



SUMMARY OF THE REPORT OF THE 1ST PAN-AFRICAN CULTURAL CONGRESS (PACC) OF THE AFRICA UNION

1. The First Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Culture, held in December 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya, adopted the Commission's proposal to organize the 1st Pan African Cultural Congress (PACC) in 2006. The same was endorsed by the AU Summit in Khartoum in January 2006. Accordingly, PACC held from 13 to 15 November 2006 at the AU Conference Center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

2. The General Theme of the Congress was "Culture, Integration and African Renaissance" which was further broken down into eight (8) themes which include (1) Memory and Heritage; (2) Culture, Language And Education ; (3) Culture, Youth and Gender; (4) Cultural Rights, Freedoms, and Intellectual Property Rights; (5) Cultural Development; (6) Culture, Development and Social Transformation; (7) Cultural Policies in Africa; and (8) African Culture, the Media and New Information Technologies. The order of presentation of the themes was rearranged during the actual sessions of the Congress and reorganized in the Report (see Annex1).

3. The Congress was attended by about 300 cultural practitioners, experts, policy-makers, and representatives of cultural institutions from Africa and the rest of the world. Member States of the African Union which were represented in the Congress include Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Congo, Cote D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic Of Congo (DRC), Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe. Also in attendance were Regional Economic Communities (RECs), non-African embassies in Addis Ababa accredited to the AU Commission, international organizations and UN-Agencies, including UNESCO.

4. The Opening Ceremony of the Congress was graced by the presence of Mr. Mahtar Mbow, Former Director General of UNESCO and H. E. Prof Alpha Oumar Konare, Chairperson of the AU Commission as well as other eminent personalities, including the State Minister for Culture of Ethiopia and the Deputy Minister of Culture of Kenya. After a brief welcoming remarks by Adv Bience P Gawanas, AU

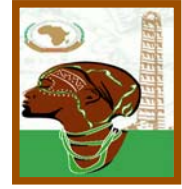
Commissioner for Social Affairs, who also chaired this Session, the Congress was started its deliberation on the General Theme at the 1st Plenary Session by a Statement from Prof Konaré and by a Key-note speech of Mr. Mbow.

5. In addition to the substantive discussions on the themes mentioned above, the Congress was marked by colorful cultural side-events such as exhibitions of handicrafts, paintings, and various works of art from Ethiopia and other Member States. Moreover, cultural troupes from Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania performed different cultural shows and played traditional as well modern African songs.

6. At the end of its three-day deliberations, the Congress issues a Consensus Statement, which among others:

- Called upon all parties, both state and non-state actors to appreciate [the] candid views expressed in the forum on the renaissance of African identity & personality, philosophy and wisdom of knowledge, creativity and innovations in order to move in solidarity towards socio-economic advancement of Africa in the new millennia; and
- Realized the continuation of PACC is instrumental to concretize its goals, [and] recommended to convene such a congress in three years interval and revive the spirit of annual festivals to celebrate traditional African culture and mark every 5th/10th PACC anniversary with regional festivals similar to FESTAC.

7. If these and other recommendations of the Congress are adopted by the relevant decision-making bodies of the AU, it is possible to institutionalize the PACC as an important forum for the promotion of dialogue and common understanding on African culture and the role it is expected to play in shaping the new Africa rooted in its age-old values and African identity. Our culture has been providing and should continue to provide the material and spiritual foundation for the overall transformation of our continent.



REPORT OF THE 1ST PAN-AFRICAN CULTURAL CONGRESS (PACC) OF THE AFRICA UNION

**REPORT OF THE 1ST PAN-AFRICAN CULTURAL CONGRESS (PACC)
OF THE AFRICA UNION**

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, the African Union has been working very hard to organize major continental gatherings such as the First and Second Conferences of Intellectuals from Africa and the Diaspora (CIAD I & II) held in October 2004 in Senegal and in July 2006 in Brazil, respectively; the First Session of the Conference of AU Ministers of Culture held in Nairobi, Kenya, in December 2005 and now the First Pan African Cultural Congress (PACC) held on 13-15th November 2006 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with the view to foster exchange of views, ideas, experiences thereby to create a common understanding on the way forward in reviving African cultural values and making culture serve the larger cause of African renaissance.

The Congress was preceded by major cultural events, notably, a Preparatory conference - Addis Ababa 2004, a meeting of Independent Experts - Nairobi 2005 and the 1st Conference of AU Ministers of Culture held in December 2005, in Nairobi, Kenya, and the 6th AU Summit of January 2006 in Khartoum, Sudan whose central theme was "Culture and Education". The Summit endorsed the decision of the Ministerial Conference on Culture to convene the PACC during 2006.

In pursuance of the above, the AU Commission convened the 1st Pan African Cultural Congress from the 13th to the 15th of November 2006 at the Africa Union Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Congress was attended by about 300 participants from 45 African countries, and from the Diaspora. The participants consisted of policy makers from the AU Member States, cultural practitioners, cultural administrators, educators/academicians, designers, creators, producers, critics, entrepreneurs, researchers, African and international inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations; associations and networks, Regional and International Cultural Organizations and Development Partners of the AU.

The participants discussed a range of issues under the general theme "Culture, Integration, and the African Renaissance".

This Report gives a highlight of the discussions during the Congress and is organised as follows:

Proceedings of the Congress
Narrative Report
Recommendations

Draft Consensus Statement of the Congress

Annexes

- Work programme
- Aide Mémoire
- List of participants

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE CONGRESS

The Congress was divided into the following sessions:

- (1) Opening ceremony
- (2) Plenary sessions
- (3) Thematic group discussions

(1) Opening Ceremony

Adv Bience Gawanas, AU Commissioner for Social Affairs, who also made welcoming remarks before inviting the speakers to make their statements, chaired the opening session. This session featured speeches by the Chairperson of the Commission, H. E. Prof Alpha Omar Konare who officially opened the Congress, in the presence of Dr Amadou Mathar Mbow, former Director General of UNESCO and key note speaker, the Deputy Minister of Culture of Kenya, the State Minister of Culture of Ethiopia and a representative of UNESCO Director General.

In his statement, Prof Konare called on the meeting to recognise the contribution of Joseph Ki-Zerbo¹ to the promotion of African culture. He was invited but who was too unwell to be present at the Congress. In his statement, Prof Konare noted that more Africans are poorer today than at Independence and that it was crucial to address the problems of African poverty by adopting another mode of development based on culture. This culture, he said, should be used both as a source and as a resource. Finally he argued that preserving African culture could not be done without preserving and promoting African languages. In this context he said that he was campaigning to have Swahili accepted as an official language at international fora.

The Chairperson's statement was preceded by the interventions of the Deputy Minister of Culture of Kenya representing the Minister as chairperson of the Bureau of the AU Conference of Ministers of Culture, the State Minister of Culture of Ethiopia and the representative of UNESCO who underlined the importance of the PACC and its outcomes

¹ The Commission learnt the sad demise of Prof Ki-Zerbo, three after the Congress.

The keynote speaker, Mr Mathar M'bow, highlighted the realities of African culture as follows:

- African cultures should henceforth set parameters enabling them to better open up to the world;
 - As defined at the UNESCO Conference held at Mexico in 1982, culture is the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional characteristics of a society or a social group. It encompasses the arts and letters, ways of life, fundamental human rights, value systems, traditions and beliefs;
 - Based on this definition, culture stands as the core of the human-being and the future of Africa;
 - Hopefully, culture was at the root of the dismantling of apartheid;
 - One of Africa's most urgent needs today is to foster intellectual and artistic creativity;
 - Integration should also be realized in concrete terms;
 - Prof. Ki-Zerbo's thought stands as a most useful contribution to African development;
 - Besides what has already been said, it is equally urgent to arouse the spirit of innovation and passion for research and solidarity among....
 - Culture is the ultimate aim of development;
 - Culture should be taken into account for the harmony and well-being of each community since these factors are also an ultimate aim of development.
1. This is why we must not lose sight of the contribution of women and the youth to cultural development.
 2. The pretext that colonization had a civilizing mission must be condemned in the strongest terms; rather it was an untold disaster for the continent of Africa.

(2) Plenary sessions

Each plenary had a moderator, rapporteur and presenter(s). Within the framework of the overall theme, papers were presented in plenary sessions or in thematic groups on the following topics:

Memory and heritage
Culture, language and education
Cultural rights, freedoms and intellectual property rights
Culture, development and social transformation
African culture, the media and new technologies
Culture, youth and gender
Cultural development
Cultural policies in Africa

The main objective of the Congress was to explore the relationship between culture, integration and the African Renaissance. This involved, on the one hand, exploring how to use culture to promote integration and how to bring about African renaissance, and on the other hand, using the African renaissance and the process of integration to strengthen African culture?

(3) Thematic group discussions

These discussions centered on the main papers presented and provided an opportunity for participants to explore in depth the presentations, which were made, and to come up with concrete recommendations. Each group had a moderator, panellists, and rapporteur which reported to the plenary sessions.

II. NARRATIVE REPORT

The reports of the rapporteurs cover in some detail what transpire during the individual sessions. The purpose of this general report is not to repeat the matters covered there, but instead to take a look at the overall picture and see if there were any patterns that emerged during the discussions that might help to give a more holistic view of what the Congress achieved.

This report will organise the material contained in the papers presented to the Congress and the discussion thereafter into four headings: (1) definition, (2) description, (3) development, and (4) transmission.

1. Defining African culture

There is a well-established convention to separate culture into the tangible and intangible. Within the tangible pride of place is given to cultural industries, which are taken as “the mass production and distribution of products, which convey ideas, messages, symbols, opinions, information, and oral and aesthetic values.” Thus something produced by these industries “conveys and disseminates ideas opinions and values peculiar to its own environment”

The concept paper stated explicitly that “we have moved on from the constricted traditional concept limited culture, to the practice of fine arts and literature, to a larger

vision of integrating the vision, values, traditions and customs of people geared towards promotion of interaction and dialogue with others.”

The discussion and the interests and areas of expertise of those attending suggested that the boundaries of the definition of culture had been broadened further. Based on the discussion at the congress, the concept of culture has been separated into four elements:

We begin with how individuals in societies engage with nature to meet their needs and wants. By this is meant the knowledge that these individuals use to engage with nature, and indeed with society itself. This may be termed - culture as knowledge. But it is not restricted to the knowledge that emerges from the study of nature, but also the knowledge that emerges from the study of society.

Next is what the individuals in a society actually produce from their engagement with nature and society, and why they do so. This conforms to what is normally meant by cultural production, and is here termed culture as material and artistic production.

Then there is how individuals interpret and make sense of the regularities of nature and society, and the meaning that they give to these regularities. In so far as they succeed in getting others to accept these meanings the symbols they produce give rise to a particular form of cultural expression or ‘cultural phenotype’. This is what is termed culture as belief, meaning, and ritual.

Finally there is how and why particular individuals regulate the private and public behaviour of the members of their society, primarily in the homestead, the work place, and public affairs. This is culture as values, norms, and social behaviour.

a) Culture as knowledge

A number of speakers in their presentations made reference to African Knowledge systems, referring to them as part of Africa’s heritage. An example is the case of the Hoodia plant that the San people of Botswana use as an appetite depressant, knowledge that developed within the context of their specific environmental experience. But there does not seem to be anything in the philosophy of science that would justify making a distinction between knowledge systems and science. The essential character of science is the process of experimentation or what we may term an evidence-based approach to social action. As the discussion showed this was not exclusive to Europe, and as one of the presenters demonstrated Africa was the cradle and source of many branches of science including experimentation as a means of developing ‘certainty’. Such practices, which apply not just to the study of nature but also to the study of society and the creation and recreation of memory, form part of Africa’s cultural heritage. And should play a pivotal role in its future.

b) Culture as material and artistic production

Discussion touched on the wide range of cultural production in Africa. Based on their indigenous science and technologies African societies produced and continue to produce goods and services that people need and want, including food and drink, shelter, work places, apparel, transport, health, communication, security, art, and places of worship. Today some of the creations of culture as material production are regarded and rightly so, as cultural icons of particular historical periods. This is the case, for example, of Great Zimbabwe, the Pyramids of Egypt, the Obelisk of Aksum, and a number of heritages in other African countries. But culture as artistic production, is equally important in giving a society its identity. So art, music, language and literature, drama, and film structure the external expression of a culture and constitute an important strand of cultural identity.

c) Culture as belief, meaning, and ritual

Each society has differing and sometimes conflicting explanations for the same natural and social phenomenon. Scientific explanation, religion, and philosophy jostle with one another and compete for supremacy in one and the same society and sometimes within one and the same mind. At particular historic moments the boundaries between these approaches shift as one approach secures ascendancy, albeit temporary, over the others. The ceremonies, rites, rituals, stories, literature, theatre, film, music and dance of a society usually give expression to the dominant explanation of the regularities of nature and society. By this method it is sometimes possible to 'see' culture as meaning and belief.

d) Culture as values, norms, and social behaviour

The Congress re-affirms the view that all peoples have culture, the issue being the structure and content of their culture. The values of a society establish what it considers to be good or beautiful, and are the basis on which its' rules are set, determining what is allowed, and what, if backed by law, must or must not be done. What may be regulated includes relations within families: husbands and wives, children and parents, young and old. Also regulated are economic relations, interactions in the work place, and behaviour in public affairs. While there are norms in the roles people are required to play, the allocation of roles can, in practice, be flexible. As one of the presenters observed with respect to gender, the role a society may require a person to play is not necessarily determined by their sex; so a man may be assigned to play a role normally assigned to women, and visa versa. Equally, the concept of youth is flexible and can apply to people irrespective of their actual age. It was agreed however that almost universally in Africa, the roles assigned to 'women' are discriminated against and not as valued as the roles assigned to 'men'.

e) How are these various domains interconnected?

The consensus seemed to be that Africa could develop its culture of knowledge without losing its culture of meaning and beliefs, or its culture of norms and values. Participants were of the view that aspects of African culture are deleterious for the well being of significant sections of society, with perhaps women being the most prominent. Thus there is a presupposition, at least among those present, that they could identify which aspects of African culture as norms and values should be amended, and additionally the direction in which they should be amended. Participants agreed that, for example, a change in the way women are viewed in African societies that leads to greater equality would have a generally beneficial effect on African culture as a whole.

Thus participants were of the view that there is a connection, albeit a flexible one, between the various aspects of culture, but it is not at all certain how much elasticity there is between one domain and another. One participant provided an example of how an attempt at changing economic behaviour of African people in a rural setting, floundered on the failure of the promoters of change, to understand how what they were advocating translated into peoples' values and norms. But he also demonstrated that people proved perfectly capable of changing established social behaviour if the circumstances were appropriate.

One is tempted to ask, since nature is one and universal, will development of culture as knowledge mean that all societies will in some important ways portray similar characteristics? If so, this suggests that the effects of culture as knowledge not only in some way underpin the other aspects of culture, but given the diversity even among societies that have similar levels of knowledge, there is a great deal of flexibility, and that the influences go both ways.

2) Describing African culture

The geographic, religious and linguistic diversity among of the participants, just to mention three, clearly testified to Africa's cultural diversity. However, there was some concern about whether this diversity was so pronounced that it was not possible to speak of African culture at all. The historians were able to point out how African culture had altered over time. The dominant view appeared to be that despite the diversity, there was and is an African culture.

But what all were agreed on was that in order to effectively intervene in, or engage with African societies, it is important, indeed it is a necessary requirement, that one knows in operational detail the nature of the culture under consideration. Therefore, it is a primary task for African cultural policy makers and practitioners to ensure that they do pass that test.

The proper description of African culture will provide all Africans with deep self-knowledge, and a resource for living and developing this culture in ways deemed to be desirable.

Could it be the case that the unity of African culture is linked to a common or shared knowledge base, while its diversity is more connected to differences in material and artistic production, beliefs and meaning, values, norms and social behaviour or due to geographic, political and social factors?

3) Issues of cultural development

There was a passionate consensus among participants that African culture needed to play a greater role in the lives of modern Africans, implying the extended use and consumption of African culture on the one hand and production of it on the other.

Much was said about the importance of cultural development, in the sense that it was important that Africa made a conscious undertaking to develop its culture. But there was also a realisation that culture could not be developed in a vacuum; the only way it could develop was to be used, or consumed, which, in turn, implies that it had to be produced. But the central questions for participants were how do Africans develop their culture, and in which directions should African culture be developed.

With respect to the first question, participants held that cultural change should be internally driven and not imposed from outside. Of course internal change could take place in response to external circumstances. As one participant said colonisation, and indeed the current period of globalisation, have had an impact on Africa's multiple gender, religious, ethnic, and linguistic-based identities. The challenge currently facing Africa is to redefine the relationship of all these identities to the globalized world within which they are located and have to operate. Many participants supported the view that African culture had been the victim of externally and often forcefully driven changes and that future development should involve a process of realignment, whereby Africans are, in some sense, able to return to their cultural roots or sources. As yet another put it, African culture should be lived every day by African people, and not treated as a jacket to be put on for special occasions and then returned to the wardrobe. In the global context one presenter observed that culture becomes dangerous when it becomes intolerant. Africa, it seems, has been the victim of cultural intolerance from other parts of the world. But perhaps this should be seen as a warning about possible tendencies towards intolerance within Africa itself as well. As to the direction in which African culture should be developed, participants were of the view that it should be developed in ways that provide dignity for African people.

Culture as knowledge

Participants agreed that there is a widespread misrepresentation of science as a uniquely European enterprise, despite the fact that the systematic study of nature based on experimentation originated in Africa. This origin and development of science as a method, and a body of knowledge and associated theory, has meant that Africa has been both a cradle and fountain of human knowledge from which other cultures have drawn. A detailed presentation in support of this thesis showed that studies into geography, cartography, spherical instruments, map projections, astronomy, building, medicine, health, the anatomy of the body, pulmonary circulation of the blood, water clocks and other time keeping devices, commerce, trade, banking, navigation, ship building, military devices, the anatomy of the eye, and making sense of the 3 dimensional world were first conducted in Africa. However as part of a deliberate process of denial these achievements and Africa's role as a fountain for European and world culture were disregarded, ignored, or projected onto others from outside Africa, by Europeans during their global expansion which commenced 500 years ago.

At the moment in Africa there are two knowledge systems living side by side. The methods, knowledge and associated theories of one system are taught in schools and universities but as a foreign and imported phenomenon. The products of this domain are on the whole considered desirable by Africa's ruling elite. On the other hand the methods, knowledge and associated theories of the other which have been developed within Africa, have a shadowy existence and are passed on almost exclusively outside the confines of schools and universities. The products of the second are used or consumed predominantly by the poor and uneducated, and by the elite mostly in secret.

It was agreed that Africa needed to develop a framework to unify these two systems and also to popularise this unified science. Additionally it was agreed that it was important to promote a greater general understanding of science by building on Africa's historical strengths, and by changing the way science is taught in primary and secondary schools.

There was agreement that the core strategy to develop African culture as science was to once more harness it to the mass production of material and artistic goods and services. In so doing care should be taken to ensure that the intellectual property rights of Africans is not lost to others from outside Africa. In this regard as a participant observed it was crucial that these rights apply to both material and non-material products, and that African leaders should be assisted by the relevant specialised agencies not to negotiate away Africans' rights to produce, enjoy and live their cultural rights. An example of this process of harnessing African science and technology to mass production is the case of the Hoodia plant of the San. The

cautionary aspect of this tale being that the task of developing the knowledge to be capable of mass production is being undertaken not by an African company but by, Phytosan, a British one. There is thus the ever-present danger that the principle benefits to be derived from this process may accrue to people outside Africa, even though the core knowledge is part of Africa's intellectual property. But as this example also showed, the process of establishing the beneficiaries of intellectual property rights is not uncomplicated, and may have many potential pitfalls for the unwary. Equally the challenge of establishing the beneficiaries of intellectual property rights as African science and technology is applied to the mass production of African goods is potentially fraught with dangers.

However it is only by doing what is necessary to make African culture as knowledge capable of mass production, that the gulf between the two domains can be bridged and Africa can once more rest on a unified and integrated scientific base.

Culture as material and artistic production

The dangers of losing out on the benefits of cultural development based on knowledge apply equally to culture as material and artistic production. Based in part on the development of science and technology in Africa, a number of presenters showed that at the time of contact with Europe, Africa was producing a range of products equal to and often superior to those of Europe. This was supported by evidence from reports of African kingdoms and cities at the time of European contact by the very early European travellers. Of note in this regard were Dahomey, Angola, and Mali to name just three. Nevertheless there were important areas such as in military capability where African knowledge and production was not as developed as that in Europe. This means that the range and quality of Africa's cultural products were in many respects as impressive, if not more so, than those in Europe at the time of the initial contact. Nevertheless as one participant put it the continent that was until 500 years ago among the leaders of the world is today one of the world's paupers, while much of its consumption and production is dependent on the activities of cultures outside the continent.

Today much of what is consumed in Africa uses inputs from other environments and has been designed for other climes. Thus there is an extended dislocation between the African societies and their environments. This state of affairs was achieved during the European colonial interlude. At the same time some of Africa's most outstanding material cultural products were looted and taken to Europe where except for one or two exceptions, they have remained. However, some participants cautioned that given the precarious state of the majority of Africa's museums the natural desire to have these cultural monuments returned should be tempered by the realisation that for the time being there might be value in securing their return virtually physically.

Participants were of the considered view that the link between what is termed economic development and cultural development should not be ignored: the higher the level of one, the higher the level of the other. One participant postulated that in part, poverty in Africa could be attributed to the failure to industrialise, on the basis of African culture. However if Africa developed a capacity to mass-produce and mass-consume African cultural products, this will provide a spur to culture as material and artistic production. In so doing sight should not be lost of the combined effects of young creators, and the input of women who today are the face of African poverty.

Focussing on culture as artistic production, participants observed that modern media and ITCs could be used to create a common African cultural space, where products based on Africa's cultural heritage are produced and consumed and the African Renaissance promoted. Instead however these powerful tools are being used to transmit the cultural values and norms of other societies into the homes and minds of African children, as Africans uncritically consume the artistic products of other peoples' culture. Such a state of affairs it was agreed could only be over come if there was a systematic and concerted effort by governments either to themselves invest in the development of technology transfer or else to establish conducive environments within their countries for this to happen.

This raised the question of how Africa's artistic production in the realms of language, literature, film, music, musical instruments, clothing, drama etc can be used and consumed in significant quantities? Some of the case studies presented suggested that what is required is for joint action by cultural entrepreneurs, academic and research institutions and government. Cultural entrepreneurs will provide the cultural content, academic and research institutions will help to develop scientific and technological capability, and governments will use legislative and fiscal policy to help promote the capacity to produce and the propensity to consume.

One presentation on culture, media, and ITC graphically demonstrated this tendency with respect to language. They showed that the Internet carried 50 million web pages within the African domain, 42 million of which were in South Africa. Of the 8 million non-South African pages, 54% were in English, 40% were in French, 4% in Arabic, and 0.5% in various African languages. This very low profile of African languages on the Internet highlighted the fact that this new global medium was currently incapable of supporting communication between speakers of African languages, so that, for example, two speakers of an African language are not able to communicate together using their common mother tongue.

Culture as belief, meaning and ceremony

There was only a very brief discussion about the interaction between indigenous African religions and religions imported from outside.

Culture as values, norms, and social behaviour

There was animated discussion around the proposition by a presenter that Africa's experience of rights and freedoms is simultaneously ennobling and despairing. For example, the year 1994 is simultaneously significant as being the year in which South Africa liberated itself from colonial Apartheid, and also for being the year of the genocide in Rwanda. The culmination of the struggle against Apartheid presumably exemplified the idea of equality of people, and in that particular case of reconciliation. Nevertheless, in Rwanda it witnessed the massacre of up to 800,000 within the twinkle of an eye. Being able to confront both tendencies was essential, the presenter asserted, since it was important that in examining themselves Africans should be ruthless without being unkind. For, only if Africans were able to confront their weaknesses, will they be able to overcome them.

The issue of what is and what is not acceptable was crucial in properly addressing Africa's prospects for being able to make cultural progress. Participants noted, for example, that too often culture in Africa allowed political and gender-based violence. And yet in many ways Africa has led the world in extending the realms of rights and freedoms. For example, the African charter on human and peoples' rights introduced the concept of the right to development; the idea of environmental rights was of African origin; and important aspects of the extension of the rights of refugees globally were in response to the African experience. The conclusion is that human rights should not be seen as an externally or Western imposed idea. Other examples of the cutting edge nature of African approaches to human rights include the fact that, according to the constitution in South Africa, the state has a duty to develop languages that were undermined by colonialism and Apartheid. Another is that Article 29 of the Charter for the Cultural Renaissance says Africans have a duty to promote positive cultural values. Despite this, in Africa today, human rights culture is not very strong.

There is a continuous and ongoing struggle to decide how culture develops, and which elements are to be retained, jettisoned, or incorporated. This struggle is carried out in accordance with core principles which are themselves contentious. These core principles define the character and aspirations of a people. In deciding the direction of cultural change, participants were of the view that, individual rights should be given supremacy over collective or group rights, since collective rights in Africa were often unfair to important sections of the society, especially women. Participants further noted that the quest for rights is never-ending, since the greater the number of rights that have been established, the more that come into focus for recognition as such.

Today, confronted by the hegemony of Western power across the board, many Africans have evolved a culture of inferiority and dependency. On the other hand, when it suits the ruling elite it is capable of standing on the platform of African culture,

and declaring to the world that it will not be dictated to. This is especially so when some aspects of its behaviour is being challenged or criticised from the outside. Thus Africans appear to suffer from cultural schizophrenia, not being sure at any one time whether to be 'modern' or 'African'.

Renaissance, a participant observed, is a triangulated discourse between the past the present and the future on the one hand and between culture as values and norms, beliefs and meaning, production, and knowledge. In this regard, participatory government policies to alter social behaviour can play an important role in shaping the nature of the eventual outcome.

The prospects of achieving irreversible changes leading to an African renaissance rest first, on radically transforming the values and norms of African social behaviour. This will involve changing many aspects of the way people behave a task made a bit more difficult because these changes will need to occur simultaneously. In the process of achieving the African Renaissance, which participants all aspired to, Africa should seek to heal the damage that has been done to the African psyche, and to help overcome the subaltern and dependent approach that Africans, on the whole, now have towards the rest of the world. In particular it calls on Africans to become once again knowledge producers, and not just consumers, and transmitters.

In this quest the central question posed by one participant was that what kind of Renaissance would make sense in Africa's current context? To which the reply was one that took account of class, as well as youth and gender. This suggests that perhaps the place to start is to should look to see how the current norms of social behaviour between women and men, youth and elders, and people of different classes, should be amended, to take the people of Africa forward towards a more dignified cultural future.

4) The challenge of transmitting culture

The fourth global issue that emerged from the Congress was that of cultural transmission, and more specifically what it is that this generation is transmitting to the next and how it should be done.

What is being transmitted - memory

One of the key areas of cultural production is the production of memory. A participant summed up the issue of memory thus: each generation must decide what it wishes to transmit to the next as well as the best way of doing so. This is because each new generation recasts its own approach to the past, which never weighs as heavily on it as it does on those who actually lived it. In combating the distorted past presented to Africans, it is important that contemporary Africans understand what they want to

transmit, and should do so on the basis of a reconstructed African past, and on the writing of a more accurate history.

In this context it is important to remember that history, written or oral, is in the first place the product of individual memory, since it is what one individual, although affected by social forces, chooses to preserve and highlight for the collective, and thereby shaping collective memory and identity. In this quest, Africans should look for space and resources to accommodate their memories, and also to use their intellectual resources to fight cultural poverty. Some of the resources to be used in this process of identity formation will necessarily involve the use of indigenous knowledge or science. Within the discipline of history participants noted that the shift in paradigm which recognises the historical contribution of Africans is very much in its infancy, not having yet made its way into school and university curricula. In so doing there is a need to unpack the concept of the public for whom African historians are preserving memory, archives, and monuments because the value of heritage to the various publics can range from the sacred religious to outright commodification.

One of the elements of African memory that was touched upon is that of slavery and the slave trade in Africa, which persists to the present day in some communities. Whereas the transoceanic slave trade from Africa to America or to Europe has come under scrutiny, the inter-Africa slavery and slave trade has not received much attention, including Trans-Saharan slave trade. It is a practice that is retained as a painful memory for the African people. Another area which received limited coverage was that of the tangible or material heritage. This was partly due to the background of the paper presenters who were more biased to history than to heritage.

Memory is one of the more emotive elements of transmission perhaps because of its links with identity. Nevertheless sight should not be lost of the other elements of cultural transmission. Certainly other elements of cultural transmission such as values, and norms also exercised participants.

The medium of transmission - language

Children who commence their education in a foreign tongue fail to have passed onto them the content and framework of the knowledge systems of their ancestors. In addition they find it harder to assimilate the knowledge placed before them. Despite this, Africa is the only continent where education of children is systematically carried out in foreign languages. Participants were passionate about the need for African languages to be the backbone, and central means of transmitting African culture, and as a necessary precondition to the African renaissance. This can only happen if African language development is prioritised in the African cultural policy firmament. In this context the idea of developing regional languages as part of the process of helping to develop African languages seemed to receive widespread support.

The method of transmission - education

The simultaneous unity and diversity of African culture resting as it does on multi-ethnic and multicultural foundations presents a serious challenge to those wishing to transmit African culture to the next generation using their mother tongue. Africa's education systems will need to develop mechanisms to cater for this high level of diversity if they are to have a reasonable chance of respecting the right of all children to receive the first years of their education in their mother tongue. A practical example is when one considers that the Congo boasts around 450 ethnic groups, and many African countries can do something similar. Nevertheless it was observed that the problem can appear to be more challenging than it actually is. For example some studies have shown that the orthography of over two thirds of African languages can be reduced to about eleven.

Apart from the question of language, participants were fully minded to ensure that the education system is made capable of transmitting not only values and norms, but also science and technology within the framework of African languages.

The target of transmission –the community, but with a special focus on children and youth

Participants agreed that the circumstances Africa's youth face today has traumatised many of them. In a number of African countries, only 50% of the youth access education beyond primary school. This almost certainly condemns large sections of the youth to chronic unemployment. Added to this is generalised gender violation especially of girl children, and political instability. The result is that large sections of the youth are condemned to a life of frustration, with their dreams and expectations incapable of being fulfilled. As a result a number of them seek to leave Africa culturally, while a sizeable number actively attempt to leave it physically.

There was generalised agreement that the time for the youth to be 'properly socialised' was when they were children and not when they were adolescents. But there was also general agreement that youth should have better access and opportunities to air their views on the future of their societies. Cultural education or literacy, it was agreed, should be provided not only within the context of the family and formal academic education, but also within the community and through cultural institutions, making this a life long process.

When such a process is successful, what is learned will serve to move the society onto a higher or more complex plane of social organisation. If, however, Africa fails to succeed in doing so, then the youth will resort to modes of behaviour that will challenge the coherence, cohesion, and dynamism of the society that they feel themselves to be simultaneously part of and yet socially excluded from. The youth

present at the congress said very clearly that they felt they had not been properly prepared for the future, which caused one participant to observe that 'if their upbringing fails to provide the youth with the means to know how to use their inheritance, then strangers will walk away with it.'

III RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the participants counselled those present to resist the temptation to throw an institution at any problem that was identified. This on the grounds that almost certainly there already existed - a cash strapped - institution on the continent attempting to address problems in the area. What was required was to think about how to develop policy to encourage collaboration between existing institutions with a view to working to transform behaviour. This approach appears to be well-suited to the perspective that emerges from this survey, which is that the first step to making change is to alter social behaviour. If such behaviour can be altered on a large scale and for a sufficiently long period, then societies can be transformed relatively quickly. The task then, is to develop policies appropriate to the problems they are intended to address.

In this spirit the recommendations that will receive the greatest attention will be those that focus on getting people to collaborate to alter social behaviour. Of course if those people are policy makers and the difference is in the policies they formulate, then this can have a relatively quick and significant impact. Another focus will be those recommendations that involve existing institutions working more closely together. For altered behaviour to be sustainable however it seems a necessary requirement that such altered behaviour should produce positive returns to those who change. Finally therefore focus will be on those recommendations that seek to produce a positive return.

Describing and Mapping

Mapping and cataloguing

Recommendations under this heading are intended to provide the continent with the information or knowledge required to know itself better and to intervene effectively. The rationale is that once the issue of definition has been resolved, the next step is to be able to make an adequate, i.e., usable description of the state of whatever aspect of culture is under consideration. Thus there were a number of recommendations calling for Africa to know itself. This was being proposed not just for purposes of self-knowledge but also as a necessary condition for effectively engaging with African culture.

The suggestions made in this regard included (1) setting up of a central database of traditional knowledge including medicine; (2) establishing an African cultural resource centre for collecting, digitising, archiving, and distributing cultural information; (3)

creating a portal for African scientists, which, it was suggested, should be facilitated by the African Union; (4) establishing a comprehensive record of African oral tradition; and (5) conducting a comprehensive series of ethnographic surveys of African societies to be carried out by universities and relevant research institutions.

b) Development

From the discussion, it has been established that unless African culture in its various forms is produced and consumed on a mass scale, then its various elements will not achieve higher levels of robustness. Secondly, given Africa's past history which has resulted in a severe dislocation between its' various forms, it is important that African culture undergo a restructuring which will bring its various elements into closer harmony with one another.

The scale of production and consumption

Among the suggestions that would achieve this was that the African elite should make special efforts to adopt policies that lead to high level of consumption of African culture by them and Africa's population generally. There was a specific recommendation for example for the elite to make it a habit that they and their families regularly visit and learn from the continent's cultural heritage sites. Within the same framework but more concerned with marketing there was a suggestions to set up e-shops to sell African craft. Acknowledging that there was a prominent business element to cultural development, there was a call for a change to the rules of copyright so that artists rather than producers, and publishers were the primary beneficiaries. More generally there was a call for increased collaborative partnerships between cultural entrepreneurs, academic and research centres, and government to help increase Africa's capacity for artistic production and propensity to consume the products of Africa's cultural entrepreneurs.

For example in the area of music development, African governments could make it a requirement that certain African musical instruments should be a requirement of the school curriculum. This and similar action could increase at a stroke the demand for the musical instrument in question. Related action could support local or regional production by stimulating research and development into mass production. Finally, an enabling fiscal policy could support the capacity to produce and the propensity to consume. This formula could be repeated with necessary modification, with other aspects of culture such as artistic production such as books, film using African stories especially for children, the content of local broadcasting. By so doing it would go some way to help reclaim some of the cultural space within Africa itself that has been lost to the cultural product of the rest of the world.

Memory and identity

Among the things that could/should be mass-produced for mass consumption is the history of Africa, or Africa's sense of what it is. So it was proposed that there should be a new ethno-history of Africa based on a new paradigm to be developed by the relevant academic associations and institutions.

Language

The other core element in the development of African culture, in the view of participants, is the development of African language. There were specific recommendations to improve the degree to which African languages are used within the continent. One proposal was that the African Union should settle on one African language to be used continentally, and another suggested that each region should choose a language to serve as a regional language.

Modern technology and African Culture

There were a number of recommendations calling for modern technology and in particular ITC to play a crucial role in producing and disseminating African culture. But it was felt that the transfer of technology required for this implied an environment that promoted technology use and also one that democratised it.

Transmission**Publishing**

On a number of occasions participants suggested that a pan-African publishing house should be given charge of book publication and distribution.

Education

Many times it was said that education should be regarded and organised as a life long experience, allowing individuals to move seamlessly from learning in the family and community, to academic institutions, and then to cultural institutions. To facilitate this, it was suggested that there should be an African cultural resource centre that should be linked to early childhood learning centres, and programmes, to assist with cultural transmission. Another suggestion was that research into the educational systems of African Union Member States should be undertaken with a view to identifying and sharing best practices on age of enrolment, use of grades, and use of standards. Since the Africa Union has launched a second decade of education it was suggested that this should be anchored within African culture, and mainstream African cultural knowledge into the relevant school subjects at primary, secondary and university level.

History

A key proposal was that comprehensive survey of the slave trade routes (Atlantic and Saharan) should be published, and that steps should be taken for the UNESCO general history of Africa to be more widely disseminated.

Language

To facilitate the development of the medium of transmission of culture in Africa there were a number of proposals on African language. The first was that every African country should evolve an African language policy to be used in social, educational, and public life, together with a strategy of implementation. It was also suggested that as part of this language policy, there should be mother tongue use for all children below eight and a half years of age, and that second languages will be introduced after children reach this age. The development of new terminology for the national language could be done in collaboration with the institute of Kiswahili development, in Tanzania which has experience in this area. Alongside this there should be a programme of translation of classical material into national languages, and language teaching materials should be developed in various subjects for the school system. To make this possible it was recognised that there should be training of trainers of mother tongue education for example in the form of a Masters in Applied Linguistics (MAPA) in Africa. Development and use of cross boarder languages. As a first step countries were asked to implement a programme of action for African language year. To facilitate this, work on the reduction of African language orthography should be speeded up and implemented.

In recognition of the cost implications of the multifaceted aspects of this policy it was suggested that each country should reserve 0.01 of its' national budget to implement the programme of language education, although other sources of finance for this could be taxing air flights into and out of Africa.

Finally the Academy of African Languages (ACALAN) should be given responsibility to monitor the implementation of the language related programme at the continental level and report to AU.

The Diaspora

As a way of engaging with the Diaspora it was suggested that exchange programmes between primary and secondary schools in Africa and the African Diaspora should be established, and that teaching African languages should be extended to the Diaspora to help achieve unification of African people globally.

The AU

Specific proposals for the African Union included one that the technology related recommendations of the Cultural Congress should be submitted to the forthcoming African Union summit on technology. Another was that the African Union should harmonise and co-ordinate the activities of its various structures to best meet the requirements of developing African culture.

CONSENSUS STATEMENT

The Pan African Cultural Congress held from 13 to 15 November 2006 was preceded by major cultural events over the past few years, notably, CIAD I & II, the 1st Conference of AU Ministers of Culture held in December 2005, in Nairobi, Kenya, and the 6th AU Summit of January 2006 in Khartoum, Sudan. The Khartoum Summit endorsed the decision of the Nairobi Ministerial Conference on Culture to convene PACC during 2006.

The Pan African Cultural Congress is part of the on-going interrogation of African identity in the 21st century. The Congress represents the culmination of the work of the AU in Culture, including the revision of the Dakar Plan of Action on cultural industries during the 5th Conference of African Ministers of Culture held in December 2005, the Nairobi Declaration, and the Assembly Decision on the Revised Charter for the cultural Renaissance of Africa, during the Khartoum Summit in January 2006. The Charter for the Cultural Renaissance of Africa was launched during the opening ceremony of the Pan-African Cultural Congress.

The Participants in the Pan-African Cultural Congress recognize the immense honor of the presence and participation of Dr. Mbow, the former Director General of UNESCO, in the Congress.

Similarly the participants in the Congress recognize and appreciate the participation of artists and exhibitors from Africa and who have contributed to enriching the Congress.

1. **WE**, the African Cultural participants attending the First AU Pan African Cultural Congress, gathered at the AU Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 13 – 15 November 2006, to deliberate on the general theme; “CULTURE, INTEGRATION AND AFRICAN RENAISSANCE”.
2. **Aware** of the overarching commitments and deliberations of the Africa Union (AU) and its Member States towards promoting democracy, peace and development to the peoples of Africa;
3. **Acknowledging** the critical role and contribution of African Culture in:
 - Harnessing our positive attributes, norms, and values as the basis for solid and broad based human centered development;

- Promoting integration, preservation of our heritage, reviving our sustainable production systems, and balanced utilization of resources;
- Promoting and restoring values of good governance;

All of which form the basis for the African Renaissance;

4. **Convinced** that no known civilization has ever evolved from a borrowed culture, emphasize that Africa's development will be realized if anchored on African Culture, values, and context;
5. **Appreciating** that reviving African cultural treasures is an effective and strategic instrument in realizing the African Renaissance, and contribute to on-going efforts towards integration;
6. **Taking Note** of the need of AU member states to put culture at the center of the development agenda in Africa, by recognizing the importance of Culture in socio-economic transformation;
7. **Recognize** the existence of a dynamic and complex alignment between culture, economic development and social transformation, thereby making it imperative that pursuing cultural development ought to be considered as an integral part of the cultural approach to the development perspectives of Africa in the new millennium;
8. **Ascertain** that it is timely for Africa to recapture and refocus its socio-economic transformation path based on the abundant cultural resources that the continent is endowed with;
9. **Realize** that Africa strongly needs to rediscover and fully utilize the vast and extensive knowledge, skills, creative ideals and systems of its longstanding Traditional and Cultural treasures, and diversity and gender-based potential inherent in its population in order to strategically streamline them towards the advancement and progress of Africa's development;

NOW, THEREFORE, COMMEND OUR CONSENSUS AND CALL FOR ACTION:

We;

10. **Urge** all State Parties, African citizens resident in Africa and in the Diaspora, non-state actors, including Civil Society organizations and human-rights activist groups, development partners, and friends of

Africa, to acknowledge, understand, promote, advocate, and support the translations of our call into deeds, in order to make the Pan-African Cultural vision a reality;

11. **Emphasize** that drawing a Roadmap and revitalizing existing strategies and calls for action as well as operationalizing them is the collective responsibility and duty of states and peoples to demonstrate their commitments to realize the enrichment of African cultures;
12. **Reiterate** the centrality of inclusiveness to encompass all segments of society, including women and youth, in the processes and interventions as well as deriving benefits from such initiatives.

On the theme of Memory and Heritage

We;

13. **Reaffirm** the need for the reconstruction and rediscovery of the memory and historical conscience of Africa and its diasporas; by ensuring that the History of Africa is well researched, recorded and documented and needs to be used as a valid base for teaching African History in various languages of Africa.
14. **Recognize** that Africa needs to actively concretize its efforts to safeguard and protect its vast cultural Heritage, both tangible and intangible, as an end in itself, and to serve as a vehicle for Africa's development endeavours, by passing it from generation to generation so that Africa can sustain its identity in future generations.
15. **Reiterate** that there is a need to take measures to ensure the role of heritage education in tackling Africa's problems, especially HIV/AIDS and conflict resolution. Similarly, memorials to past atrocities are needed in order not to forget the tragedies and traumas of the past.

On the theme of culture, Language and education

We;

16. **Reiterate** the commitment to managing cultural diversity, and the need for deepening and concretizing the broader meaning of culture as a universal and complex concept which is not a free standing phenomena, but one constituting a set of social structures which provides the framework that defines people's interaction with social, economic, political, technological, even environmental transactions;

17. **Reconfirm** that language is both an integral part of human culture and a vehicle for transmitting culture, facilitating communication and creating understanding through mediating social interaction; and reiterate that Africa is in dire need to foster its languages to accelerate its socioeconomic advancement by reintroducing them into education systems at national level and promoting cross-border use of other commonly used African Languages.
18. **Reemphasize** that African Educational systems need to be re-oriented and redefined in a way that integrates culture and education as being inseparable; so that education serves as a vehicle for trans-generational transmission of culture, while culture serves as the end-point of education which cements the identities and solidarities of the society at large, and language being the instrument to match culture in education and education – in culture.

On the theme of Culture, Youth and Gender

We;

19. **Admit** that Africa is still a continent of young people, and needs to engage youth and provide opportunities to them, and strive to inculcate Africa's cultural identities, values and norms into the minds of youth; not only by considering them as active recipient of past cultures, but also recognizing them as a capable constituency in the making of a new Africa and thereby harnessing them as a critical resource in realizing the Renaissance of Africa.
20. **Resolve** to utilize half of Africa's untapped potential of its female population acknowledging the critical need to empower African women and girls and move swiftly to resolve the conflict between gender and culture and fine tune the balance between the two by ensuring that the cultural agenda is gender mainstreamed so as to achieve equality between men and women of Africa.
21. **Recognize** the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on youth. Africa's youth is at the epicenter of this epidemic, which will in the next two decades transform the social landscape of Africa. It is incumbent upon us to examine how we can harness cultural heritage education to manage this transformation.

On the theme of Cultural Development**We;**

22. **Fully Recognize** culture as being both evolutionary and revolutionary in nature and also a springboard for development,.

On the theme of Culture, Development and Social Transformation**We;**

23. **Strongly Emphasize** that the goal of sustainable development in Africa will only be achieved when its development objectives and deliberations are defined in terms of its peoples' culture; which calls for a broad-based qualitative and participatory approach.
24. **Recognize** that culture has both positive and negative effects on the process of social transformation, it is acknowledged that adopting a strategic approach in addressing culture, development and social transformation is an essential element of the African renaissance;
25. **Restate** that state parties should take necessary measures to recognize and actively engage traditional cultural leaders on developmental, social progress and transformation endeavors of Africa;

On the theme of Culture Rights, Freedoms and the Protection of Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights**We;**

26. **Strongly Note** that cultural democracy is indivisible from political economic and social democracy, and that it needs to be situated in the African context so as to evolve and place culture as the base for the respect of human and democratic rights;
27. **Recommend** that talented and creative producers, innovators and knowledge producers are the basis for African Renaissance, so there is a need to acknowledge them and ensure protection for their intellectual property and Property Rights, and facilitate the production and distribution of their works.
28. **Urge** all parties of the need to strengthen copyright and anti-piracy laws, and the extension of intellectual property rights to cover individual and collective rights.

29. **Emphasize** the need to promote and protect indigenous knowledge systems and practitioners and to use these systems to foster development.

On the theme of Cultural Policies in Africa

We;

30. **Reaffirm** that the development of African culture should be comprehensive, inclusive and participatory and spearheaded in the right path, so that it is guided by principals and values that encourage adopting and updating of appropriate cultural policies.

On the theme of African culture, the Media and New Technologies

We;

31. **Unanimously** Admit that the level of change in information and communication technologies is speeding-up and enormously affects the cultural diversity of Africa and call for African culture to be scaled-up to confront the challenges of such technologies;
32. Recalled that film, audio-visual, and print media are used as means to disseminate cultural values and norms and therefore there is need to strategically align African Culture in such a way as to penetrate and influence the content of media.

On the Pan-African Cultural Congress

We;

33. **Call upon** all parties, both state and non state actors to appreciate our views expressed in this forum focusing on the Renaissance of African identity & personality, Philosophy, wisdom of knowledge, creativity and innovations in order to move in solidarity towards socio-economic advancement of Africa in the new millennia;
34. **Realize** that the continuation of PACC is instrumental to concretize its goals, thus recommend to convening the congress at three year intervals, and revive the spirit of annual festivals to celebrate traditional African culture.
35. **Emphasize** the urgency of translating the recommendations of the Congress into concrete workplans.

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Telephone 002511-115 517 700 Cables: OAU, Addis Ababa
website : www.africa-union.org

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
Tenth Ordinary Session
25 – 26 January 2007
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA**

EX.CL/317 (X) Rev.1

**REPORT ON THE 1ST PAN-AFRICAN CULTURAL
CONGRESS (PACC)**

2007

Summary of the report of the 1st Pan-African cultural congress (PACC) of the Africa Union

African Union

African Union

<http://archives.au.int/handle/123456789/4440>

Downloaded from African Union Common Repository