



**Speech by H.E. Mr. Leonard-Emile Ognimba**

**Assistant Secretary General**

**Department of Political Affairs and Human Development**

**Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials**

**5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ACP Ministers of Culture**

**“Strengthening and Diversifying Partnerships for ACP Cultures”**

**Palais des Congrès, Niamey (Niger), 17 October 2019**

**SPEECH BY H.E. MR. LEONARD-EMILE OGNIMBA, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, AT THE 5<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF ACP MINISTERS OF CULTURE, PALAIS DES CONGRES, NIAMEY, NIGER, 17 OCTOBER 2019**

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Distinguished Senior Officials,

Ambassadors and Representatives of ACP Member States,

Ambassadors and Representatives of ACP Regional Organisations,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Secretariat of our Group, I would like to say how pleased I am that this meeting of Senior Officials is being held, prior to the fifth conference of our Ministers of Culture. Allow me, first of all, to thank the Nigerien authorities for having offered to host these meetings and for their excellent organisation, which testifies to their commitment to our Group, its vision, and its ideals, as well as their ongoing commitment to the fulfilment of the Group's objectives.

The warm welcome that we have received as well as the courtesies extended to us since our arrival in this beautiful capital city, illustrate this perfectly. We are indeed grateful to the Nigerien Government and people.

Thanks to all of you as well for having chosen to honour us with your presence.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Our conference is being held two years after our very successful meeting in Brussels, during which our Ministers adopted the Brussels Declaration; an essential step and major achievement for the reformulation of the Group's policy for culture.

In fact, you will recall that in Brussels, our ministers recognised the central role of culture as a driver of economic growth and sustainable human development,

therefore highlighting the intrinsic relationship between culture and development, for peace, social cohesion, and national solidarity. The Brussels Declaration is in line with this approach, as reflected by the approximately thirty commitments made by our Ministers. We will together examine the implementation of these commitments at the intra-ACP, regional, and national levels before they are considered at the Ministerial session.

That is one of the objectives of our meeting.

We will also have to engage in a dynamic and in-depth reflection on the future of culture in intra-ACP relations, in order to chart new courses based on the challenges and issues of the day.

With this in mind, our session will focus on a number of major topics, as set out on our agenda, namely: Innovative perspectives for future ACP-European Union programmes: what are the culture sector's future prospects, and how can rapidly changing new technologies be incorporated, in an environment marked by the preponderance of social media available to young people? How can we support, understand and participate in these changes?

During this meeting, we will also present to you the main features of each new ACP-EU Culture programme, as well as the modalities for benefiting from them. In other words, what are the main lines of the new ACP-EU Culture Programme financed under the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF, the €40 million cultural industries support programme, for which the first call for proposals for audiovisual productions is currently being evaluated?

In addition, how can we better integrate culture into all sectoral and political strategies and create a 'leverage effect' for development?

Finally, what are your thoughts about the different types of partnerships? How can they be strengthened for culture and development? You will have the opportunity to hear from major international institutions, regions, partners in the banking sector, and even representatives of civil society.

## **Ladies and gentlemen**

The 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of ACP Ministers of Culture falls within the special context of the negotiations under way between the ACP Group and the European Union for the conclusion of a new post-2020 partnership agreement. In light of this, the ACP side has highlighted the role of culture in endogenous and sustainable development, by insisting, in particular, that a strong cultural dimension be included in the cooperation strategies and policies. We will have the opportunity, during our deliberations, to hear a status report on the negotiations, in terms of culture. Our Ministers will be duly informed of it and we hope that their discussions on the subject will help us to further formulate our Group's position.

I have no doubt that the outcomes of this meeting, which will be expressed in a new declaration, the Niamey Declaration, will help to give further guidance to the implementation of our cultural industries support programme, while ensuring that most cultural operators in ACP countries will be able to compete for and receive grants that are on par with those received by European Union operators. For that to happen, now more than ever before, we must set up efficient support and capacity building programmes.

The ACP Group must seize the opportunity of this new Declaration to restate its goal of meeting the challenges facing us on every side, in collaboration with our partners in the international community. These challenges include those in the field of culture, which is now, more than ever before, as we have stated, an essential lever for development.

I have no doubt that our meeting will result in relevant conclusions and recommendations and that at the end of these two days of discussions, we will be able to identify the new challenges facing us and the new opportunities presented

in the culture sector, and we will be able to take appropriate and effective actions for our States and our peoples.

I thank you for your attention and wish us all every success in our deliberations.