

**The 3rd Ordinary Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Culture
(Abuja, Nigeria, 25 - 29 October 2010)**

**Follow-up to and implementation of the recommendations of
the Round Table of the Roundtable of experts from cultural
institutions in Africa (17 18 October 2008)**

**Report by the Observatory of Cultural Policies in Africa
(OCPA, Maputo)**

Introduction

This report is presented by OCPA at the request of the AU Commission with a view to inform the Third Ordinary Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Culture (Abuja, Nigeria, 25 - 29 October 2010) on the progress made in following-up the recommendations (See Annex 1) of the Roundtable of experts from cultural institutions in Africa (17 18 October 2008) on “Strengthening Partnership between African Cultural Institutions and the African Union”, organized in the framework of the Second Ordinary Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Culture (Algiers, 19 - 23 October 2008).

We remind that the main objective of this roundtable, prepared with the intellectual input of OCPA, was to bring the different cultural institutions in Africa together to exchange views and experiences, to share best practices, to identify challenges and constraints in promoting African culture and to develop a strategy for effective co-operation between and among cultural institutions on the one hand and between these institutions and the AU on the other.

In this respect it should be recalled that the Conference of Ministers of Culture, by taking note of the conclusions of the Algiers Round table, entrusted OCPA to coordinate the implementation of its recommendations. (NB. As there was no specific financial provision made available for performing this task, the activities reported in this document were carried out by using the financial and intellectual resources of OCPA and its partners.)

Follow-up action (2008 – 2010)

I. General Level: Preparation of Draft Strategy and Plan of Action¹

On the basis of this mandate (see recommendations N° 8 and 10), acting as a focal point and a facilitator in networking African Cultural Institutions, in March 2009 OCPA proposed a draft strategy for consideration by the AU Commission and the partner regional cultural organizations with a view to facilitate the formulation of a regional strategy for the efficient follow-up of the conclusions of the Algiers Round Table.

¹ This document can be obtained from OCPA Secretariat secretariat@ocpanet.org

Taking into account the complexity of the problems met and the diversity of the sectors and stakeholders concerned, the draft strategy stresses that the implementation of these recommendations needs a co-ordinated action under the leadership of the AU Commission with the active participation of all the institutions interested.

To this effect, by proposing a distribution of the tasks and a timetable to be envisaged, the document aims to present a structured set of actions, under way or foreseen, integrated in the framework of a common plan of action, likely to contribute to the efficient implementation of the recommendations of the Round Table.

The document stresses also that, when finalized and approved, this Strategy could serve as a guide for the efforts aimed at dynamizing the co-operation between the African regional cultural institutions and the AU Commission according to the following principles:

- The realization of the recommendations will be monitored by the AU Commission seconded by OCPA, acting as an operational relay;
- The distribution of the tasks will be decided upon in function of the competences and implementation capacities of the partners;
- The Strategy will seek to integrate the existing and planned initiatives, and will aim at promoting partnerships based on mutual advantage and complementarity;
- The Strategy will seek to mobilize all partners interested in the realization of the objectives and priorities set by the conclusions of the Round Table.

The Strategy document proposes to inform periodically the competent AU instances about the implementation of the recommendations of the Round Table, inviting them to support the mobilization of appropriate financial resources for their realization. In this respect, it is proposed that a regional project „Cultural Development and Co-operation in Africa” be elaborated and presented for funding, by the Commission with the approval of the Assembly, to potential regional and international partners.

The Draft Strategy and Plan of Action was examined and endorsed by the Summit of Cultural Institutions of Africa and the Diaspora (SICADIA, Yaoundé, 8 – 9 April 2009) that took place with the participation of representatives of a great number of from cultural institutions (including the chief executives of CERDOTOLA, CBAAC and OCPA), as well as from the African Union Commission, the CEEAC and UNESCO.

This meeting also proposed the establishment of a monitoring mechanism in the OCPA Secretariat for the further development of the co-operation of the African regional cultural institutions under the aegis of SICADIA.

II. Other actions of OCPA and its Partners contributing to the Follow-up of the Round Table

Among others the Roundtable entrusted OCPA with a mission to initiate the establishment of a regional portal in order to connect various cultural institutions in the continent, to facilitate the recognition of regional and /or sectorial focal points and proceed with the definition of criteria for centers of excellence in culture. What has been done so far?

1. Regional Cultural Portal

As to the regional cultural internet portal, two international and one regional encounters, and various demonstrations and technical consultations have been organized on this subject, namely as follows

- 1.1. At AFRICULTURES's initiative a first meeting was convened in Brussels in April 2009 at the European Union Colloquium on Culture and Development. The idea of a common portal was explained and a consensus reached. It was agreed to organize a meeting of institutions and initiatives that have already a cultural website with a view to design the mechanisms of connecting data in a wider common site before designing the portal guideline.
- 1.2. At ARTERIAL's initiative, on the occasion of the celebration of the Africa Day in May 2009 in Johannesburg, a demonstration was organized about the Arterial portal project where OCPA contributed to the design of the project with comments on the portal needs, constraints and precautions.
- 1.3. In June 2009 in Maputo in the framework of the Campus on Euro-African Cultural Cooperation, a special meeting was organized with the participation of all cultural institutions represented. A recommendation was given to all to transfer technical information needed to the OCPA Webmaster.
- 1.4. In November 2009 in Zagreb, Croatia, a technical meeting was held with the OCPA Webmaster on a concept of this portal and the conditions of its realization. According to a provisional budget estimated its implementation would require a provision in the amount of \$40. 000. The AUC leadership was informed of this requirement.

2. Network Development and Capacity Building

Various training seminars – contributing both to network development and capacity building, have been organized (or are planned) by OCPA and its partners, namely with the financial support of the AECID (Madrid) and TrustAfrica (Dakar), as follows.

- 2.1 On local cultural development for Southern African countries (Maputo, June 2009) in connection with the Euro-African Campus of Cultural Co-operation;
- 2.2 On cultural industries for Central African countries (September 2009), in collaboration with CERDOTOLA for the identification of possible joint projects;
- 2.3 On creative industries and local cultural development for Francophone West African countries (Dakar, December 2009) in close cooperation of WAMP (West African Museums Programme) and UNESCO National Commission in Senegal. Focal points were identified and recognized and joint regional projects expected were going to be completed with the involvement of the EPA in Porto Novo, Benin, thanks to UEMOA funding;
- 2.4 OCPA also participated in the training and planning meetings (Porto Novo, April and July 2010) of the RECAO project (Strengthening the Network of Cultural Institutions in West Africa) realized by the Ecole du Patrimoine Africain (EPA, Porto Novo) with the support of the Regional Fund for the

Promotion of Cooperation and Cultural Exchanges in West Africa (ECOWAS-UEMOA);

2.5 Similar initiatives are planned in 2011 in North Africa in Morocco with the Rabat University, and the Cultural Heritage Department of the National Museum in Cairo has indicated its interest to host such a seminar in 2011 and play a coordinating role for OCPA in Egypt;

2.6 Other activities expected include: 1) a seminar at EACROTANAL in Zanzibar, Tanzania for the East African region in cooperation with ACALAN to be combined with the Sauti Busara Music Festival, 2) a seminar for English Speaking West African Countries, Experts and Institutions and 3) the SICADIA Summit in Colombia for a stronger presence of the Diaspora.

3. Backing Existing Cultural Institutions and Organizations

While pursuing the establishment of new connections, a strong presence is maintained and strengthened at the level of the regional institutions and non governmental organizations. In this regard it should be recalled that

- OCPA has a seat in the African Arts Initiative launched in the framework of ARTERIAL in Cape Town;
- OCPA was invited to take a seat in the CERDOTOLA Scientific Committee;
- OCPA is increasing its scientific and moral support to CRAC in Lome by participating directly in the training and co-organising international and regional encounters;
- Among African regional or national, cultural, professional NGOs, OCPA has signed co-operation agreements (MOUs) with EPA (Porto-Novo, Benin), WAMP (Niamey, Niger), ARPAC (Maputo, Mozambique), Mont des Arts (Kinshasa, DRC) and with CELHTO (Niamey, Niger) and is preparing to sign similar agreements with ACALAN (Bamako, Mali) and AFRICOM (Nairobi, Kenya);
- OCPA is participating in most of significant art festivals and maintains contacts with the major leaders of these cultural events.

4. Sustaining Regional Initiatives and Co-operation with regional integration organisations

4.1 OCPA is committed to the relaunching of the CICIBA (Libreville, Gabon) through providing information and expertise. More recently an informal meeting was organized in June 2010 in Kinshasa in this regard.

4.2 A commitment is taken to contribute in the resurrection of the SADCAMM, a regional professional organization of museums and monuments in Southern Africa. Same is discussed for Central Africa in relation with ICOMAC.

4.3 In cooperation with the National Direction of Culture in Uganda, acting as facilitator, OCPA is considering the possibility to prepare a regional consultation before drafting a MOU, similar to the one proposed to ECOWAS for West Africa, to be proposed to the Cultural Department of the East African Community, established in Arusha.

5. Promoting a Broader Concept for Culture

OCPA attaches a great importance to the broad approach of culture related to all aspects of sustainable human development for which it represents a framework, fundamental objective and resource. As a matter of fact this issue is becoming a more and more important subject for discussion in most of the African countries.

Indeed Ministries of Culture, in charge of designing, implementing and evaluating national cultural policies are more and more aware that beyond the strict area of arts and culture, culture is closely related with overall development issues both at national and local levels. OCPA is often invited to advise the national and local authorities in this respect, for example in relation with the efforts undertaken in this respect by the Ministry of Tourism in Congo, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and National orientation in Nigeria, the Ministry of Science and Technology in Mozambique, the Ministry of Communication and Culture in Burkina Faso, or by the regional economical organizations such as ADB, ECOWAS, SADC and CEEAC.

6. Coordination

OCPA is actively supporting the SICADIA (The Summit of Cultural Institutions of Africa and Diaspora/Sommet des Institutions culturelles africaines et de la Diaspora), which was created in Lagos and met for the second time in Yaoundé, Cameroon in April 2009. The third meeting has just been organized in September 2010 in Abuja where it was decided

- to extend the areas of research and competences with the integration of the history discipline;
- to support the organization of the FESTAC with a permanent secretariat in CBAAC;
- and a SICADIA conference in 2011 in Lagos;
- to confirm the establishment of the permanent secretariat at OCPA in Maputo and meet the cost of secretarial and liaison services;
- to secure a seat to the Diaspora component and a better gender balance in the Board and to organize a meeting foreseen in Colombia and the following Summit in Maputo or Kinshasa on request.

7. Consolidating and Formalizing OCPA's Co-operation with the AUC and UNESCO

In order to formalize the effective co-operation existing between the AUC and OCPA and to consolidate the framework of the mission entrusted to it, OCPA submitted in 2010 a new MOU to the AUC. The same process is engaged with a view to formalize the already existing fruitful co-operation relation between UNESCO and OCPA.

Conclusions

- A follow-up strategy and plan of action is proposed for the follow-up of the Algiers Round Table.
- The cultural portal is in preparation. If necessary resources are available it will be operational soon. Meanwhile the exchanges between significant cultural websites will be instrumental in designing the structure and modus operandi of the regional portal.

- The majority of the Regional Focal Points are identified in Eastern, Central, Western and Southern Africa and they are being completed in Northern Africa. When looking at the way they are operating one will determine easily the elements of their efficiency and then can list the criteria of selection.
- The centers of excellence will appear among them when assessing the evidence of their achievements.

Definitely OCPA is pleased and committed to work closely with the Regional and the Sectorial Focal Points as well as with the expected Pan African Cultural Institute and the Pan African Museum for the development of African Culture in the perspective of the African Cultural Renaissance, the main instrument for Africa to meet the challenges of the new international world.

Lupwishi Mbuyamba

OCPA Executive Director

Maputo, Mozambique, 20 October 2010

2010

Follow-up to and implementation of the recommendations of the round Table of the roundtable of experts from cultural institutions in Africa (17 18 October 2008) Report by the observatory of cultural policies in Africa (OCPA, Maputo)

African Union

African Union

<http://archives.au.int/handle/123456789/1610>

Downloaded from African Union Common Repository