

**MINUTES OF THE ACALAN CINYANJA WORKING GROUP MEETING
HELD IN CONFERENCE ROOM 7 AT LAKES HOTEL JOHANNESBURG ON
THURSDAY 5TH NOVEMBER, 2009 FROM 11-13 HOURS AND FROM 14-15
HOURS**

Present

Prof. Ngunga, Chair
Prof. Mtenje
Prof. Matsinhe
Prof. Kamwendo
Prof. Banda
Prof. Alexander
Dr. Zola
Dr. Nkolola-Wakumelo
Mr. Agrippa
Dr. Macalane
Dr. Maseko
Mr. Chauma

Apologies:

Prof. Kishindo

Agenda:

1. Composition of the Cinyanja language commission
2. Formation of Interim Commission
3. Nomination and appointment of the interim chairperson and secretary
4. Tasks of the language commission
5. Discussion on the terms of reference
6. Discussion on sign language
7. A.O.B

1. Composition of the Cinyanja language commission

The meeting discussed the composition of the Cinyanja language commission. For the individual countries represented additional names were suggested as follows:

1.1 Malawi

- (a) Rev. (Dr.) Winston Kawale. Noted that he was an experienced translator especially of religious materials.
- (b) The office of the Director of Education Methods and Advisory Services. The office would provide the name of the person they thought would serve on the commission.

1.2 Zambia

- (a) Prof Lazarus Miti. Observed that he was an experienced linguist who has published a lot and was currently involved in work on languages with different organizations and language groups in the region.

- (b) An official from the office of the Director of the Curriculum Development Centre. Noted that this was the office that was responsible for language issues in education and their input and participation would be very helpful.
- (c) Rev. (Dr.) Wendland. Observed that he was an experienced person in language matters as he is working with the Bible Society of Zambia and has been involved in the translation of religious materials. His postgraduate work was also on Cinyanja.

1.3 Mozambique

- (a) Gervasio Madziayenda Chinsipo. Observed that he was an experienced teacher and politician. He was currently working in the NGO sector.
- (b) Shipo Chikwekwe. Noted that she was an experienced teacher. She has been involved in writing primary school readers for Grade 1 – 5. She was currently working in the Ministry of War Veterans as Deputy Director.
- (c) Smart Katawala. Observed that he was a businessman but was very influential in language issues.
- (d) Father Ntupila. He is an Anglican priest who has been involved in translation projects

It was agreed that LASU and the SADC secretariat will each have a seat on the commission.

2. Formation of Interim Commission

The meeting proposed and agreed that the members present would constitute the interim committee.

3. Nomination and appointment of the interim chairperson and secretary

The meeting elected Prof. Mtenje as interim chairperson. Noted that he has been involved with ACALAN for a long time and was familiar with the current ACALAN project. It was also observed that his appointment would be an advantage as Malawi will soon be taking the African Union chairmanship.

The meeting also elected Prof. Kishindo as interim secretary in absentia.

4. Tasks of the language commission

Noted that there was need to differentiate between voluntary work and commissioned activities such as language surveys, compilation of dictionaries grammars, etc. For the former there would be no remuneration. On the other hand ACALAN may have to budget for and remunerate the people involved in the latter.

Hence there was need to explain to the nominated members to the language commission that their involvement would be voluntary as they will be helping in the development of their language.

Agreed that members of the language commission would have to embark on advocacy work.

5. Discussion on the terms of reference

Proposed and agreed that the terms of reference should be translated into the languages of ACALAN, namely Cinyanja and Setswana and also into Portuguese as one of the working languages of the AU.

Proposed that the appointed members of the language commission needed to meet early next year, 2010 to come up with a strategic plan. In the meantime online discussion of the terms of reference and any other issues between the members would continue.

6. Discussion on sign language

Noted that sign language was not necessarily based on the languages of ACALAN, that is Cinyanja and Setswana. Observed that while users of sign language may belong to the Cinyanja and Setswana ethnic groups their mother tongue was sign language and not these two languages. The meeting proposed that the issue of sign language could be handled by a separate sign language commission which would work towards harmonizing sign language within the countries. This could be done after consultation and research to determine the situation on the ground. Observed that some organizations such as the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) were currently involved in sign language activities in some countries in the region.

7. A.O.B

The meeting agreed that all the proposed members of the Cinyanja language commission present and those yet to be contacted would be expected to submit their CVs to the interim chairperson, Prof Mtenje before the end of November, 2009 for onward transmission to Bamako.

ACALAN would then officially write to the chairperson, secretary and all proposed members of the language commission whose membership will be approved concerning their appointment to the Cinyanja language commission.

There being no other business the meeting was closed at 15: 00 hours.

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Minutes of the ACALAN Cinyanja
working group meeting held in
conference room 7 at Lakes Hotel
Johannesburg on Thursday 5th
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