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Concept note

**Meeting of Experts for the Revision of the Language Plan of Action for Africa**

**Date: 01 December 2020**

## Background

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The development and promotion of African Languages with a view to using them in all domains of society in partnership with the former colonial languages, namely English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish have been one of the main preoccupations of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now African Union (AU).

Article 29 of the founding charter of the Organization of African Unity bears witness to this assertion, as it states that: “The working languages of the Organization and all its institutions shall be, if possible African languages, English and French, Arabic and Portuguese.” The search for viable strategies to bring about this sustainable development that would propel Africa into development and hence making the “if possible” possible has therefore become the challenge of developing and promoting African languages.

Various attempts have been made to making this “if possible” a reality among which are the creation of OAU Inter African Bureau of Languages (OAU/IBL) in 1966 through the decision AH/DEC. 8, 1966 of Assembly of Heads of State and Government, that drafted the first version of the Language Plan of Action for Africa in 1984, adopted in 1985, and revised in 2006, which is a blue print for the development and promotion of African languages in the member states of the African Union.

The African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) has subsequently been created by the African Union as a specialized institution entrusted with the task of working with the member states of the African Union to develop and promote African languages in partnership with the former colonial languages and monitor the implementation of the 2006 revised Language Plan of Action for Africa (LPAA).

Despite the various initiatives, African languages continue to be relegated to the periphery of development activities, which has adversely affected the participation of the African people in their own development. Also, very few Member States of the African Union, have tried to implement the provisions of the Language Plan of Action for Africa.

Considering the foregoing, ACALAN is organising a (webinar) meeting of experts on language planning and policy development to re-evaluate the plan of action in view of revising it to set policy framework and facilitate its effective implementation.

### Methodology:

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- A network would be developed, which will majorly include research and academic institutions, ACALAN’s National Focal Points, Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commissions...
- Presentations and discussions on documents relating to the Language Plan of Action and other related policy documents on language issues in Africa with a view of reviewing the documents;
- Selected members from among the academicians from the linguistic divide in Africa will guide the committee/Research group in arriving to their decisions;
- Question and answer sessions.

### Time Frame:

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A time frame of six months will be set for the first phase which would basically involve studying existing documents. The study group in collaboration with ACALAN Secretariat will work out ways of disseminating the information. Resources for the Research work will be made available by ACALAN. Phase two will proceed taking into account the

experience obtained from the first phase and final report will be written for the Constitutive Committee to work upon before it goes to the Governing Board.

**Expected results:**

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At the end of the meeting:

- ⇒ The plan of action re-evaluated in view of revising it to set policy framework and facilitate its effective implementation;
- ⇒ The working group would have been set up;
- ⇒ A framework for the research/review work would have been put in place

**Participants :**

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- Group of experts of ACALAN proposed by the Assembly of Academicians from ACALAN organs and working structures;
- Members of the ACALAN Secretariat,
- Head of Culture of the African Union Commission,