

Ministers commit to prioritise culture in national, regional strategies in Africa, Caribbean, Pacific

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Brussels, 10 November 2017/ ACP: Leaders and policy makers from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) reaffirmed their commitment to making culture a priority sector in their countries through concrete actions and strategies, while welcoming €40 million under the European Development Fund for a new ACP-EU support programme to be launched in 2018.

The 4th Meeting of ACP Ministers of Culture was held on 9-10 November under the theme “Making Culture and Impact Investment in Achieving the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development”, and chaired by the Minister of Tourism and Culture of the Republic of The Gambia Hon. Hamat Bah.

Ministers reaffirmed the essential role of culture as a driver of economic growth, peace and sustainable human development in ACP countries, and adopted a [declaration](#) [1] that secured united political backing for five priority areas for action. These include:

- Strengthened regional, inter-regional and international cooperation and solidarity
- Economic growth and job creation
- Integration of culture into development policies and strategies
- Literary and artistic protection and improved circulation of cultural goods and services
- Participation of women and youth in the cultural and creative industries.

A range of concrete recommendations and proposals were made under these broad areas. Other issues that emerged from the discussions and integrated in the final declaration included:

- the need to emphasize capacity building, while taking into account existing structures and initiatives in the regions;
- involve banks and financial institution to create innovative finance schemes, such as regional venture capital and social bonds to favour establishment of start-up;
- implement projects that link culture and sustainable tourism and favour South-South Cooperation;
- build policies and implement projects to protect and preserve culture and traditional knowledge which are challenged by climate change and natural disasters;
- create a favourable environment for a better representation of women and youth in cultural industries, at all levels;

- beside the support to production of cultural goods, which is essential, continue the effort to promote and market cultural goods and services, using, *inter alia*, digital technologies and legal measures;
- prioritise projects that include local cultures, highlights diversities of ethnical groups and local languages;
- continue the effort to fight against piracy and create a favourable environment for the protection of authors' rights and remuneration of artists;

Ministers noted the commendable achievements made under the ACP Cultures+ Programme, which is the 3rd Intra-ACP Support Programme for the ACP cultural sector, supported by €30 million financed by the EU over the period 2012-2017. Lessons learned include the need to continue to generate relevant studies, guides, and best practices for officials and professionals, while also building the capacity of local operators to access funds and reducing bureaucratic processes.

Finally, the Ministers called for a better monitoring evaluation on how previous decisions have been implemented and transformed into actions. The next meeting of ACP Ministers of Culture is scheduled to be held within two years, in 2019.

Read the full Brussels Declaration ^[1]

For more information, please contact:

*Ms. Josephine Latu-Sanft
Communications & Media Relations Officer
Ave. Georges Henri 451, 1200 Bruxelles
Tel +32 2 7430617
GSM +32476575673
Email latu@acp.int*

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