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Lights, Camera, Action! African Film Industry Gets a Boost with African Audiovisual and Cinema Commission (AACC) Launch

According to UNESCO, the film and audiovisual industries in Africa account for US\$5 billion of the GDP, employing an estimated 5 million people, and have the potential to create over 20 million jobs and generate \$20 billion in revenues annually. To harness this potential, the African Union has launched the temporary Secretariat of the African Audiovisual and Cinema Commission (AACC).



The AACC was established in Maputo, Mozambique, in 2003 by the Kenyan Government, the AU Commission, and the Pan-African Federation of Filmmakers (FEPACI) to enable Africa and its diaspora to take their rightful place in the global creative and cultural industry value chain. This initiative aims to create exponential local job-creation opportunities and to coordinate the film and audiovisual sector with AU member states. The establishment of the Secretariat culminated in its launch on **10th May 2024**.

In her opening remarks at the launch, AU Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs, and Social Development, **H.E. Amb. Cessouma Minata Samate**, stated, "The African Union has taken a significant step towards unlocking the immense potential of the continent's film and audiovisual industries with the launch of the African Audiovisual and Cinema Commission (AACC). This agency is dedicated to promoting research on African audiovisual and cinema industries, distributing African films across the continent and internationally, and accelerating the establishment of the **African Audio Visual and Cinema Fund**. Additionally, the commission provides technical support and advisory services to member states for the formulation and implementation of audiovisual and cinema policies."

Amadou Cisse, Head of the AACC, expressed deep gratitude to the Government of Kenya for hosting the Secretariat. "The AACC temporary launch in Kenya marks a significant step forward in our journey to nurture creativity and solidarity through audiovisual mediums. We are committed to championing the AACC objectives, prioritizing sector audits, and providing technical assistance to bolster the industry's growth," said Cisse. **Angela Martins, Acting Director** for Social Development, **Culture**, and Sport,

echoed Cisse's sentiments, highlighting the importance of collaboration among AU member states to [strengthen the audiovisual industry](#) across the continent.

The main role of the AACC Temporary Secretariat is to advocate for the ratification of the [AACC Statute](#). In order for the Statute to enter into force and for the Commission's organs to be fully operational it requires fifteen (15) ratifications by Member States. To date no Member State has ratified this instrument.

In his speech, the Principal Secretary of the **State Department for Youth Affairs and Creative Economy**, Mr. Ismail Madey, the CS emphasized that Kenya's selection as the host for the temporary Secretariat affirms the country's commitment to becoming a competitive hub for the continent. This choice is supported by Kenya's strong ICT infrastructure and robust training institutions capable of building capacity in audiovisual-related careers. The CS also challenged stakeholders in **Africa's film industry to set high targets** and continuously review the industry's performance to compete on the global stage. He urged them to eliminate barriers that make film investment in Africa difficult, expensive, and unattractive.

"I encourage the African Union member countries to develop strategies that can be implemented immediately to create a conducive environment for audiovisual investment," said Maalim.



"The Pan-African Federation of Filmmakers (FEPACI) calls on governments to commit to promoting the protection of indigenous knowledge and African folklore, both oral and written, at national and continental levels. We urge support for the protection of authors' rights and intellectual property within the frameworks of harmonized standards and legislation. Governments must engage in all functions that align with the promotion of African cinematic expressions and products," said FEPACI representative, Mr. Deme Dramane.

Temwa Gondwe, Senior Manager at the Intra-African Trade Bank (Afreximbank), spoke on behalf of the bank's President and Chairman, highlighting bank's commitment to sustainable financing for the African film industry.

"The bank has already taken action through a bespoke film financing facility and a film venture fund established under its Fund for Export Development in Africa. Afrximbank boasts a robust pipeline exceeding **US\$600 million for creative industries**, including film, with deals ranging from **US\$2 million to over US\$150 million**. Notably, film financing, alongside sports infrastructure, has been a major focus area for the bank," said Gondwe. He further solidifying their commitment, Afrximbank is actively developing a **\$1 billion African Film Fund**. This fund will oversee film financing, co-finance projects with major studios, and directly support African filmmakers, producers, and directors.

Key stakeholders in the African film industry who attended the event include Madu Chikwendu, Film Specialist, Sylvie NWET, Nigeria, Mrs. Magdalena Reddy, Director Durban FilmMart Institute, South Africa, Onke Dumeko - National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), South Africa and Nicholas Moyo, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture, Zimbabwe.

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