

**Press Release N°117/2012****Culture as a catalyst for socio-economic and political transformation in Africa**

Kinshasa, 29 October 2012 - The 4th Session of the African Union Conference of Ministers of Culture (CAMC4) kicked off today 29 October 2012 in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of Congo. From 29 to 30 October, the culture experts will focus among other things on the launch of the African Cultural Renaissance Campaign and the status of ratification of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance.

The ratification and implementation of the Charter will “boost the value and preservation of our positive traditions and culture as well as uplift our self-esteem as Africans”, Dr Olawale Maiyegun, Director of the Department of Social Affairs of the AU declared. To date, the Charter was ratified by only three of the fifty four AU Member States, namely, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal. Unlike the other AU instruments which require fifteen ratifications to enter into force, article 35 of the Charter stipulates that the said Charter shall become effective when ratified by two thirds of Member States. The review of this article will feature prominently among the deliberations of the Conference.

In 2013, the African Union will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) under the theme: Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. The experts are therefore expected to contribute to the success of this golden jubilee by bringing their expertise and ideas to bear, thereby making culture a catalyst for socio-economic and political transformation in Africa. To this end, the AU Department of Social Affairs has announced the establishment in a not too distant future of an African Cultural Space within the new AU Conference Complex.

The Experts are also expected to discuss the commitment for action on combating harmful traditional practices. This will be an occasion to transcend the gender dimension of this practice and evaluate its impact.

The Experts' Session of CAMC4 was officially opened by Mr Banza Makula Nsungu, Minister of Youth, Sports, Culture and Art of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The statement by the Director of Social Affairs of the AU is available on the AU website www.au.int

Contact

Mme Yaye Nabo Sene
Direction de l'information et de la communication
Union africaine
Tel. : +243 (0) 825 028 469
Courriel : seney@africa-union.org ou epsilon10@gmail.com