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**ENCYCLOPAEDIA AFRICANA PROJECT – DOCUMENTING AFRICAN
HISTORY TOWARDS DURABLE SOLUTIONS TO AFRICAN
CHALLENGES INCLUDING FORCED DISPLACEMENT**
(Item proposed by the Republic of Ghana)

CONCEPT NOTE

ENCYCLOPAEDIA AFRICANA PROJECT – DOCUMENTING AFRICAN HISTORY TOWARDS DURABLE SOLUTIONS TO AFRICAN CHALLENGES INCLUDING FORCED DISPLACEMENT

BACKGROUND

The Encyclopaedia Africana Project (EAP) was initiated by the first President of the Republic of Ghana, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, together with the eminent African Diaspora scholar, Dr. W. E. B DuBois, in 1962. The EAP was designed to document the authentic history of Africa and African life, with particular focus on the history, cultures, social institutions and contribution of Africans and people of African descent to world development. The realization of this project was expected to expose Africans to self-knowledge, leading to new thinking and the restoration of African dignity.

2. While the EAP has successfully published three (3) volumes of the Encyclopaedia Africana, the pace of implementation of the Project slowed considerably over the last few decades, following decades of socio-economic decline and political strife on the African continent, which had the effect of diverting attention from the EAP. Funding to the EAP Secretariat has since been reduced to the annual subvention provided by the Government of Ghana, which is not enough to support the technical operations of the Project.

3. In 2014, the Government of Ghana made an appeal to the African Union for the adoption of the EAP as one of the Pan African Legacy Projects that merited revitalization to help drive Aspiration Number Five (5) of the AU 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration on African Identity and Renaissance. The Assembly, at its 22nd Ordinary Session of Heads of State and Government and the Executive Council at its 24th Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (January, 2014), overwhelmingly endorsed the proposal by Ghana (Assembly/AU/16(XXII) Add.5).

4. In 2016, the CIDO Directorate of the African Union Commission assumed responsibility for coordinating actions on the implementation of a revitalized EAP. Since then, four (4) technical consultative meetings have been organized by the CIDO Directorate in partnership with the EAP Secretariat based in Accra, Ghana. These technical meetings brought together an impressive mix of key stakeholders, carefully selected from academia, research institutions, historical societies, policy-making authorities, diplomats, business experts and writers specialized in African studies, drawn from the Continent and the Diaspora.

5. As per the AU Assembly Decision on the adoption of the Encyclopaedia Africana Project (Assembly/AU/Dec.500(XXII)), the Republic of Ghana (Secretariat of the EAP) was tasked to avail itself to work with the African Union Commission and to facilitate consultations with the aim of reviving the awareness of all Member States concerning the ongoing EAP.

6. The same decision also requested the AUC to facilitate the formation of National Cooperating Committees in each Member State to be financed by the respective Member State to enlist the assistance of scholars in various universities and Research Centres to contribute to the Encyclopaedia.

7. The EAP is a cross-cutting project which transcends all themes of the AU as it seeks to document Africa's history including issues, statistical data and challenges related to refugees, returnees and forced displacement which will enable the continent to provide solutions to them.

GOAL OF THE EAP

8. The immediate goal for the new strategic direction of the EAP is to create a platform for the full-scale implementation of the EAP while serving as the authoritative source of information on indigenous Africa and African life, as envisaged at its inception by the founding fathers of the project.

RELEVANCE OF THE EAP TO THE THEME OF THE YEAR

9. There is a nexus between peace and development as well as migration and development. Some parts of the continent have been adversely riddled with poor governance practices which usually result in conflict, thereby, creating several migrant vulnerabilities which include Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons. This has resulted in giving the Continent an unfavourable outlook.

10. The true essence of African history would be dispelled if critical occurrences such as conflicts, diseases and droughts on the continent, which compelled a remarkable number of our citizens to be displaced, cannot be documented to be used as a scholarly source of information.

11. Issues of African migrants to other continents, particularly Europe, have not been devoid of political and economic disagreements between both continents over the past decades. There have been issues of various degrees of abuses which have taken many lives as well as rendered most migrants vulnerable.

12. In order for the Continent to spearhead a more "Durable Solution to Forced Displacement", there is the need to expand the stakeholder network, to include members of the diaspora, the private sector, academia and local authorities to assuage the brunt of the root causes of vulnerable migrants.

13. The Encyclopaedia Africana Project could be a starting point to further enhance sensitization of the negative effects of poor governance and conflicts throughout the continent. The diaspora and other migrants could be used as fulcrums to share both positive and negative experiences during their transitions.

14. Documentary evidence to bring universal knowledge from the African perspective, through extensive research should be applauded as a veritable tool to solve forced

displacement on the continent. A reliable vehicle, from the continent, to inform Africa of the ad hoc solutions which are evidently not working and innovative solutions borne out of “good practices” which could be adopted to bring a sustainable solution to the issue of forced displacement should be highly considered.

15. The Encyclopaedia as a documentary source on African forced migration, which is in line with the theme of the year, would be a step in the right direction for scholarly research and policy advice.

**DRAFT DECISION ON THE ADOPTION OF THE ENCYLOPAEDIA AFRICANA AS A
FLAGSHIP PROJECT OF THE AFRICAN UNION
Doc. EX.CL/1133(XXXIV)Add.7**

The Executive Council,

1. **RECALLS** a Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.500(XXII) on the adoption of the Encyclopaedia Africana Project (EAP);
2. **COMMENDS** the work of the Government of Ghana and the African Union Commission on the progress made in reviving the EAP;
3. **REQUESTS** the African Union Commission to adopt the EAP as one of its flagship projects;
4. **CALLS UPON** AU Member States, the African Union Commission and Pan-African institutions on the Continent and in the Diaspora to support the work of the EAP;
5. **REQUESTS** the African Union Commission to conduct an evaluation of the current Secretariat of the EAP and assess the possibility of making it a Pan - African Institution.

2019-02-07

Encyclopaedia Africana project – documenting African history towards durable solutions to African challenges including forced displacement (Item proposed by the Republic of Ghana)

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