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**REPORT OF HIS EXCELLENCY IBRAHIM BOUBACAR KEITA,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALI,
LEADER OF THE AFRICAN UNION ON
ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE**

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PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALI,
LEADER ON ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE**

Introduction

1. At the 32nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, held on 10 and 11 February 2019, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in my capacity as President of the Republic of Mali, I officially agreed to take on the mission of Leader of the continental organisation of the Arts, Culture and Heritage. In two statements, I outlined my mission, and stated that I would set myself the following three objectives:

- a) *Assist in clarifying the conceptual plan of African cultural issues.* This involves transcending the arguments of various schools over the terms culture, arts and heritage, and promoting an approach that links the concepts to that of “sustainable and inclusive development”, in the spirit of *Agenda 2063*;
- b) *Strengthen advocacy for human development.* The focus is on emphasizing that in order to have meaning, development should be centred on human beings, who should be the Alpha and the Omega. It is also important to propagate the idea that peace, which is another name for development, has a cultural dimension, in that for it to be sustainable, it should stem from the clear consciousness that diversity is enriching;
- c) *Give impetus to or strengthen operational activities.* The AU has implemented a number of initiatives aimed at giving a central role to African culture, arts and heritage. However, the initiatives have not always achieved their full potential, and it is essential to explore how the efforts of the African Union Commission (AUC) can be supported, with a view to revitalizing such initiatives. Outside the AU, initiatives are carried out or planned that could impact on the cultural issues on which Africa and its Diasporas are active, some of which deserve the Leader’s support.

2. It was against this backdrop that I drafted the present Report, which has a twofold objective:

- Brief the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union on progress made since February 2019 under my leadership in the promotion of Arts, Culture and Heritage, pursuant to the mandate received from the serving Chairperson at the time, His Excellency Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda;
- Outline the activities I intend to carry out in 2020.

3. This Report is structured around the two timeframes.

Part 1: Activities carried out between April and October 2019

1. Structure of the Office of the Leader

4. Upon my appointment as Leader on Arts, Culture and Heritage, I deemed it necessary to establish structures that could assist me intellectually and politically. Therefore, in February 2019, I set up three bodies:

1.1. – Panel of Peers

5. I invited twelve (12) Heads of State and Government to join me in forming a Panel of Peers, whose mandate is to formulate strategic orientations and ensure that the orientations are taken into consideration in the activities of the African Union. Members of the Panel are also expected, at regional level, to play the role of leadership, advocacy and facilitation that I carry out at continental level. The List of Members of the Panel is attached as an annex. In order to make its establishment official, the Panel will meet in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 9 February 2020, in the sidelines of our current session.

1.2. - Advisory Committee

6. Comprising seventeen (17) well-known African personalities, recognized and respected by their peers in the area of arts, culture and heritage, the mission of the Advisory Committee is essentially to support my activities, through intellectual contributions towards achieving the three objectives I have assigned myself. In establishing the Committee, I ensured that there was sectoral, geographical, generational, language and gender balance, and that it reflected Africa's diversity. Furthermore, in order to guarantee the independence of the Committee, its members are selected and serve on an *intuitu personae* basis.

7. The Committee held its First Meeting in Bamako, Mali, on 14 and 15 October 2019. The Meeting was attended by fifteen (15) of the seventeen (17) members invited, as well as the AU Commission, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF). The Report of the Meeting is attached as an annex to the present Report.

1.3. - Support Unit

8. I appointed a Special Adviser to coordinate the work of the Support Unit, which, in collaboration with the AUC, will be the linchpin for implementation of activities selected within the framework of the mandate. The Support Unit will also serve as the Secretariat of the two above-mentioned bodies.

2. Conceptualisation of the Leader's Mission

9. The Advisory Committee took stock of the situation on the African continent in the areas of arts, culture and heritage, the main characteristics of which are as follows:

- a) Marginalisation of culture in relation to the economy in the order of priorities, due to the fact that there is confusion between the goals and purposes of development;

- b) Low budget allocations to the culture sector, and a chronic financial shortfall. Despite the low threshold, no African country has earmarked 1% of its national budget for culture;
- c) Lack of cultural infrastructure and apprenticeships in cultural trades, as well as relevant skills;
- d) Glaring shortcomings in the governance of the sector, which results in instability in the institutional management of the sector;
- e) Multifaceted and multidimensional dependence on the outside world;
- f) Conceptual approaches largely dominated by Eurocentric visions.

10. These characteristics could be considered as *major trends*.

11. However, over the past two decades, it was observed that like for literature, in the area of living and visual arts, African cultural productions are excelling due to their quality and visibility, resulting in increased interest in the African cultural scene. It was also noted that a number of initiatives have emerged on the Continent, in the form of alternative discourses and efforts to invent new paradigms with regard to the production of meaning of new practices, original expressions and organisation methods. These are *seeds of change*, weak signals that could influence the major trends mentioned above.

12. The general feeling that emerged from the Meeting of the Advisory Committee is that from the perspective of cultural issues, the Continent is in a state of transition; caught between, on the one hand, major trends whose persistence is worrisome, and on the other hand, seeds of change that offer every hope. The prevailing idea among all members of the Advisory Committee is that the Continent is at an in-between stage, a time span where everything is possible; from the brightest to the darkest possibilities.

13. Convinced that the development of the socio-cultural sphere at continental level will depend on the capacity of actors to be conceptually assertive, develop mobilising advocacy, and build strategic partnerships that are primarily inter-African in action, members of the Advisory Committee adopted recommendations.

14. One of the recommendations is on the conceptualisation of the cultural issue. It involves developing a new vision of culture that takes it out of the marginal and peripheral space it occupies, to consider it as a place for generating the goals and purposes of societal adventures, education, edification of individual and collective subjectivities, and therefore humanization. From this standpoint, it is a key sector, which due to its cross-cutting nature, affects all other areas of society.

15. As a result of the creative industries it establishes, culture is also a driver of economic development. A telling example is that of Nigeria's movie industry, which could be a source of inspiration.

16. Under a broader definition of culture, it should also be regarded as a cross-cutting index that includes, in addition to the humanities and the arts, the link to science

and technology. It is essential to have a policy aimed at better integration of culture in education, from primary school to higher/university education, including science and technology.

3. Advocacy

17. Advocacy is vital in order to justify and legitimize the necessary breaks to embody the idea that Africa should determine its own agendas, speak based on its own categories, and refer to its own historicity, rather than to a future that will only be the past of others. Most of my interventions as Leader and those of my fellow Leaders will most likely focus on this level of advocacy. It is therefore important to develop a discourse on culture, arts and heritage, as a witness to history as well as an indicator of horizons for the African continent, since the arts, culture and heritage refer to forms of organisation of a society, its beliefs, methods of production, creative activities, property and languages.

18. Also worth highlighting is the strategic importance of the issue of preservation or development of African languages as vehicles of communication, as well as knowledge and culture.

19. Lastly, the performing arts deserve special attention because, in all probability, they are one of the most fruitful areas of intangible African cultural heritage.

20. Advocacy was carried out on the following occasions:

- AU Extraordinary Summit of July 2019, held in Niamey, Niger, for the launching of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA);
- Luanda Biennale on a Culture for Peace in September 2019;
- United Nations General Assembly in September 2019;
- Russia-Africa Summit, on the margins of which I met with four Heads of State, prospective members of the Panel of Peers;
- UNESCO General Conference, which I attended on 14 November 2019.

4. Support for Operational Activities

21. The proposed operational activities fall under five (5) categories:

- Financing of the cultural economy;
- Development of cultural infrastructure;
- Training of cultural actors;
- Arts, culture and heritage information system;
- Promotion of cultural activities.

22. A few of the recommended activities have already been included in my interventions, in the form of:

- a) Missions to some States in order to obtain the qualified majority for the entry into force of the Charter. After contacting several Heads of State and Government to sensitize them on the issue, I sent envoys to ensure the necessary follow-up;

- b) Letters to African Heads of State and Government to request their political and financial support for the AWHF.

Part 2: Planned Activities

23. In collaboration with the African Union Commission, in consultation with members of the Panel of Peers, and by mobilising the expertise of members of the Advisory Committee, I plan to undertake the following actions:

- a) Advocacy for the African Union, our common organisation, to declare 2021 Year of Culture, Arts and Heritage. A draft decision on the subject will be submitted for your consideration, and I hope I can count on all your support for its adoption;
- b) Elaboration/completion of strategic plans for the promotion of the arts, culture and heritage (one continental and five regional);
- c) Elaboration of plans with strategic partners: UNESCO, International Organisation of the Francophonie (OIF), etc.;
- d) Dispatching missions to Heads of State and Government in order to obtain the fifteen (15) ratifications required for the entry into force of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance, which was adopted in January 2006;
- e) Celebration of the entry into force of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance. Considering that the Charter was designed to serve as a reference document on cultural policies in Africa, its entry into force should be marked with some solemnity. The ceremony to mark its entry into force could be held in Bamako, Addis Ababa, or one of the capital cities of my fellow Leaders in 2020. It could be organised together with a meeting of Ministers in charge of the relevant sectors, in order to fast-track the operationalisation of the Charter;
- f) Support for resource mobilisation for the African World Heritage Fund. Strengthening the Fund would make it possible to step up the inscription of African tangible properties on the World Heritage List, in response to the need to further enhance our wealth as well as mark our presence in the world;
- g) Make Africa's voice heard on the restitution of African cultural heritage present in the West. This would entail making it a continental issue rather than a matter concerning only a few countries;
- h) Launching of the Leader's website. The website will give visibility to the unprecedented pan-African cultural mandate, and provide the general public, cultural experts and actors with resources on "the situation" and future of culture, arts and heritage in Africa and its Diasporas, as well as on achievements made. It will also facilitate the collection and emergence of ideas generated by individuals;

- i) Organisation of missions/activities of strategic interest and dispatch of envoys where necessary;
- j) Have a decision adopted by the competent AU organs to encourage and commit States to allocating at least 1% of national budgets to culture.

Conclusion

24. This first Report therefore makes it possible to take stock of actions accomplished, while outlining the way forward in the development and promotion of culture, arts and heritage in the African continent and its Diasporas. Needless to say, the task is as great as the responsibilities entrusted to me and all those who agreed to assist me in my mission. The challenges of Africa's strong, inclusive and protean cultural development – including the rapidly changing digital territories - deserve the commitment of each and every one, and should be backed by a common political will. For my part, I pledge to submit my next progress report in January/February 2021, at our 34th Ordinary Session.

ANNEXES: (3)

1. *List of members of the Panel of Peers;*
2. *Report of the First Meeting of the Advisory Committee;*
3. *Draft Decision.*

**LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE PANEL OF PEERS ON THE ARTS,
CULTURE AND HERITAGE**

President of Cabo Verde
H.E. Mr Jorge Carlos Fonseca

President of Ghana
H.E. Mr Nana Akufo-Addo

President of Nigeria
H.E. Mr Muhammadu Buhari

President of Equatorial Guinea
H.E. Mr Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo

President of Congo
H.E. Mr Denis Sassou Nguesso

President of the Democratic Republic of Congo
H.E. Mr Felix Tshisekedi

King of Morocco
His Majesty Mohammed VI

President of Egypt
H.E. Mr Abdel Fattah el-Sisi

President of Kenya
H.E. Mr Uhuru Kenyatta

President of Ethiopia
H.E. Madam Sahle-Work Zewde

President of South Africa
H.E. Mr Cyril Ramaphosa

President of Namibia
H.E. Mr Hage Geingob

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GENERAL REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

GENERAL REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. If Africa aspires to play a greater role in a globalized world, on the basis of its history, its cultural resources and the richness and diversity of its identities, and if it aspires to redefine its presence in the world, Africa must consider the role of its cultures in the achievement of its economic and social well-being, and in the development of its societies. In particular, the complex issue of the shaping and development of African identities in a multicultural world should be addressed.

2. We cannot think about the role of cultures without a theory of culture. Current theories on culture and the reality of cultural practices have so far been dominated by two controversial approaches. The first is a fixist approach focusing on cultural features that would characterize communities and hardly evolve, cultural features that would be unchanging, as it were. The second is an approach that views culture as an expression of universal human experience; an overly broad concept that overlooks the fact that human communities are historically shaped. The two approaches are in fact two ways of getting nowhere. Firstly, by locking cultures into an essentialism that drains them of their dynamism; and secondly, by dissipating them into an abstract universalism which, for the time being, is not rich in all its specificities. It is therefore necessary to go beyond these approaches in order to make productive splits. From this point of view, the approach of the Cameroonian philosopher, Fabien Eboussi Boulaga¹, who sees culture as the place where the individual perceives his or herself as the genesis, a self-production from a persona that no longer exists, towards a future persona, appears to be more in keeping with the reality of African cultural practices.

3. In this regard, there is a growing concern to anchor cultural policies on long-term visions and innovative options in relation to previous policies². Furthermore, the circle of actors involved in cultural action is widening. In both fields, the ongoing transitions, which sometimes result in genuine disconnects, lead to the questioning of separatism, binary logics, dichotomies and a rejection of the hierarchy of knowledge and cultures, as well as the rejection of their folklorization.

4. If they are to be sustainable, courage is required to make the changes in question.

- First of all, the courage to innovate, by fully embracing recent developments in communication and information technologies, which are bound to have an impact on the production of new cultural media and on the creation of new spaces for the dissemination of culture;
- Then the courage to reconcile innovative approaches with a new and revitalizing use of cultural heritage;

¹*Christianisme sans fétiche, Éditions Présence Africaine, 1981*

²*Découvertes du Burkina, Gouverner pour et par la culture, page 45.*

- Lastly, the courage, to "hurry", in the words of Édouard Glissant, towards the future; an idea similar to the one expressed by Aimé Césaire when he wrote "*Ayons l'audace de regarder l'avenir*" [Let us have the audacity to look to the future]³.

5. The question is, where does one find the courage? Among political actors and movements? Among cultural actors and activists? Among cultural policy makers? Among innovative economic operators? Within alliances between these various social categories? The scope of possibilities is so vast and open that a "concrete analysis of concrete situations" is necessary to answer the above question. In other words, a strategic diagnosis of the cultural sector is essential.

6. As with any strategic diagnosis worthy of the name, the one dealing with culture should, at the very least:

- Analyze development factors in the cultural sectors, the actors who have an influence on the factors, the strategies of the actors, and the uncertainties linked to the strategies;
- Highlight the invariables, major trends and agents of change in the system under consideration.

7. In a nutshell, the aim is to examine the dynamics that drive the development of cultural systems. Such is the content of the systemic approach that we recommend⁴.

8. The main premise of this approach is that no single variable is capable, on its own, of developing the system, and that rather, it is the interaction of several variables that determines the direction and speed of development of the system in question. A review of the revolutions that have shaken and shaped our world allows us to extend this premise with the hypothesis that the variables that make up the system will fall into several categories, namely economic, social, political, cultural, environmental and/or technological. Moreover, cultural and social well-being and "sustainable and inclusive development", to adopt an expression from the African Union's **Agenda 2063**, are interlinked and can be mutually reinforcing. In relation to cultural issues, Agenda 2063, subtitled "The Africa We Want", includes two ideas that the Advisory Committee endorses:

- i. Development is meaningful only if it is people-centred. The practical adoption of such a stance continues to be a major challenge in a world driven by an unbridled quest for economic growth, considered as the ultimate goal of the societal adventure, despite the major social and environmental ravages of such a vision of progress.

³ In "*Moi, laminaire*"

⁴ See *Futurs africains: Un guide pour les réflexions prospectives en Afrique*

- ii. The African Union's ambition to speed up the building of an Africa at peace with itself and with other parts of the world, stems from a vision that is not only political but also philosophical, since peace-building has a cultural dimension given that, in order to be lasting, peace should be based on the clear awareness that diversity is enriching.

9. It is against this backdrop that the Advisory Committee established by His Excellency the President of Mali, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, met on 14 and 15 October 2019, in Bamako, to support him in his mission as the African Union Leader on Arts, Culture and Heritage. Composed of 17 personalities from Africa and the Diaspora sitting *intuitu personae*, the Committee strived to meet the expectations of President I.B. Keita, namely, to provide topics for reflection, and propose action that could be integrated into a roadmap that the President/Leader would develop, in consultation with his peers and the appropriate organs of the African Union, to ensure the enhanced cultural development of the African continent.

10. The following is a summary of the main results of the deliberations of the Advisory Committee. These results are organized around two pillars:

- A brief overview of the situation on the African continent in the areas of arts, heritage and culture;
- A series of recommendations aimed at fine-tuning the conceptualization of the Continent's cultural issues, intensifying advocacy in this area and supporting or initiating operational activities focusing on African priorities.

I. CURRENT SITUATION

11. The situation as it stands following the deliberations of the Advisory Committee at its plenary session on 14 October, highlighted the following salient points:

- i. Marginalization of culture in relation to the economy, in the order of priorities due to the confusion between goals and purposes of development;
- ii. Low budget allocations to the culture sector and a chronic funding deficit: Despite the low threshold set by the African Union, no African country has earmarked 1% of its national budget for culture,;
- iii. Lack of cultural infrastructure and apprenticeships for cultural professions, as well as a lack of relevant skills;
- iv. Glaring weaknesses in the governance of the sector, resulting in instability in the institutional management of the sector;
- v. A multifaceted and multidimensional dependence on the outside world;
- vi. Conceptual approaches largely dominated by Eurocentric visions.

12. These characteristics can be seen as *major trends*. However, over the past two decades, it was observed that like for literature, in the area of living and visual arts, African cultural productions are excelling due to their quality and visibility, resulting in increased interest in the African cultural scene. It was also noted that a number of initiatives have

emerged on the Continent, in the form of alternative discourses and efforts to invent new paradigms for the production of meaning, (Reflection Workshops and similar initiatives) of new practices, original expressions and organisation methods (such as *Les Récréâtrales* in Burkina Faso). These are *seeds of change*, weak signals that could influence the major trends mentioned above.

13. The general feeling that emerged from the discussions on the current situation is that the Continent, from the perspective of cultural issues, is in a state of transition; caught between, on the one hand, major trends whose persistence is worrying, and on the other hand, the seeds of change that offer every hope. There is a widespread belief among all the members of the Advisory Committee that the Continent is in an in-between stage, a time span where everything is possible; from the most luminous to the darkest possibilities.

14. While the Advisory Committee cannot give a definitive opinion on the future of the system, which is in a process of development, the Committee is convinced that the development of the socio-cultural sphere at continental level will depend on the capacity of the actors to be conceptually assertive, develop mobilising advocacy, and to build strategic partnerships that are primarily inter-African in action. These are important, indeed major challenges. However, subject to confirmation of this rapid state of affairs through a more in-depth strategic diagnosis that would include the analytical steps mentioned above, addressing the challenges is within the Continent's reach. On the basis of this conviction and in the light of this state of affairs, the Members of the Advisory Committee adopted the following recommendations.

15. The recommendations are addressed to the AU Leader and his Peers, as well as to the appropriate AU organs, and constitute avenues that could specifically contribute to addressing the conceptual, communication or operational challenges revealed by the stocktaking exercise.

II. CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE CULTURAL PROBLEM

16. The focus is on developing a new vision of culture that takes it out of the marginal and peripheral space it occupies, and recognizes it as a place for generating the goals and purposes of social events, education, building of individual and collective subjectivities, and therefore for humanization. From this point of view, it is an essential sector, which due to its cross-cutting nature, affects all other spheres of society.

17. As a result of the creative industries it engenders, culture is also, a vector for economic development. The example of Nigeria's film industry is eloquent and could be a source of inspiration.

18. Under a broader definition of culture, it should also be regarded as a cross-cutting index that includes, in addition to the humanities and the arts, the link to science and technology. It is essential to have a policy aimed at better integration of culture in education, from primary school to higher/university education, including science and technology.

III. ADVOCACY FOR NEW PARADIGMS

19. Advocacy is essential to establish a basis and legitimize the indispensable discontinuities if we want to give substance to the idea that we should learn to determine our own agendas, speak based on our own categories, our grammar, and refer to our own history as well as to our own future rather than to a future that is merely the past of others. We assume that most interventions by the Leader and Co-Leaders will most likely focus on this level of advocacy. It is therefore important to develop a discourse on culture, the arts and heritage as a witness to history as well as an indicator of horizons for the African continent, since this sector refers to the forms of organization of a society, its beliefs, its production methods, its creative activities, its assets, its languages. Regarding the horizon indicator function, the strategic importance of the issue of preservation, and even the development of African languages as vehicles of communication and also of knowledge and culture, cannot be overemphasized. Neither should we overlook the fact that the performing arts will likely be one of the most fruitful areas of African intangible cultural heritage, and as such, they deserve special attention.

Advocacy Proposals

- Intensify action for the inscription of African tangible property on the List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (to simultaneously meet the need to further enhance our wealth and to mark our presence in the world);
- On the restitution of African cultural heritage currently in the West: bringing the voice of Africa to the fore, making it a continental issue and not a matter for a few countries, in order to deal with the matter appropriately;
- Advocate for the AU to declare a Year of Culture, Arts and Heritage, beginning in 2021;
- Make the African Charter for Cultural Renaissance a reference document.

IV. OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

20. The proposed operational activities fall under several categories: financing the cultural economy and key infrastructure in this domain, training of cultural actors, deployment of an information system on the arts, culture and heritage, as well as promotion and enhancement of cultural activities.

(1) Financing the Cultural Economy and Key Infrastructure in this Domain

- Rethink the cultural economy from the Continent's perspective (its material, symbolic, financial resources);
- Identify key cultural infrastructure and cultural sectors for priority investments;
- Establish an investment fund for cultural infrastructure financed by AU Member States, whose capital would be open to the African private sector. The Fund could

be managed by the African Development Bank (AfDB). African countries and private sector operators could submit cultural projects to the Fund;

- Make a commitment to ensuring sustainable financing of cultural policies by allocating 1% of State budgets for that purpose. This will facilitate training and provision of support to cultural actors, as well as help in identifying and developing infrastructure, investing in education and artistic training, and in developing a promotion strategy;
- Adopt tax policies that encourage businesses and individuals to sponsor and finance the arts and culture;
- Build cultural infrastructure in terms of quantity and quality. The objective would be to ensure a better network of countries with cultural infrastructure (libraries, concert halls, theatres, cinemas, etc.) to reduce disparities in this area;
- Establish a framework for emulation and incentives for building cultural infrastructure, through the institution of annual cultural capital cities, according to artistic discipline (Capital of books, dance, theatre, cinema, photography, etc.);
- Establish an African museum of contemporary art and/or support existing ones. Example: Zeitz MOCAA in Cape Town, which is the largest African contemporary art museum ;
- Set up African Cultural Centres in the world (also locally, as well to meet the need to further enhance our wealth and mark our presence in the world);
- Support the establishment of a continental publishing house with a printing press and substantial resources, backed by continental distribution and translation networks for published books;
- Integrate the digital dimension into the infrastructure development strategy to facilitate the production of new cultural media, dissemination of culture, and strengthen Africa's presence in the "online" world.

(2) Training of Youth and Cultural Actors

- Introduce heritage education in school curricula to strengthen the capacities and general knowledge of the youth and provide them with a common base, as a source of unity and pride;
- Provide training in the arts, crafts and art-based practices by establishing training institutes in all artistic disciplines;
- Promote research through cooperation between research institutions in different countries and/or sub-regions;
- Establish a system of collaboration between research structures and institutes or technology firms, as part of operations to preserve and enhance the value of heritage (archaeological excavations, rehabilitation of sites and buildings, etc.);
- Set up an information system on cultural policies at continental level.

(3) Deployment of an Arts, Culture and Heritage Information System

- Set up a continent-wide information system on cultural policies;
- Develop a governance index for cultural policies that facilitates their evaluation. The idea of an indicator for cultural policies and key productions (such as existing festivals) stems from the same concern;

- Produce a directory of major artistic platforms on the Continent (MASA, FESPACO), evaluate and label the platforms;
- Establish an “African Union” label for festivals.

(4) Promotion and Enhancement of Cultural Activities

- Establish a “culture and creation” travel visa for African artists, in order for them to move without difficulty within the Continent;
- Establish an African Union award for literature, music and cinema, to enhance visibility and promote the creativity of artists from the Continent;
- Produce a series (TV/web) on modern African history;
- Organize the 4th Pan-African Festival of Arts and Culture (previously scheduled to be held in Kinshasa);
- Translate and disseminate our basic texts/Transcribe and promote traditional stories and information.

21. For these activities, the Advisory Committee recommended making use, as much as possible, of the achievements of institutions and other instruments established or supported by the OAU/AU, namely:

- the Centre for Linguistic and Historical Studies through Oral Tradition (*CELHTO*);
- the Centre for Research and Documentation on Oral Traditions and Development of African Languages (*CERDOTOLA*);
- the International Centre for Bantu Civilizations (*CICIBA*);
- African Academy of Languages (*ACALAM*);
- the African World Heritage Fund (*AWHF*);
- School of African Heritage (*EPA*).

CONCLUSION

22. A provisional conclusion can be drawn from this initial assessment of the situation of the African continent in the area of the arts, heritage and culture, an inventory which should be supplemented by a more detailed strategic analysis. This can be organised around three, non-exhaustive lists, of important structuring elements:

- The African Union’s decision to institute the unprecedented role of AU Leader on Arts, Culture and Heritage, together with the decision of the Leader, His Excellency the President of Mali Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, to establish a Pan-African Advisory Committee to assist him in this mission, demonstrates a high level of interest in the issue of Africa’s cultural development;
- However, the Advisory Committee will perform at its full potential only if its recommendations are supported by a stated political will to act over a long period, thereby transcending the limits of governance mandates or modes of institutional management of cultural issues at national or regional level. This is in line with the Committee’s call for “the courage to hurry towards the future”, combined with the

desire to ensure genuine sustainability in implementing the programmes to be selected;

- Given the vast, multidimensional and multifaceted nature of the cultural sector, holistic approaches will have to be developed to ensure that none of its constituent dimensions are overlooked or underestimated. This is all the more imperative since, in essence, culture is a “developing” area, especially in a global context marked by rapid changes in demographic, social, political, environmental and technological structures. The evaluation of the actions of the Leader and his Peers therefore deserves sustained attention, and should be carried out with the objective of promoting the cultural development of Africa in its environment and in the world.

**DRAFT DECISION ON THE REPORT ON THE ARTS,
CULTURE AND HERITAGE**

The Assembly,

1. **TAKES NOTE WITH SATISFACTION** of the Report of **H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita**, President of the Republic of Mali, African Union Leader for the promotion of Arts, Culture and Heritage on the Continent, and **COMMENDS** him for his commitment and personal contribution, as well as the significant results achieved since his nomination by his peers in February 2019;
2. **WELCOMES AND APPRECIATES** the unprecedented initiative of the Leader to establish a Panel of Peers on Arts, Culture and Heritage, in charge of formulating strategic orientations, ensuring that the orientations are taken into consideration in the activities of the African Union, and at regional level, playing the role of leadership, advocacy and facilitation;
3. **STRESSES** the importance of Culture, Arts and Heritage in the achievement of the objectives and the Flagship Projects of African Union Agenda 2063;
4. **WELCOMES** the ratification by fourteen (14) Member States of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance, adopted in January 2006, and **URGES** Member States that have not yet done so, to sign and/or ratify the Charter with a view to its entry into force as soon as possible;
5. **TAKES NOTE** of the inadequacy of the budget allocations of Member States to the Culture, Arts and Heritage sectors, and therefore **CALLS ON** Member States to allocate at least 1% of their national budget to the sectors by 2030;
6. **URGES** the Commission to take the necessary steps to strengthen AU structures responsible for Culture, Arts and Heritage issues, within the framework of the ongoing AU Institutional Reform process, and report thereon to the Executive Council in June/July 2021;
7. **ENDORSES** the proposal of **H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita**, President of the Republic of Mali, to declare 2021 AU Year for the Arts, Culture and Heritage, and **REQUESTS** the Commission, in collaboration with the Leader, to propose the related theme, for consideration and adoption by the Executive Council at its June/July 2020 Session;
8. **REQUESTS** the Leader nominated by his peers to promote the Arts, Culture and Heritage, to submit a mid-term report at the 34th Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government, scheduled for January/February 2021.

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Report of HIS Excellency Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President of the Republic of Mali, Leader of the African Union on Arts, Culture and Heritage

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