

AFRICAN UNION

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**UNION AFRICAINE
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**LAUNCH OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR AFRICAN CULTURAL RENAISSANCE FOR
THE SOUTHERN AFRICA DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) MEMBER
STATES**

WORKSHOP OPENING SESSION

30 NOVEMBER 2011

PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA

**STATEMENT OF THE
COMMISSIONER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

Honourable Paul Mashatile, Minister of Arts and Culture of the Republic of South Africa,

Honourable Rosa Maria da Cruz e Silva, Minister of Culture of the Republic of Angola,

Acting Director General, Department of Arts and Culture Mr. Ndima

Permit me to start by expressing my deep appreciation to the Government of the Republic of South Africa, especially to the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) for having positively responded to our call for collaboration to Launch the Campaign for African Cultural Renaissance for SADC Member States and for the excellent hospitality and welcome extended to us as well as the facilities provided for the successful carrying out of the Launch of the Campaign and the workshop on the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance.

I also wish to express thanks to Minister da Cruz who accepted our invitation to be here.

Allow me also to thank our distinguished participants to this launch and workshop who managed to take time off their busy schedules to be part of this important event which will popularize and promote further the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance, so that the process of its ratification followed by its implementation starts at earnest in SADC Member States.

The Campaign for African Cultural Renaissance, is a two year programme of the African Union Commission aimed at promoting the Pan Africanism spirit, cultural renewal and identity as part of the African Continent shared values. The Campaign is in line with the

implementation of the African Union Commission Strategic Plan for the period 2009 – 2012. Components of the Campaign include:

- **Promotion of** the African Union Symbols (the flag, the anthem and the logo) as they are important instruments for us to claim our cultural identity;
- **Promotion of** African cultural values including African languages so that their potential is explored and used to the maximum effect in order to reinforce a sense of identity among Africans;
- **Promotion of** the ratification of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance to ensure its entry into force. (The Charter was adopted by the AU Assembly January in 2006 and to date only 3 Member States have ratified it (Mali, Nigeria and Senegal). Hence we have invited them to share with us how their best practices in the process of ratification of Charter and its implementation);
- **Popularization, and promotion of** the effective implementation of the Charter at all levels of society through various activities that will:
 - (a) Ensure the ownership of the Charter by Member States (MS), Pan-African Cultural Institutions, cultural stakeholders, Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and the public at large.
 - (b) Ensure the preservation of our rich cultural heritage as well as positive traditional and cultural values and practices whilst also combating Harmful Traditional ones.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

. We can conceptualize African Renaissance as a global programme of African Societies and Civilizations aiming at the creation of conditions for the re-birth of Africa. Through African Renaissance African people and nations will overcome the current challenges confronting the

continent and achieve cultural, scientific and economic renewal, the African Renaissance is a philosophical and political movement to end violence, elitism, corruption and poverty that seem to plague the African continent and replace them with more just and equitable systems

As such Pan-Africanism can be viewed as a political and economic doctrine for African Renaissance. From a cultural point of view Pan-Africanism addresses the need for a critical reassessment, valorization and promotion of African Cultures and Languages, as well as of a qualitative reform of African information and education systems.

Pan-Africanism will mean:

1. A proud African people returned to their rightful place in history; respecting themselves and promoting the African Identity; .
2. A social system with equal access for women as well as men; satisfying the needs of both women and men; allowing them to grow and develop to their fullest potential;
3. A whole continent with all of its natural resources truly owned and controlled by African people for the benefit of its people, even those in the Diaspora; these natural resources used to prevent starvation and disease; infant and child mortality; these resources used to promote humanism , collectivism, and egalitarianism.
4. African governments where the people govern themselves within a "true" democracy.
5. And above all an African continent with its self esteem up-lifted, with its proper identity promoted and sharing its values.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

As mentioned to you earlier the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance was adopted by the Sixth Session of the African Union Assembly held in Khartoum, Sudan in January 2006. The Charter is a very powerful tool which will enable the AU Member States to put culture at its rightful place by providing at national level human and financial resources to cultural programmes, development of cultural policies, promotion of cultural and creative industries to boost intra-Africa and international trade with the ultimate goal of achieving our Cultural Renaissance through the Pan-Africanist Spirit.

We are aware that the process of ratification of legal instruments by the AU Member States is very lengthy because it involves various layers of society including Ministries and the Council of Ministers, CSOs and National Parliaments, but we also believe that through joint efforts made by the AUC and the Member States for the popularization of such instruments the process can take less time.

You will note that the programme of the workshop which we have before us focuses on the following thematic key areas:

- Cultural Dimensions of Shared Values
- The Charter for African Cultural Renaissance
- The Campaign for African Cultural Renaissance
- Study on the procedures for ratification of treaties and harmonization of ratification procedures in the AU Member States
- Sharing of Best Practices
- Revival of the Colloquium of Ministers of Culture in the SADC region

These thematic sessions were chosen to enable a better understanding of the Charter itself as well as the rationale behind its expeditious ratification and implementation by Member States

Let me conclude by wishing the workshop on the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance the success that it richly deserves and hope that by 2012, at the end of the Campaign for African Cultural Renaissance, at least seventy per cent (70%) of the SADC Member States will have ratified the Charter and shall be embarking on its implementation.

I am glad that South Africa will soon be signing the Charter.

I THANK YOU