

BRUSSELS DECLARATION OF THE 4th MEETING OF ACP MINISTERS OF CULTURE

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Declaration of ACP Ministers of Culture at the conclusion of their 4th meeting held in Brussels on 9th to 10th November 2017.

I. The ACP Ministers of Culture meeting in Brussels, Belgium, on 9 and 10 November 2017

A. Reiterate the commitments made at previous meetings (Dakar 2003, Santo Domingo 2006, and Brussels 2012); while regretting that an effective follow-up mechanism has not been established;

B. Acknowledge the central role of culture as a driver of economic growth and sustainable human development;

C. Recall paragraph 14 of the Port Moresby Declaration of the 8th Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government, which called for, inter-alia, the need to place culture at the heart of development policies and strategies;

D. Recognize that cultural industries are not only sources of job creation and innovation, but also instruments for peace, social cohesion, and solidifies individual and national solidarity;

E. Reaffirm our commitment to make culture a priority sector in our States, based on the added value generated by the cultural and creative industries, as well as their social impact;

F. Recall that the ACP's multiculturalism and rich cultural heritage must be preserved and developed, because they contribute to the cohesion of communities and are the binding force for our unity, solidarity and integration processes;

G. Recognizing the role of regional organisations in the promotion of culture as tools for the acceleration of regional integration processes, social cohesion and peace, as well as the relevance of regional approaches in addressing the challenges of the cultural sector in ACP countries;

H. Determined to make culture a strategic vehicle to achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015;

I. Acknowledge the progress made since 2012, in terms of the formulation and implementation of national and regional cultural strategies, while bearing in mind that efforts still need to be made to harmonise policies and expand markets for ACP creative professionals and creative works;

J. Commend the achievements of the ACP-EU cultural cooperation programme, ACPCultures+, as well as the growing commitment of ACP group of States and the European Union to the cultural sector;

K. Recall that culture is an essential factor for the empowerment of youth and women in ACP countries;

L. Convinced of the need to adapt cultural policies, depending on the challenges, risks, and opportunities associated with the digital revolution, as well as the new cultural consumption habits;

M. Underscore the importance of cultural policy implementation in cities and local communities as drivers of social inclusion and economic development;

N. Stress the importance of integrating into the national development and sectorial policies in particular those relating to environment, climate change, and the mitigating of risk before, during and after natural disaster to build resilient societies.

II. With a view to strengthen regional, inter-regional and international cooperation and solidarity,

The Ministers commit to:

1. Ratify and implement the different UNESCO conventions on culture, as these are important tools for the development of culture in ACP States;
2. Work together to defend common interests within international fora, so that cultural goods and services, in particular, are given priority consideration in international and regional trade agreements;
3. Utilize appropriate mechanisms to ensure consistency, coordination and harmonisation of cultural cooperation programmes with local, national, and regional strategies, to ensure that the actions funded are sustainable and promote genuine cultural diplomacy;
4. Strengthen collaboration among all development actors (authorities at the local government, national and regional levels, the private sector and civil society) by giving priority to fora for exchanges and discussions;
5. Support the movement of artists and cultural professionals;
6. Share best practices among ACP states and encourage North-South, South-South and Triangular Cooperation;
7. Ensure that ACP-EU cooperation, under future support mechanisms in the renewed ACP-EU post-Cotonou Partnership, gives priority to capacity building and accompanying efforts for harmonisation and regulation, job creation for youth and women, in particular the protection of tangible and intangible heritage, the development of entrepreneurship, and the consideration of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) as vehicles for cultural diversity and economic development;
8. Simplify and ensure access to financial support mechanisms for cultural stakeholders from ACP States;
9. Facilitate the creation of funding mechanisms, common regional markets open to cultural goods and services.

III. Recognising culture as a driver of economic growth and job creation

The Ministers commit to:

10. Establish develop, and enhance capacity development in the creation of databases of credible cultural statistics in ACP Countries through the training and funding of statistical agencies, and catalogue creative practitioners and cultural products;
11. Encourage and rationalise the allocation of increased substantial public investment to national budgets to increase the viability, size and share of the creative economy;
12. Recommend the inclusion of Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs) in the industrial and commercial strategies of countries and that Ministers responsible for Finance, Budget and Planning make culture a priority of the National Development Strategies and National Indicative Programs (NIPs) and Regional Indicative Programmes (RIPs);
13. Recommend the adoption of incentives, such as tax and customs measures at the national, regional and international level, to encourage the dissemination of ACP works, in partnership with Ministers of Trade in ACP States and international trade organisations; and to call for reduction of non-tariff barriers;
14. Encourage public-private partnerships in the development of the cultural sector;
15. Develop sustainable cultural tourism, based on the wealth and diversity of the ACP tangible and intangible cultural heritage and creativity of actors;
16. Recommend the use of ICTs to share knowledge, data, and the best practices of the sector whilst raising public awareness about intellectual property;
17. Establish venture capital funds, regional endowments and foundations as well as financial products for cultural and creative entrepreneurs.

IV. Towards the effective integration of culture into development policies and strategies

The Ministers commit to:

18. Promote the integration of culture into national development strategies and sectoral policies in particular those relating to gender, employment, education, trade, tourism, environment, climate change and natural disaster risk reduction and resilience;
19. Include culture in urban and rural development policies (support for cultural infrastructure, development of creativity hubs, etc.);
20. Establish provisions governing the status of artists and cultural professionals, taking into account the economic and sectoral peculiarities of these professions;

21. Include art and culture in educational curricula and support art schools;

22. Support the role played by civil society organizations (CSOs) in particular associations of actors and artists and to harness the knowledge, skills, and resources of the Diaspora to facilitate the effective integration of culture into national development strategies;

23. Conduct impact assessments and establish follow-up mechanisms for sectoral policies and programmes, and an analysis of the low participation of the Caribbean and Pacific States in the ACP Cultures+ Programme with a view to ensuring increased funding to the two regions.

V. Towards effective protection of literary and artistic works and improved circulation of cultural goods and services

The Ministers commit to:

24. Strengthen the protection of copyright and intellectual property legislation and practices, and raise public awareness of the importance of intellectual property;

25. Underscore the need to take account of the development of digital platforms, in order to ensure the financing of cultural productions and fair remuneration for artists, and ensure the plurality of cultural expressions;

26. Support cultural festivals and fairs as key factors for peace, social cohesion and integration, and as vehicles in the production and dissemination of cultural goods;

27. Develop financing mechanisms to combat piracy and the illicit trafficking of artefacts and works of art;

28. Strengthen national regulatory and oversight mechanisms through the establishment of quotas for distribution of local cultural content;

29. Undertake to promote cultural expressions and traditional knowledge systems, especially through the protection, production and dissemination of works in local languages;

VI. Towards increased participation of women and youth in the cultural and creative industries

The Ministers commit to:

30. Integrate gender and the youth perspectives into cultural policies, plans of action, support programmes, and legislation concerning the cultural and creative industries, as well as in their follow-up and assessment mechanisms;

31. Undertake capacity-building among women and youth, especially in administrative management and entrepreneurial leadership, technical professions, and the use of digital tools;

32. Promote youth and women entrepreneurship in the CCI.

VII. Final provisions

The Ministers

33. Mandate the ACP Secretariat to send this Declaration to the ACP Council of Ministers, and recommend that the new ACP-EU Cultural programme under the 11th EDF as well as the post-Cotonou framework fully reflects the commitments made in this Declaration;

34. Direct the ACP Secretariat to establish appropriate implementation and follow-up mechanisms for this Declaration at all-ACP, national, bilateral, regional and multilateral levels, and to mobilise appropriate partnerships to this end;

35. Recommend that funding is equitably allocated to the three geographical constituents of the ACP Group in the programming of support to the ACP cultural sector under the 11th EDF;

36. Mandate the ACP Secretariat to disseminate this Declaration among ACP governments, the European Commission, international bodies and organisations, culture professionals, non-governmental organisations, and civil society, and establish an effective mechanism for following up on the commitments made; and

37. Decide that the Meeting of ACP Ministers of Culture will be held every two years, and in this regard, support the offer of the Republic of Niger to host the next meeting in 2019.

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