

# ***The Creative Economy and Public Policy in Africa: A Case Study of Uganda***

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# Introduction

In its *2010 Creative Economy Report* **UNCTAD** observes that many African countries lack an explicit cultural policy as well as the institutions or infrastructure to deliver on policy objectives.

On a positive note UNCTAD adds: “Nevertheless, certain countries in Africa have begun to recognize the potential of the cultural sector and the creative economy to alleviate poverty and create jobs and are becoming more committed to supporting these sectors...”

# Uganda

Uganda popularly known as 'the Pearl of Africa' is a landlocked country located in Eastern Africa.

Total population in 2014 was 34.6 million.

The cultural heritage of Uganda includes artistic and cultural expressions. And these are; language and literary arts, performing arts, visual arts and handicrafts, indigenous knowledge, cultural beliefs, traditions and values, cultural sites, monuments and antiquities.

Although Uganda has put in place a number of legal instruments related to culture and the related institutions meant to strengthen the culture function – this is being hampered by poor execution of the related laws and regulations, poor funding and co-ordination.

# **Legal and Policy Framework**

## **The 1995 Constitution of Uganda**

The 1995 Constitution recognises the importance of Ugandan cultures and provides for the preservation and promotion of the country's heritage.

## **The Historical Monuments Act, 1967**

The act provides for the preservation, protection and promotion of historical monuments and objects of archaeological, paleontological, ethnographical and traditional interest.

# Legal and Policy Framework Cont.

## **The Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act, 2006**

This Act repealed and replaced the Copyright Act, and to provide for the protection of literary, scientific and artistic intellectual works and their neighbouring rights; and to provide for other related matters.

The UNATCOM survey titled “*Mapping of Cultural Industries in Uganda*” shows that the music sector in Uganda is still challenged with a high level of piracy with many illegal and unauthorized CD rewrites in many shopping malls and arcades in major towns.

## **Legal and Policy Framework Cont.**

According to the UNATCOM survey, the existing policy regime has not addressed the problem of piracy that is affecting some of the creative activities such as the music sector.

### **The Uganda National Culture Centre 1965 Amendments Act**

The Uganda National Culture Centre (UNCC), is a semi-autonomous body established by an Act of Parliament of 1959 and amended in 1965.

On a sad note, the arts and culture fraternity in Uganda is opposing government's proposed principles for the repeal of the UNCC Act, as a way of doing away with the UNCC Board of Trustees to eventually control the prime properties owned by Trust in the middle of Kampala city.

## Legal and Policy Framework Cont.

This follows the artists earlier rejection of the redevelopment plans of the two constituent institutions owned by the Centre that may result in the UNCC Management demolishing the National Theatre building on De Winton Road to pave way for ultra modern twin towers. While the Nommo Gallery Building on Victoria Avenue will be pulled down to construct a five-star hotel.

The artists are contending that piano shaped 60-year-old National Theatre historical building a unique architectural work that deserves conservation.

# **Legal and Policy Framework Cont.**

## **Language and Literary Arts**

According to the Uganda National Culture Policy, 2006, language is the means of expressing the creative arts of orature and literature.

Government admits that the development of languages in Uganda has not been uniform and tended to privilege some languages over others.

# Legal and Policy Framework Cont.

## **The National Library Act, 2003**

The National Library of Uganda (NLU) was established by the National Library Act, 2003. This Act repealed the Public Libraries Act, 1964 which had established the Public Libraries Board.

There were 32 public libraries in 2013 funded by the tax payer across the country down from 26 in 2006.

Many public libraries do not have trained staff or enough staff. They are poorly funded and lack purpose built structures – some of them are in office blocks.

# Legal and Policy Framework Cont.

## **The Stage Plays and Public Entertainment Act of 1964**

This Act provides for the regulations and control of stage plays and public entertainment.

The absence of deliberate plans and incentives by Government to develop the arts and culture has led to their near demise.

For example, the culture sector commands only 0.03 per cent of the national Budget.

# Legal and Policy Framework Cont.

## **The Uganda National Cultural Policy, 2006**

The Uganda National Cultural Policy, 2006 is the first comprehensive instrument that takes into account the country's cultural diversity.

This policy has been formulated to guide the formal and informal systems of managing culture at all levels.

This policy is poorly funded to realize its objectives.

# Legal and Policy Framework Cont.

## Uganda Vision 2025

The Key elements of Uganda's Vision 2025 include recognition and enhancement of unity in diversity, national pride and dignity and respect for/and conservation of cultural heritage.

# Legal and Policy Framework Cont.

## Uganda Vision 2040

Uganda Vision 2040 aims at transforming Uganda from a predominantly peasant and low income country to a competitive upper middle income country.

This policy document acknowledges that Uganda lacks a national culture that the citizens can identify with.

# Legal and Policy Framework Cont.

## International Laws and Conventions

Uganda has been a State Party to the 1972 Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

Uganda is a signatory to the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Uganda is a member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

Uganda is also a member of the African Union and East African Community.

# Government's Position

The inadequacies in Uganda's culture sub-sector are; limited qualified personnel, materials and equipment, knowledge about markets for products, infrastructure and coordination.

Participation by artists in the performing arts is limited because of inadequate capacity.

There is a general lack of appreciation of the significance and value of Uganda's cultural heritage towards the realization of Uganda's development Goals.

Uncoordinated legal framework .

Lack of reliable data.

# Conclusion

Increased funding from government and the implementation of important aspects of the culture policy and amendment of the policy.

Polices should enhance and broaden access and participation in cultural activities and consumption.

Regulations should be geared towards improving the incomes and working conditions.

Encourage the government and the private sector to invest in the cultural sector.

Culture should be strongly supported as a across cutting sector of the economy.

Thank You! Asante sana!