



ACALAN

ACALAN Communique on the March, 2017 statutory meeting of the Assembly of Academicians, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) held a meeting of the Assembly of Academicians on the 7th and 8th of March 2017, in accordance with its statutes adopted by the Sixth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, (Assembly/AU/Dec.95 (VI), held in Khartoum in January 2006.



The objectives of this meeting, in terms of the functions of the Assembly of Academicians were to:

- i. Consider ACALAN's Strategic Plan in consultation with the Scientific and Technical Committee and submit it for consideration and adoption of the Governing Board of ACALAN;
- ii. Implement one of the recommendations of the last meeting of the Scientific and Technical Committee of ACALAN: to enlarge the Assembly of Academicians by selecting new Members (a process which is overdue)
- iii. Receive and consider the results of the deliberations of the last meeting of the Governing Board on subjects relating to scientific, technical and cultural topical issues;
- iv. Examine and discuss issues submitted to it or any other scientific issue, and independently express their opinions and recommendation for action;
- v. Elaborate Rules of Procedure for ACALAN's functioning and submit to the Board for approval;
- vi. Undertake any other issues congruent with ACALAN's vision and mission

Members of the Assembly, the Executive Secretariat, and the Founding Interim Executive Secretary Hon. Adama Samassekou attended the meeting. The Coordinator of the Luganda Vehicular Cross-border Language Commission Ms Margaret Nankinga was invited to attend as rapporteur.

Dr. Johan Strydom, Head of the Social Welfare Division, Department of Social Affairs, African Union Commission, representing the Department, welcomed the members and stressed the role of language in an individual's perception of the world and his overall contribution to development. Highlighting the main objectives of the meeting, and its agenda which inter alia included examining ACALAN's strategic Plan and charting the way forward for the next three years, (2017 to 2020), he pledged the support of the Department of Social Affairs to ACALAN and hoped that the meeting would help to assist ACALAN in its efforts to develop African languages as a crucial factor of national development in accordance with its statutes. Declaring the meeting open on behalf of H E

the Commissioner for Social Affairs, he advised that the meeting of the Assembly of Academicians should consider the mainstreaming of ACALAN in the 2017-2020 work plan of the African Union Commission.

The President of the Assembly of Academicians and Chair of the session, Professor Ayo Bamgbose, gave a brief introduction of the statutory provisions of the Assembly, and highlighted the key tasks before the Assembly, which included the review of recommendations of the last meetings of the Governing Board and of the Scientific and Technical Committee of ACALAN, as well as enlarging the Assembly, and paving the way forward for the implementation of ACALAN's strategic plan in subsequent years.

The Assembly validated with adjustments, the following recommendations that arose from previous meetings of the Governing Board, and the Scientific and Technical Committee:

- i. ACALAN's budget should be separated from that of the Department of Social Affairs, and that the department of Education should henceforth take the lead in ACALAN's matters.
- ii. The composition of the Governing Board should be downsized in the range of 9 to 11 members with a maximum of 13 members, and with representation per region on rotational basis to cut down on cost and make it more functional and operational.
- iii. Member States of the African Union should establish National Language Structures for coordination of all language related and language-dependent activities and these should serve as ACALAN's working structures at national level. ACALAN should therefore organize a seminar as a cost effective means of sensitization on the creation and functioning of national structures, so that ACALAN can have such knowledgeable institutions as focal points and not individuals. The national structures should be attached to governments to avoid funding issues and the ACALAN Secretariat should work out guidelines for the implementation of the creation of National Structures for Languages.
- iv. ACALAN should campaign for the implementation of the Khartoum Declarations and Decisions, especially the elaboration of comprehensive national language policies in the 'Language Plan of Action for Africa (AU 2006a) and the implementation of the language and culture articles in the Charter for African Cultural renaissance (AU 2006b)
- v. ACALAN's vacant positions should be filled to enable the Secretariat to more effectively carry out its functions.
- vi. ACALAN, an AU institution, should be transformed into an ORGAN of the African Union so as to strengthen its activities. The Secretariat should therefore meet with the Legal Counsel, to examine procedures, and then venture into the possibility of achieving this.
- vii. ACALAN should write letters to Vehicular Cross-border Language Commissions (VCLC) to empower them to raise funds, but the letters should be carefully written to ensure that funds including funds from fundraising are judiciously used for the implementation of ACALAN's agenda via the VCLC.
- viii. The Assembly of Academicians advised the Secretariat to make use of the Assembly and to consult more often with the President and Members of the Assembly of Academician to foster the ACALAN agenda.
- ix. The Assembly resolved that the ACALAN Secretariat be properly staffed, and that all already approved positions still vacant should be filled as soon as possible. In this respect, Members voiced concern about the delays in appointing the Executive Secretary and resolved to take the matter to the Department of Social Affairs. (This was done subsequently and ACALAN

was also asked to come up with a staffing proposal that will enable the institution perform its duties well).

- x. Members noted that ACALAN Secretariat needs regular meetings with its organs as these are vital to the institution's visibility by publicizing the activities of the institution. To this effect, the ACALAN Secretariat was asked to come up with an action plan of its meetings which can be shared and put on the African Union calendar.
- xi. It was agreed that it is desirable for ACALAN to be operationally and functionally autonomous so as to determine and carry out its activities that are crucial to achieving its goal and objectives.
- xii. ACALAN should fully embrace its role as umbrella of the regional language Commissions and therefore take a leadership role and be proactive in strengthening and coordinating activities of these bodies and find ways of working with them.
- xiii. ACALAN should source for funding of the PANMAPAL Program and investigate the possibility of linking the program to the Pan African University to enhance its viability.
- xiv. ACALAN's next strategic plan should begin in 2018, and the year 2017 be used as a transitional year to plan and garner resources for implementation. The strategic plan should be shared with regional bodies.
- xv. ACALAN should not solely count on donors, since funding from donors is not always sustainable because of donor fatigue and the unforeseen. Therefore ACALAN, through the Departments of Social Affairs and Education should impress on governments of AU Member States to finance its activities. In this respect, the ACALAN Secretariat should take both routes to canvass for donors' and governments' funding. There is therefore a pressing need to sensitize Member States because contrarily to the evidence, many do not consider language as priority for development.

The President of the Assembly of Academicians commended the Secretariat for a job well done.

SELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY OF ACADEMICIANS

With respect to the agenda point of enlarging the membership of the Assembly of Academicians by the selection of new Academicians to add to the eight Foundation members of the Assembly of Academicians, the following guidelines were established and used for the exercise:

- (i) A Full Member must be quite distinguished and renown academically and professionally;
- (ii) S/he must be working in the language field (this includes language and literature or language and culture, etc.) and must be currently productive.
- (iii) S/he must have been Professor for at least 10 years in case of full Members and at least five years for Associate members.
- (iv) S/he must have high quality publications and made outstanding contributions to research and national development.
- (v) Besides, evidence of productivity, the work of the candidate should show evidence of considerable impact on the community of scholars and/ or development. ..

After this stringent criteria of selection, the following were selected Members of the Assembly of Academicians in the four categories.

1. Academician: (Full) Members or Fellows:

- i. Professor Alfred Mtenje (Republic of Malawi - **Southern Africa**),
- ii. Professor Haunkpati Capo (Republic of Benin - **West Africa**),

- iii. Professor Herman Batibo (United Republic of Tanzania - **East Africa**)
- iv. Professor Marcel Diki Kidiri (Central African Republic - **Central Africa**)
- v. Professor Mohamed Ferrane (Kingdom of Morocco - **North Africa**),
- vi. Professor Oladele Awobuluyi (Federal Republic of Nigeria - **West Africa**),

2. Associate Members or Fellows :

- i. Professor Hankoni Kamwendo (Republic of Malawi - **Southern Africa**)
- ii. Professor Sheila Mmusi (Republic of South Africa - **Southern Africa**)

3. Honorary members:

- i. Professor Fary Silate Ka (Republic of Senegal - **West Africa**)

4. Correspondent Members (Members not resident and operating in Africa)

- i. Professor Ngalasso Mwatha (Democratic Republic of Congo - **Central Africa**)
- ii. Professor Ngugi WaThiong'o (Republic of Kenya - **East Africa**)

FOUNDATION MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMY (2008)

1. Professor Ayo Bamgbose (Republic of Nigeria- **West Africa**) President
2. Professor Mohamed Hassan Abdulaziz (Republic of Kenya- **East Africa**)
3. Professor Beban Sammy Chumbow (Cameroon- **Central Africa**)
4. Professor Neville Alexander (South Africa- **Southern Africa**) Deseased
5. Professor Arame Fal (Senegal -**West Africa**)
6. Professor Baye Mekonnen (Ethiopia- **East Africa**)
7. Professor Mona Tolba (Egypt - **North Africa**)
8. Professor Armindo Ngunza (Mozambique - **South Africa**)

ELECTION OF NEW PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY

At end of the meeting, the President of the Assembly of Academicians, Professor Ayo Bamgbose, informed members of his decision to step-down as President but promised to continue supporting the Assembly and ACALAN as a full member of the Assembly.

He nominated Professor Beban Sammy Chumbow who was unanimously elected as the new President by acclamation. Professor Chumbow accepted his election as President of the Assembly of Academicians of ACALAN and thanked the President and the Assembly for the confidence bestowed on him. He pledged commitment to consolidate the achievements of his predecessors and to work together with the other Academician, ACALAN Secretariat and partners to cover new grounds in the implementation of ACALAN's language action plan for strategic development in Africa.

The following are some essential outcomes of the meeting:

- The recommendations of the latest meeting of the Scientific and Technical Committee of ACALAN to enlarge the Assembly of Academicians was validated and implemented ;
- ACALAN's Strategic Plan for 2018 to 2021 was validated with a few adjustment;
- Results of the deliberations of the last meeting of the Governing Board on subjects relating to scientific, technical and cultural topical issues, were received and considered;
- Some Rules of Procedure for ACALAN's functioning, were reviewed and elaborated for greater level of efficiency;
- An advocacy plan for ACALAN was outlined for implementation.

**African Academy of Languages (ACALAN),
Bamako – Mali, March 10, 2017**