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# African Member States Should Borrow a Leaf from Mali

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The Republic of Mali held a national referendum (Decree N°2023-0401/PT-RM), **Article 31,** to establish African languages, including Bamanankan, Fulfulde, Songhay, Tamasheq, and others, as the Republic of Mali's primary official languages, designating French as a working language in 2023.

This landmark decision marks a major step toward fulfilling the vision of the African Union's **Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want**, which champions cultural identity, heritage, and the empowerment of African citizens through their native tongues.
The African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) celebrates a momentous victory for language sovereignty across the continent and urges other Member States to invest in and promote African languages within their territories.

**Bringing African Languages into the Digital Age**
By making national languages official, Mali ensures every citizen can understand governance, justice, and public services without language barriers.
This decision strongly supports ACALAN's work across the region to bring African languages into modern media, classrooms, and technology—including artificial intelligence. Giving mother tongues an official role makes it far easier to develop translation tools, build digital archives, and create local media content across the continent.

**A Call to Action for the Continent**
Language is far more than a way to communicate; it holds our culture, history, dignity, and independence. Giving African languages their rightful place is essential for building fair societies, encouraging public participation, and forging real continental unity.

ACALAN urges African governments, media houses, schools, and tech developers to take clear steps:

1. **Implement Supporting Policies:** Give African languages official status in law, government, and public services.
2. **Drive Tech and AI Inclusion:** Build African languages into new software, digital platforms, and AI systems.
3. **Expand Daily Use:** Use native languages in education, public administration, and media to bring citizens closer to decision-making.

ACALAN stands ready to offer technical guidance and support to any country or institution ready to advance local language inclusion.

**About ACALAN**
The African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) is the African Union's language agency. ACALAN works with partners across the continent and beyond to promote African languages so they can be used alongside international languages in all areas of life.

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