AFRICAN UNION

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UNION AFRICAINE

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SUPPORTING FILM PRODUCTION IN A BID TO ENHANCE ITS CONTRIBUTION TO AFRICA DEVELOPMENT

(Item Proposed by Burkina Faso)

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INTRODUCTION

1. In the aftermath of their independence, most African States accorded special importance to the cinema as a means of regaining an identity devalued by colonial domination. The public policies implemented at the time met the pressing need to devise a cinematic expression in the service of the development of national identities and social cohesion.

2. Regional and Pan-African institutions were also engaged in the establishment of mechanisms designed to strengthen Africa's capacity to produce and disseminate movies that reflected African realities and the factors that brought people together.

3. However, over the years, public commitment to the cinema gradually gave way to a withdrawal on the part of some States without alternative systems of supervision, regulation and financing of film and audio-visual activities. Meanwhile, Western film production did not cease to receive multifaceted support in industrialized countries.

4. Besides, it was observed that, contrary to the commitments, sub-regional and African institutions intervened only modestly in the financing of the film and audio-visual sector.

5. Thus, in the 90s, the expansion of national cinema in Africa suffered a serious setback. African cinema was particularly characterised by a very low production, increasingly dwindling subsidies, reduced training offers, absence or closure of cinema halls, limited presence of African productions on the markets and lack of meaningful distribution networks.

6. Faced with this catastrophic situation, movie professionals, politicians and African intellectuals, assembled at a symposium in Ouagadougou on 26 and 27 February 2013, as part of the 23rd edition of FESPACO, on the theme "**African Cinema and Public Policies in Africa** " laid a significant milestone for the cinema to be recognized as one of the levers of development of the African continent.

7. Forward-looking brainstorming was carried out in the bid to reverse the trend, help avail African States, individually and collectively, with sustainable capacity for movie production and distribution, support economic growth, and the democratic and cultural dynamics of our States.

8. At the end of deliberation, participants adopted a declaration known as the **Ouagadougou Declaration.**

9. To ensure the development of the African cinema, participants dwelt on a new approach to public policies that takes into account the digital revolution, trade globalization and the threats that they could pose to the diversity of cultural expressions at the national and continental levels.

10. They appealed to all African Heads of State and Government for:

- the establishment of a credit fund in every State as a way to step up film production;

- the application of legal instruments and tools provided for in national cultural policies;

- the activation of regional tools and instruments in regional or sub-regional groupings; and

- the gradual and sustainable systematization of co-production with all TV channels.

11. Apart from the Heads of State and Government of Africa, the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities were invited to effectively intervene in the area of culture in general and cinema in particular, in a way that ensures that international aid comes as a complementary element rather than as a substitute.

12. It was in this spirit that they requested **H.E. Blaise Compaore, President of Faso** to be their spokesperson with his peers and the African Union for the movie industry to be taken on board as a lever for development.

Conclusion

13. At a time when the African continent is celebrating Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance, movie professionals have engaged their leaders to take ownership of their own cultural industry, the advancement of which had hitherto been backed almost exclusively by international partners. By virtue of its dual cultural and economic dimension, cinema is an art, an ideological vehicle and an industry. To this end, policy makers need to take concrete measures to make African cinema one of the levers of the continent's development.

14. On the occasion of the Symposium of the 23rd edition of FESPACO, participants opened a historic chapter for continental level integration of their concerns. They strongly recommended the organization of a high-level meeting on "**Support to film production to step up its contribution to the development of Africa."**

FORMAL DECLARATION OF OUAGADOUGOU

FESPACO 2013
Commitee Business Meetings

Assembly/AU/12(XXI)
Add.3
Annex

FORMAL DECLARATION OF OUAGADOUGOU

Ouagadougou, 27 February 2013

We the Participants,

At the **Colloquium** of the **23rd** edition of the Pan-African Film & TV Festival of Ouagadougou **(FESPACO)** held from **26 to 27 February 2013** on the theme **« African Cinema & Public Policy in Africa »**, consider this **colloquium** as a watershed in the life of African Sates to reflect on a new approach to public policies taking into account developments related to the digital revolution and trade globalization.

We the Participants

Have decided to call on all the Heads of States of Africa

- Considering that public engagement for cinema in some countries of the continent has gradually given way to excessive exit of some States;

- Taking account of the low level of intervention from some countries or Regional and Pan-African institutions in financing the film and audio-visual sector, which has led to:

    - The drop in the number of cinema theatres;
    - The inadequate and discontinuous national production;
    - The inadequate specialized vocational training institutions and centres;
    - The non-compliance with copy rights;
    - The absence of tax and customs measures that are adapted to companies in the industry;
    - Recognizing the apathy of professional filmmakers' organizations.

We the participants would like to call on African States to:

- Move from political will to political decision by establishing a producer loan fund in each and every State to boost production;

- Promptly enforce the legal instruments and tools contained in existing cultural policies at country level;

- Activate already existing tools and instruments within different Regional and Sub-Regional Communities;

- Ensure the freedom of expression and imagination, which can greatly boost a quality cinematographic production;

- Systematize in a gradual and sustainable manner coproduction with all TV channels;

  Moreover, **We the Participants** would like to:

- Call on the **African Union** to take action in the area of culture in general, and cinema in particular, to ensure that international aids supplement, instead of substituting local endeavours;

- Call for support to the **Pan-African Film & Audio-visual Fund (FPCA)**;

- Professionals would like to reassert **FESPACO** as a platform for meeting and celebrating African cinematographies ; and consequently, **FESPACO** deserves to be supported by **African States** and the **African Union;**

- The professionals gathered in Ouagadougou would like to seek the personal engagement of the **Head of State of Burkina Faso** to be their spokesperson with his peers and with the Highest African bodies on these concerns.

Issued in Ouagadougou, 27 February 2013

Filmmakers and professionals of Africa
And the Diaspora present at FESPACO 2013

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