



ACALAN

African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) Hamdallaye ACI 2000 Porte 223 Rue 394, Bamako-Mali,
Email: acalan@africa-union.org Website: www.acalan-au.org Tel. +223 20 29 04 59 Fax +223 20 29 04 57

Operational and planning workshop for the establishment of the Arabic, Amharic and Tamazight Vehicular Cross-border Language Commissions.

Introduction

The African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), specialized institution of the African Union mandated to develop and promote African languages as a factor for African integration and development, organized an operational and planning workshop for the establishment of the Arabic, Amharic and Tamazight Vehicular Cross-border Language Commissions, from 29 to 31 October 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



1

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- i. Establish the Arabic, Amharic and Tamazight *Vehicular Cross-border Language Commissions*;
- ii. Agree on the modalities of operation of the Arabic, Amharic and Tamazight Commissions and national language structures;
- iii. Identify the priority areas of the Commissions;
- iv. Produce action plans that take into account the priority areas identified;
- v. Clarify the role of other stakeholders, including Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Regional Institutions of Language and Culture (RILC), universities, civil society organizations and ACALAN national structures;
- vi. Discuss any other issues relating to the functioning of the language commissions.

The workshop brought together:

- i. Potential members (identified) to establish the Arabic, Amharic and Tamazight Commissions;
- ii. The members of the ACALAN's Assembly of Academicians of the regions;
- iii. Representatives of the Regional Economic Communities;
- iv. Representatives of ACALAN's National Language Structures (focal points) of the countries represented in the language commissions;
- v. A representative of the Department of Social Affairs of the African Union Commission;
- vi. Representatives of UNESCO and the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF), as well as university departments;
- vii. Members of the ACALAN Secretariat;
- viii. Representatives of the host country.

The opening session was chaired by Professor Ayo Bamgbose, Founding President of the Assembly of Academicians of ACALAN. Professor Bamgbose qualified the operational workshop historic in the sense that two of the Commissions being established are part of the first batch of twelve Vehicular Cross-border Languages identified by ACALAN.

The Executive Secretary of ACALAN, Dr Lang Fafa Dampha, reiterated the importance of Addis Ababa meeting and recalled that it was imperative to create the conditions allowing the commissions to realize the expected objectives.

Mrs Cissé Mariame Mohamed, Director of the Department of Social Affairs, representing H.E. Admiral Elfadil, Commissioner for Social Affairs of the African Union Commission, stressed the importance of the promotion and enhancement of African languages as an important factor of the continent's political and socioeconomic development. She thanked ACALAN and all participants and encouraged them to continue to work together to help ACALAN fulfill its noble mandate. She then declared the workshop open on behalf of H.E. Amira Elfadil, Commissioner for Social Affairs of the African Union Commission.

The session after the opening commenced with the Executive Secretary, Dr. Dampha's presentation of ACALAN and its projects and activities. He emphasized research on African languages and ACALAN's work on cultural and linguistic diversity. Dr Dampha deplored the lack of political will on the part of some African Union Member States to promote African languages as a factor in the integration and development of the continent.

Professor Ayo Bamgbose then presented the Terms of Reference that are required of the language commissions and their tasks that he categorized into three, as follows: Initial Fact-finding, Research and Advocacy. He urged members of the three language commissions to be dedicated to the development and promotion of their respective languages in particular and African languages in general.

The members of the three commissions made presentations on the state of their languages in their respective countries.

The presentations on **the modern Arabic language** in the six countries that took part in the workshop: Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Sudan and Mauritania, all have common denominators, as well as some differences due to the concerns and priorities of each Member State.

The first remark is that Arabic is the only official language but it is a co-official language in countries like in Morocco and Algeria with other languages in these countries.

Secondly, there is the political will in all these Member States to promote, popularize and revitalize Arabic through its use in the field of new technologies and scientific research.

Thirdly, each of these countries revised its constitution in favor of the Arabic language on different dates according to the evolution of the linguistic situation.

Finally, the common point in all these Member States is that classical Arabic is not used in everyday life by the populations, but only in literary, legal and official texts.

The two presentations on the **Tamazight language** in Morocco and Algeria show the geographical importance of the language, which makes it an essential language in the sub-region. They also showed the commendable progress made in recent years as far as the Tamazight language is concerned, starting with its officialization in both countries and its introduction into the education systems, from primary to higher education. However, the presentations showed that there was still much to be done for this language and the presenters made a solemn appeal for ACALAN's support.

The **Amharic language** is presented as the official language of Ethiopia alongside 86 languages, and English and Arabic. They are taught in schools and nine of these languages are used in the country's various universities. The introduction of many languages into the education system requires a lot of work.

1. The modern Arabic commission

The members of the modern Arabic language commission were drawn from the seven countries that took part in the workshop: Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Sudan. Places were reserved for Algeria and other Member States in which Arabic is a national language and were not present.

Table 1: List of Members of the modern Arabic Commission

The representatives of the modern Arabic Commission unanimously elected **Dr. Moustapha Ahmed Ali** as Coordinator, representing Sudan and Professor **Bouchra BOUKLATA**, as secretary, representing Morocco.

No	Name	Role	Country	Contact
01	Dr Moustapha Ahmed Ali	Coordinator	Sudan	alkhandagaw@yahoo.fr
02	Prof Bouchra Bouklata	Secretary	Morocco	b.bouklata@yahoo.fr
03	Dr Kraiem Mabrouk	Member	Tunisia	Almabrouk2003@yahoo.fr
04	Prof Mohamed El Allali	Member	Morocco	Mohamedallali04@gmail.com
05	Prof Cheikh Ould Erebih	Member	Mauritania	Cheikh.erebih@gmail.com
06	Prof Abdalhamid Al Harama	Member	Libya	hrhameedha@gmail.com
07	Prof Khalil Mgahrfaoui	Member	Morocco	mgharfaoui@gmail.com

Priority projects of the modern Arabic Commission:

- i. Develop the alphabet and Arabic script to enable it to continue to play the historical role that it has played in the writing of African languages in Arabic character.

- ii. Develop teaching programs from Arabic to non-native speakers.
- iii. Conduct studies on the status of the Arabic language in other African societies as a dominant or minority language.
- iv. Promote the Arabic language to enable it to follow technological developments.
- v. Establish festivals and prizes for artistic and film productions in Arabic.
- vi. Develop partnerships with institutions working to promote the Arabic language
- vii. Mobilize human and material resources.

2. The Tamazight Commission

The members of the Tamazight Commission unanimously elected **Professor Youssef NACIB** as coordinator, representing Algeria and **Dr Abdesslam BOUMISSER**, secretary, representing Morocco.

Table 2: List of members of the Tamazight Commission

No.	Name	Role	Country	Contact
1	Youssef NACIB	Coordinator,	Algeria	ynacib66@gmail.com
2	Adeslam BOUMISSER	Secretary	Morocco	boumisserabdeslam@gmail.com
3	Nadia BERDOUS	Member,	Algeria	m-bardous@yahoo.fr
4	Naima ERRIYAH	Member,	Morocco	Naima101.101@gmail.com
5	Abdellah SADDIKI	Member,	Algeria	abdellaawassouk@yahoo.fr
6	Abdennacer GUEDJIB	Member,	Algeria	aguedjiba@yahoo.fr
7	Allaoua RABHI	Member,	Algeria	Rabehidz2018@gmail.com
8	Si El Hachemi ASSAD	Member,	Algeria	hachemiassad@yahoo.fr

4

Priority areas of the Tamazight Commission

i. Geolinguistics:

- ⇒ Production of a linguistic atlas;
- ⇒ Carrying out a Tamazight toponymic inventory in North Africa, including Canary Islands and the Sahelo-Saharan region,
- ⇒ Initiate scientific field trips to carry out corpus collection work.

ii. Linguistic planning and standardization

- ⇒ Standardization of spelling
- ⇒ Unification of terminology creation

iii. Education and training

- ⇒ Development of a Tamazight learning program as a language a language of instruction to provide every African citizen with the opportunity to access any Tamazight training program (learning, teaching, research, documentation...) in African countries with competent structures.
- ⇒ Ensuring mobility by granting regulatory authorization under ACALAN to allow students, teachers and researchers to access universities in another country in the Tamazight-speaking region,
- ⇒ Training of trainers (journalists, teachers, translators, civil status, court clerks, etc.).

iv. Cooperation and definition of joint projects

- ⇒ Encourage any initiative leading to the organization of scientific and cultural events in countries with Tamazight-speaking minorities with the assistance and support of the Tamazight Commission of ACALAN;
- ⇒ Make a bibliographic, filmographic and photo library inventory by encouraging the duplication of archives throughout the Tamazigh-speaking world;
- ⇒ Contribute to the collective inscription of major features of the Tamazight cultural and intangible heritage with UNESCO.

v. Financing of the Tamazight Commission's work plan

- ⇒ In financing the Tamazight Commission's work plan, it is important to do fundraising through ACALAN with the support of development partners: HCA, IRCAM, UNESCO, ECOWAS and other institutions.
- ⇒ Also, the members of the Tamazight Commission must work with the national structures (focal institutions) to seek funding in the context of corporate social responsibility, with the support and authorization of ACALAN.
Project proposals can be targeted to:
 - ⇒ National and continental financial institutions such as the Algerian Foreign Bank, Essalama Bank, African Development Bank ...
 - ⇒ Partners / government agencies and other private groups working in the same thematic areas...
 - ⇒ Telephone companies and travel and transport companies.

5

3. 3. The Amharic Commission

Drs. Getahun Amare and **Mulugeta Seyoum** are elected as coordinator and secretary of the commission respectively.

Table 3: List of members of the Amharic Commission.

No.	Surname and First name	Role	Country	Contact
01	Dr.Getahun Amare	Coordinator	Ethiopia	getam62@gmail.com
02	Dr.Mulugeta Seyoum	Secretary	Ethiopia	mulugeta.seyoum@aau.edu.et
03	Dr.Teshome Yehuwalashet	Member	Ethiopia	Teshome.damte@yahoo.com
04	Dr.Sirgiw Gelaw	Member	Ethiopia	gelaw.sirgiw@yahoo.com
05	Dr.Yohanes Adigeh	Member	Ethiopia	yohanes.adigeh@aau.edu. and
06	Dr.Alemayehu Gurmu	Member	Ethiopia	alegurmu@gmail.com
07	Dr.Gebre Bizuneh	Member	Ethiopia	gebrebiz@yahoo.com
08	Dr.Moges Yigezu	Member	Ethiopia	moges.yigezu260@gmail.com
09	Dr.Derib Addo	Member	Ethiopia	derib.ado@aau.edu. and
10	Dr.Abebayehu Mesele	Member	Ethiopia	abity123@gmail.com
11	Dr.Shimelis Mazengiya	Member	Ethiopia	mazshimg@gmail.com

Priority areas of the Amharic Commission

- i. Embark on dictionary creation;
- ii. Conduct dialectal study;
- iii. Harmonization of the writing systems of Amharic;
- iv. Organize conferences and workshops
- v. Do polarization of the varieties of the Amharic language;
- vi. Documentation of all works on Amharic
- vii. Apply technologies to the Amharic language;
- viii. Teaching Amharic in a simple way
- ix. Adaptation of Amharic to the new generations
- x. Conduct evaluations;
- xi. Promotion of the use of Amharic;
- xii. Embarking on a translation project;
- xiii. Creation of cartoons for children in Amharic;
- xiv. Establishment of prizes for excellence for the development of Amharic;
- xv. Collaboration with different stakeholders;
- xvi. Networking and standardization of Amharic;
- xvii. Development of reference material in Amharic for native and non-native speakers;
- xviii. Situational assessment and functional areas.



H.E. Amira El Fadil, Commissioner for Social Affairs of the African Union Commission, who declared the operational and planning workshop closed, urged the members of the commissions to work together harmoniously, and with other experts to facilitate the smooth implementation of the plans of action as set out during the meeting. She also express her hope that workable and sustainable projects would be carried out by the commissions across the countries in order to further strengthen the solidarity that exist within the sub-region so that concrete achievements could be recorded within their first three years of existence as concrete contributions to the development of Africa and as being set out in agenda 2063. She assured the participants that the Department of Social Affairs will assist ACALAN and its working structures and organs to implement the mandated assigned to them by the African Union.

**African Academy of Languages (ACALAN),
Bamako - Mali, 01 November 2019**