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## BAMAKO INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON MULTILINGUALISM

Bamako, Hotel Salam, January 19-21 2009

MASTER PLAN FOR THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN  
NATIONAL LANGUAGES AND LANGUAGES OF THE  
NORTH IN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS



### 2008 – International Year of Languages

Bundesministerium für  
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The Bamako International Forum on Multilingualism considered the issues of the relations between languages of the South (especially National languages<sup>1</sup>) and languages of the North (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, etc.) in countries of the South.

The discussions recalled on one hand that the principle of promoting national languages, enshrined in the 2006 African Union Language Plan of Action for Africa, has been officially adopted in the majority of African countries although in practice these decisions are not always implemented. On the other hand, in line with its mission, the Academy of National Languages (ACALAN) recommends re-establishing a balance in the relations between National languages and those inherited from the colonial era. Finally, the current results of educational systems that are centred on the languages inherited from the colonial era are rather mediocre. The Bamako International Forum on Multilingualism (BIFM) therefore proposes the following Master Plan, as part of the political will to promote cooperation in the form of an equitable partnership between languages of the North and National languages, in educational systems:

1- Adopt strong and practical policy measures to give effect to the status of National languages and thus allow them to fulfil functions that confer value on them (economically viable functions such as languages for teaching, administration, justice, the media, etc.)

2- Use only National languages in formal basic education and maintain them throughout school, both as languages used for teaching, and as languages that are taught, without prejudice to official languages (mostly languages of the North), which are also subjects taught.

3- Equip National languages so that they are able to fulfil the required positive functions; train the teaching and supervisory staff required for these tasks; draft and use curricula, in particular the programmes and teaching aids required, as well as evaluation tools, and promote the attendant linguistic research.

4- Carry out awareness-raising activities on multilingualism with language speakers and create the enabling conditions for communities to promote their languages in local government and education.

5- Create the conditions for a literate environment in National languages in administrations and in other spheres of daily public life.

6- Develop bilateral and regional language cooperation among States, in particular concerning cross-border, common, and regional languages.

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<sup>1</sup> "National languages" mean African languages

7- Carry out advocacy with international language organisations (Anglophone, Francophone, Portuguese-speaking, and Spanish-speaking), as well as with international institutions, with a view to promoting mother tongue-based multilingual education, according to the principles set out by UNESCO<sup>2</sup>, in order to obtain the required political, technical, and financial support.

8- Set up a renewed partnership founded on political support, capacity building, and the establishment of networks for a new vision of local multilingualism that focuses on National languages. Promote the use of mass communication languages as components of multilingualism, in particular through the development of programmes on bilingualism and multilingualism in school, as well as tools for their integration in the different levels of the educational system, from early childhood to higher education.

**Bamako, January 21 2009**

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<sup>2</sup> UNESCO, *Education in a Multilingual World*, 2005

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