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ACALAN AU Commends African Cultural Platforms for Celebrating the Continent's Knowledge, Creativity and Heritage

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The African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), a specialised institution of the African Union, commends the organisers of the Aké Arts and Book Festival in Nigeria and the African Festival of Arts, Culture and Creatives (AFESTACC) in Ghana for their contributions to celebrating African creativity, intellectual heritage and cultural identity.

The Academy recognises the importance of platforms that bring together writers, artists, cultural practitioners, researchers, innovators and communities to explore Africa's knowledge systems, creative potential and place in an increasingly interconnected world.

The 14th Aké Arts and Book Festival, scheduled for 19–21 November 2026 in Lagos, Nigeria, is being held under the theme *Native Intelligence*. By exploring the relationship between ancestral knowledge and emerging technologies, the festival provides an important opportunity to examine how Africa's intellectual heritage can inform contemporary conversations about artificial intelligence, storytelling, creativity and the future of knowledge.

Similarly, the African Festival of Arts, Culture and Creatives (AFESTACC), scheduled for 9–12 December 2026 in Accra, Ghana, offers a continental platform for celebrating Africa's cultural wealth through music, dance, fashion, literature, film, gastronomy, heritage and creative enterprise. Organised by the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) in collaboration with the Government of Ghana, the initiative also seeks to strengthen cultural exchange, investment, employment and continental integration.

ACALAN considers these initiatives valuable contributions to the broader African development agenda. They demonstrate the importance of creating spaces where African creativity, knowledge and cultural expressions are recognised not merely as elements of heritage but also as resources for innovation, economic opportunity and continental transformation.

The Academy particularly emphasises the central role of African languages in sustaining these efforts.

Across the continent, languages carry generations of knowledge, philosophy, scientific observation, artistic expression, oral literature and community experience. They are the means through which many African societies interpret their histories, transmit values, nurture creativity and communicate their understanding of the world.

Consequently, the celebration of African culture and intellectual heritage must go hand in hand with the promotion and development of the languages through which these traditions find expression.

As African societies embrace digital technologies and artificial intelligence, the integration of African languages into knowledge production, publishing, cultural documentation and creative innovation becomes increasingly important. The continent must ensure that its languages are not merely subjects of cultural celebration but active instruments of contemporary intellectual and technological development.

ACALAN therefore encourages the organisers of both festivals, participating cultural institutions, writers, publishers, artists, researchers and technology innovators to give greater visibility to African-language creativity and knowledge. This includes creating opportunities for African-language authors and storytellers, promoting multilingual literary production, supporting translation and publishing, documenting oral traditions and exploring the application of African languages in emerging technologies.

The Academy also calls on African governments, universities, cultural institutions, media organisations and development partners to strengthen support for initiatives that connect cultural preservation with contemporary knowledge production and economic development.

These efforts resonate with the aspirations of the African Union's Agenda 2063, particularly the vision of an Africa whose development is driven by its people, cultural identity, heritage, shared values and creative potential.

ACALAN congratulates the Aké Arts and Book Festival team and AUDA-NEPAD, together with the Government of Ghana and other AFESTACC stakeholders, for advancing platforms that celebrate African excellence and strengthen opportunities for cultural exchange and cooperation.

The Academy wishes the organisers, participants, exhibitors, creative practitioners and audiences successful and enriching engagements. It looks forward to seeing African languages occupy an increasingly prominent place in the continent's literary, cultural, creative and technological spaces.

Africa's heritage gives meaning to its identity. Its languages give voice to its knowledge. Its creativity must shape its future.

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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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