countries and sometimes there are even different ways of writing the same language across national boundaries. To facilitate exchange and distribution of materials published in different countries, we need to work on the harmonisation of the different orthographic practices.

3. **The Language Commissions are to work towards the evolution of the standard form of the language.** One of the major tasks of the language Commissions, is to come up with standard forms where there are differences.

4. **To engage in language promotion activities so as to increase the domain which the language is used.**

5. **To undertake terminology creation in order to facilitate the use of the language in wider domain, particularly in education and specifically in science and technology.**

6. **To sponsor and encourage research in the use of the language as a medium of instruction.**

7. **To encourage production of literary, pedagogic and technical material for the language.**

8. **To encourage the training of younger researchers.** "This point is extremely important, because those who started early in language research work are getting old, many have worked in universities and other institutions and retire now. There need to be a succession by young vibrant people to continue the work."

9. **To advocate the use of the language as a working language in some public domains.** This accordingly to Professor Ayo Bamgbose, may initially not be in all domains. It would gradually be done from domain to domain, but what is important is to start somewhere, wherever is considered feasible, it would be started there.

10. **Co-opt and enlist the interest of groups and individuals interested in the promotion of the language.** Sometimes we tend to take for granted that only those of us who are scholars or linguists are interested in a particular language. There are individuals, groups and societies interested in the languages we are dealing with and whose cooperation we can seek to work on the languages.

11. **To exchange experiences with other Language Commissions, particularly in the adaption of new technologies for African languages.** According to Professor Bamgbose, there is no need to re-invent the wheel, we know that work has been done elsewhere which is useful; we will simply go there and borrow what has been done. Professor Bamgbose gives an example Human Language Technology in South Africa on which a lot of work has been done and which West Africans can learn from.

12. To seek and raise funds for the activities of the Commissions, because without funds we can't get very far, therefore the Commissions should be encourage to raise funds.

Vehicular Cross-Border Languages have been identification

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