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**CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF CULTURE
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ABUJA, NIGERIA

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**THEME: *SUSTAINABLE FINANCING OF THE CULTURAL
DEVELOPMENT SECTOR IN AFRICA***

**REQUEST FOR RECOGNITION AND ENDORSEMENT OF THE CENTRE
FOR BALCK AND AFRICAN ARTS AND CIVILIZATION (CBAAC)**

25- 26 October 2010

REQUEST FOR RECOGNITION AND ENDORSEMENT OF THE CENTRE FOR BLACK AND AFRICAN ARTS AND CIVILIZATION (CBAAC) AS A PAN-AFRICAN CULTURAL INSTITUTION BY AFRICAN UNION MINISTERS OF CULTURE

(MEMO BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND NATIONAL ORIENTATION, NIGERIA)

INTRODUCTION

Following the successful and epoch-making hosting of the 2nd World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC '77), the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC) was established by Decree 69 of 1979. The Centre houses all the artifacts and rare cultural items that were used during the FESTAC '77. It is in fulfillment of Nigeria's pledge to keep the materials in trust for the 59 Black and African Countries and communities which participated in the Festival that the Centre was established. The preservation and maintenance of these relics of FESTACC '77 was to reinforce and build upon the gains of the historical festival.

2. In order to achieve its goals and objectives, the centre holds lectures, seminars objectives, symposia, workshops and mounts exhibition to showcase the African cultural heritage as wells as project the overall image of Black and Africa peoples. This is to facilitate the understanding and appreciation of their very rich cultures globally.

3. The Centre which is charged with the responsibility of promoting and propagating Black and African Cultural Heritage in totality has a library, an art gallery, a studio with the collections of Cultural materials of historical significance to the Black and African people all over the World.

4. Based on its significant role in Africa and Africans in the Diaspora, a recommendation was made in the report of a Presidential Panel on the Review, Harmonization and Rationalization of Federal Parastatals, Institutions and Agencies in the year 2000 to upgrade the centre to an African Heritage Centre.

MISSION

5. The mission of the Centre is to promote public interest, understanding and appreciation of Black and African Arts and Culture with a view to emphasizing the contribution of Black and African People to world Civilization.

VISION

6. The vision is to be the foremost Agency to encourage, initiate facilitate and coordinate the retrieval and restoration of the national and cultural heritage of the Black and African peoples for the purpose of protecting, preserving and projecting them for enhanced understanding and appreciation.

FUNCTIONS

7. Decree No. 69 Section 4 of the Decree that established Centre reflects the functions as follows:

4. I. The Centre shall be a multi-disciplinary institution and shall, subject to this Decree, have responsibility for the promotion of public interest in Black African Arts and Civilization and for the presentation of such creative work of value of each participating country during the second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture 1977 (hereinafter in this Decree referred to as ("the 1977 Festival") or similar manifestations; or

- of any other country or individual where such creative work has emanated from or pertains to 1977 Festival or similar Cultural manifestations, donated to the Centre either directly or through the International Festival Committee of the 1977 Festival or hereafter donated to the centre by any person or organization.

4. II. In pursuance of the above the centre is expected to carry out the following responsibilities:

- a) to locate, identify and assemble for better preservation all recorded matter, published materials and museum artifacts relating to the 1977 Festival and to prepare an inventory of these works;
- b) to promote understanding and appreciation of Black and African arts and Cultures by involving the general public in its activities through lectures, discussion, symposia, Exhibitions, performances and demonstration of arts and crafts;
- c) to acquire from zonal secretariat of the 1977 Festival/and any other source, creative records relating to past and future world, regional or national festivals of arts and culture of relevance to Black and African arts and civilization;
- d) to produce guides, catalogues, bibliographies, abstracts and indices to facilitate the use of the materials preserved at the Centre:

- e) to make the facilities of the Centre available to members of the public on such terms as the Board may, with the approval of the Commissioner, determine;
- f) to organize exhibitions, displays and such other manifestation as are calculated to achieve the objectives of the Centre;
- g) to make appropriate arrangement for the exchange either by way of lending or gift of materials held at the Centre;
- h) to supplement the materials held at the Centre by acquiring copies of materials relating to past and future, world, regional or national festivals of arts and cultures relevance to Black and African Arts and Civilization;
- i) to safeguard the property of the Centre; and
- j) to provide such services as are usually provided by cultural resources Centre.

STRUCTURE OF THE CENTRE

8. The Centre is structured as follows:

- Directorate (Director's Office and Audit Unit);
- Documentation Services Division (Library and Archives);
- Research and Publications Divisions;
- Information Management Division;
- Enhance and Administration Division;
- Exhibition and Museum Division;
- Corporate Affairs and Strategic Management Department.

COLLABORATION/AFFILIATION

9. In order to facilitate the global spread of its activities and showcase the rich Cultural diversity of Africa within the global Community, the centre collaborates with several International organizations. Some of them are mentioned below:

- International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA);
- International council of Archives (ICA);
- West African Museum Project (WAMP);
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and cultural organization (UNESCO);
- Pan African Strategic and Policy Research Group (PANARSTRAG);
- International Institute for Bantu Civilization (CICIBA);
- Kent State University, U.S.A ETC.

10. The Centre also establishes link with continental Africa and Africans in the Diaspora through international conferences within and outside Nigeria. One of such Conferences

held in November 2006 was in Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies with the theme "Advance and Integrating research and Studies in the Interest of Africa and the African Diaspora". Participants from Sixteen (16) Black and African Countries attended this Conference and the Centre was given the mandate by eight (8) Pan-African Organizations to intensify effort to strengthen the relationship between Africans on the Continent and their kiths and kins in the Diaspora. In addition, the Centre was also appointed at a joint methodology workshop in Nairobi, Kenya in 2006 to coordinate research into African Rock Art in the central and Western parts of Africa.

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

11. Below are few accomplishments of the Centre at the International Level:

- ❖ Recently, the centre concretized collaborative relationship with the Brazilian Government through Brazil's Special Secretariat for the Promotion of Policies on Racial Equality (SEPPIR), the Presidency, Brazil with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) covering broad areas of cross-national and cross continental relationship with special emphasis on the promotion of cultural rights and racial equality, researches and exchanges among other areas of importance to Black and African Culture and history. This was as a result of two (2) successful International Colloquia hosted by the centre and held in Rio de Janeiro as well as Brasilia, Brazil in 2008 and 2009 respectively. The MoU with Brazil was jointly signed by His Excellency Edson Santos, Honourable Minister of SEPPIR on behalf of the Brazilian Government while Senator Jibril Bello Gada, Nigerian former Minister of Tourism, culture and national Orientation signed on behalf of the Federal government of Nigeria on Monday 15th March 2010 in Abuja, Nigeria;
- ❖ Organized a summit/colloquium of Agencies and organizations responsible for the Management of African Arts and culture on Africa and the Diaspora in Yaoundé, Cameroon from 7th – 10th April 2009 with the theme "African culture in the Globalized world of the 21st century. This was a follow-up to an earlier summit held in Lagos in 2007 as well as the roundtable discussion of African Cultural Institutions organized by African Union Commission during the 2nd Session of the conference of African Union Ministers of culture held in Algiers in 2008;
- ❖ The centre signed two different memoranda of understanding (MoU) with the **Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA)** and the **Regional Centre for Research and Development of African languages (CERDOTOLA)**, Cameroon in February and April 2009 respectively to foster co-operation and cross border Cultural exchanges;
- ❖ In collaboration with African Union Centre for Oral Tradition and History AU-CELTHO, Trust for Africa Rock Art (TARA), Pan African Strategic and Policy

Research Group (PANAFSTRAG), the centre hosted a **Methodology Workshop on African Rock Art** in Niamey, Niger Republic in March 2008;

- ❖ The centre collaborated with the Government of Osun State to ensure a successful take-off of the Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding and affiliate of institute for African Culture and International Understanding, a UNESCO category 2 institute;
- ❖ Mounted an exhibition in Paris on UNESCO's invitation with the theme **Glimpses of FESTAC '77** at the 37th Session of the UNESCO General Conference in Oct/Nov. 2007;
- ❖ Also, it hosted the third edition of its international conference Series in Quidah, Republic of Benin in 2007 with the theme "**Global African Spirituality, Social Capital and Self Reliance in Africa**";
- ❖ Sponsored an **International Colloquium on slavery and colonialism** in Accra, Ghana to mark the two hundred years of abolition of Slavery and the pre-eminence of Pan-Africanism from May 10th -12th 2007;

ACHIVEMENTS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

12. As the centre makes its strides at the international level, it is also making great impact at the national level:

- ❖ The centre has fifty Eight (58) publications with two (2) monographs published in 2010 covering the entire spectrum of Black and African arts, Culture, heritage, peoples and history;
- ❖ A National Workshop on "**Cultural Rejuvenation for National Integration and Sustainable Development**" was hosted by the centre in Lagos, Nigeria from 17th – 18th April, 2008. It attracted participants from different institutions and agencies in Nigeria;
- ❖ It also facilitated the **listing of Ikom Monolith site in Cross River State, Nigeria on the World Monument Fund's** list of 100 most endangered sites which qualifies the site for International funding support and allied global patronage in 2007;
- ❖ The centre also hosted the meeting of African Agencies and Organization involved in the management and promotion of African Arts and Culture in Lagos, August, 21-23, 2007;
- ❖ The Centre in collaboration with Ford Foundation mounted and exhibition with the theme "**Nigerian Indigenous Architectural Technology; Culture to the Rescue and Nigeria Hidden Wealth** in Abuja, Nigeria from 10th – 16th November, 2007;
- ❖ A public lecture titled "**Arts and Heritage as catalysts for Development in Africa**" was organized by the centre at the University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria to mark the **Black History Month on 23rd February 2010**. The lecture

was delivered by **Prof. Charles Binan Bikoi**, Executive Secretary, The Regional Centre for Research and Documentation on Oral Traditional and the Development of African Languages. (CERDOTOLA), Cameroon The centre marks the Black History Month annually;

- ❖ It co-sponsored an International conference on **"Migration and Settlement Patterns in Yoruba Land"** with the institute of Cultural Studies, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria from 11th – 14th March, 2010;
- ❖ On 3rd March 2009, the Director/Chief Executive Prof. Tunde Babawale delivered a paper on Africa and African Diaspora Relations during an annual lecture at the National Defense College, Abuja, Nigeria with the theme **"Africa and African Diaspora Relations: Challenges, opportunities and Prospects"**. The lecture was organized for course 17 with 105 participants made up of colonels and counterparts from other arms of the Nigerian Armed Forces;
- ❖ Organized a public lecture on African Indigenous Languages in Abuja, Nigeria on 7th May 2009 with the theme **"African Languages, African Development and African Unity"**. The lecture was delivered by **Prof. Kwesi Kwaa Prah**, Director, Centre for Advanced Studies of African Societies (CASAS), Cape Town, South Africa;

13. Between 2006 – 2008, the Centre also hosted Series of public lectures and other activities to mention a few as follows:

- ❖ On 27th March 2008, it hosted an annual public lecture with the theme **"Reconciling the Faith: Strategies for Enhancing Religious Harmony for National Development"** and it was delivered by Prof Jacob Kehinde Olupona of Harvard University, U.S.A in Lagos, Nigeria;
- ❖ Mounted and exhibition titled **"Culture and Wealth Creation"** to mark the 2008 World Culture Day in Abuja, Nigeria;
- ❖ Organized a lecture on May 27th May, 2008 with the theme **"The imperative of Restoration of Family values for Effective Nation Building: What is to be done"** to mark the International Children's Day celebration;
- ❖ It also organized on 27th November 2008, a National Painting Competition in honour of Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa. The purpose was to recognize the contributions of professional artists to the promotion of African history and culture over the years. It attracted twenty-two (22) entries from seasoned and upcoming Professional artists. Emmanuel Dudu emerged winner in a very keen and fair contest;
- ❖ It commemorated the 30th Anniversary of FESTAC on March 29, 2007 with series of activities:
- ❖ Marked the Black History Month from 22 – 23rd February, 2007 in Lagos with an exhibition titled **"Africa: Her Indigenous Writings and Great Achievers"** aside

with a command performance of a play titled “ **Cornerstone**” which is a euphemism for “**African Culture**” in collaboration with centre for African Theatre Arts and Film Production;

- ❖ Celebrated the International Museum Day on May 18th, 2007 in Lagos with a Public Lecture titled “**Museums and Universal Heritage**”. The lecture was delivered by Mrs. Violeta Ekpo;
- ❖ It marked the World AIDS Day on December 1st 2006 in collaboration with the National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioner (NANTAP) through the presentation of a drama titled “**Angst**” which is devoted to educating the public on existing cultural practices that can help curb the spread of HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa;
- ❖ Organized a public lecture with the theme “Can Our culture and Traditions Help Overcome Corruption on December, 2006. The paper was delivered by Maj. General Ishola Williams (Rtd).

14. In view of the above, the Ministers are invited to note:

- ✓ That the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC) was established by the Nigeria decree 69 of 1979 to house and maintain all the artifacts and rare cultural items used during FESTACC '77;
- ✓ That the centre achieves its goals and objectives through the organization of lectures, seminars, symposia, workshops as well as mounts exhibitions to showcase overall image of Black and African people in order to promote understanding and appreciation of their very rich cultures globally;
- ✓ That it has a library, an art gallery and Studio with a collections of Cultural materials of historical significance to the Black and African people globally;
- ✓ That recommendation was made based on its role in Africa and African in the Diaspora for the centre to be upgraded in a Presidential Report in 2000;

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