



**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMB. MINATA SAMATE CESSOUMA,
COMMISSIONER FOR HEALTH, HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (HHSD) ON THE OCCASION OF THE
LAUNCH OF THE TEMPORARY SITE OF THE GREAT MUSEUM OF
AFRICA (GMA), A FLAGSHIP PROJECT OF THE AU AGENDA 2063**

**VILLA BOULKINE
ALGIERS, ALGERIA**

14 JUNE 2023

- i. H.E Ms. Soraya Mouloudji, Minister of Culture and Arts of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
- ii. H.E Mr. Ahmed Attaf, Minister of Foreigner Affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
- iii. Ms. Kanayo Awani, Managing Director, Intra-African Trade Initiative, AFREXIMBANK
- iv. Mr. Lazare Eloundo, the Representative of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Director of the World Heritage Centre
- v. Diplomatic Corps here in Algeria
- vi. Members of the Technical and Advisory Committee of the Great Museum of Africa (GMA)
- vii. Representatives from AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
- viii. Esteemed Artists
- ix. Our Friends from the Media
- x. Partners in the Arts, Culture, Creative and Heritage sectors
- xi. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you today to the Launch of the Temporary Site of the Great Museum of Africa: A flagship Project of the AU Agenda 2063.

Allow me to take this opportunity to express gratitude to the Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria for the hospitably we received since our arrival here in Algiers and for the commitment and

leadership that they have shown and exerted to ensure that the Great Museum of Africa Project becomes a reality. We enjoyed all the much needed support for the implementation of this important project over the years from all stakeholders including the Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Members of the Technical and Advisory Committee, UNESCO, Independent Experts, AFREXIM Bank to mention a few. To all of you we want to say **'Thank you very Much for the support and commitment to this unique and critical arts, culture and heritage project'**.

We have just finished the opening of the 1st Continental Exhibition for the GMA at Bardo National Museum which was attended physically and broadcasted through web links. The main objective of the event was to showcase the rich heritage the African continent has to the world. The event brought together partners and potential partners and media people who are now aware of the concept and genesis of the Great Museum of Africa.

The establishment of the Great Museum of African is driven by the recognition of the intricate relationship between the protection of cultural diversity and promotion of cultural pluralism, on the one hand, and development of the continent on the other. It is anchored on the understanding that the protection, preservation and promotion of cultural property and heritage are vital responsibilities jointly shared by the citizens, society and the State.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The GMA project advances the core principles of the Charter for the African Cultural Renaissance, which affirms that all people have the inalienable right to organize their cultural life in full harmony with their political, economic, social, philosophical and spiritual ideas.

Cultural property and heritage validate identity, promote the well-being of the owners and provide successive generations with valuable, information, knowledge and history.

The plunder of African treasures over the centuries has contributed to the illegal exportation of many valuable cultural properties of African origin to museums and galleries outside the continent, thereby creating huge gaps in African history and heritage. This has robbed successive generations of the original owners and creators of such great evidence of ancient African civilization, the benefit to connect to their heritage and history.

This relocation of African cultural property and heritage has resulted in the loss of valuable cultural capital to be preserved for the younger generations. This illicit trafficking of cultural resources has always reminded us that in the lost cultural property and heritage there were untold histories of our beloved continent.

While ongoing efforts at repatriation of these trafficked cultural goods are at various levels, the deficit created cannot wait for all the cases to be resolved and the long drawn processes to be completed. The establishment of the GMA is a deliberate attempt to redress historical openings by providing relevant alternative narratives through the collections to be sourced from AU Member States. It is for the Great

Museum of Africa to provide spaces and home for any cultural properties returned/repatriated to AU Members States where necessary.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should take this opportunity to call upon Member States, partners and cultural institutions across the globe to support the Great Museum of Africa (GMA) permanent site construction. Through various departments the GMA will have various programs which we believe with your support we will make this project a reality.

As you might be aware, the GMA shall have a strong Curatorial Services Department (CSD), which shall utilize innovative concepts and technologies in conserving Africa's cultural properties and heritage. The Department shall take charge of curation and shall package, organize programs, events and tours in the Museum. The department shall hold permanent as well as temporary exhibitions, including hosting specialized exhibitions from Member States.

The Training and Heritage Education Department (THED) shall focus on developing special programmes that would enrich the cultural property and heritage educational programmes of the GMA. It shall evolve special programmes that will attract African youth to and engage them in cultural matters and events. It will also oversee educational visits to the GMA by school children and students as well as research and generate texts for the narration of sites via the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) platforms etc.

The Training and Heritage Education Department (THED) shall train young people through arts and cultural programs through internships to capacitate them to work voluntarily in the museum in order to actively involve, engage and bring youthful and modern perspective to the GMA, in line with Agenda 2063.

Hence with such programmes we do expect partners to support us in the concretization of this unique African dream.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Revised AU Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries, recently endorsed by the 4th Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Youth, Culture and Sport (STC-YCS4) is a guide towards the development and strengthening of the African Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) in order to facilitate delivery of wider social and economic impact.

One of the objectives of AU Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries is to support cultural heritage, creative arts and businesses that promote the ideals and values of Pan Africanism and cultural renaissance. This will be clearly be achieved once the GMA is operational.

There is a need to link such African Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) to the bigger network of achievements. Hence as we celebrate 60 years of the African Union/OAU we focus on the African Union's theme of the year for 2023 – accelerating the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area to bring greater prosperity to the continent. The launch

of the GMA is an opening to jointly work with the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) in ensuring the free movement of artists, cultural goods and services and opportunities to access other markets.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The establishment of the GMA was a process which involved many people in various capacities. The Government of the Peoples' Republic of Algeria is a key player in the process and a partner. Without the commitment and enthusiasm to have this project in Algeria, it would have not been possible to be here to celebrate the launch.

The process also involved the establishment of the Technical and Advisory Committee of the GMA. The Committee drew its members from across the continent and amongst our partners like UNESCO and the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) including independent experts.

The process of establishing the Great Museum of Africa also received inputs through a public consultation with Member States, Pan African Cultural Institutions, museum personnel and the public at large on the establishment of Great Museum of Africa (GMA). The information through the public consultation enriched both the project document and the draft statute of the GMA.

Once again, I thank you very much for being part of the Great Museum of Africa (GMA) journey which is a flagship Project of the AU Agenda 2063.

Thank you very much for your kind attention and for joining us today!