

FESPACO 2007 COLLOQUIUM

African Cinema and Cultural Diversity

The theme of cultural diversity has for some years been at the heart of all the concerns in discussions around liberalization of exchanges. The issue of cultural diversity has become a globalization stake and *the audiovisual and film industry at the crossroads of economic, cultural and political interests in the globalization process*.

By accelerating the expansion of digital technology, globalization is undoubtedly offering new opportunities to professionals of the audiovisual and film industry across the continent and the Diaspora as well, in the area of production, post-production and in broadcasting and distributing their images. However, there's no doubt that as globalization generates a movement of standardization of ideas, it equally shapes people's real-life experiences, memories and consciousness, and endangers at the same time cultural diversity.

As Africans across the continent and the Diaspora become aware of the need to take ownership of their image, they demonstrate through their work their connection to their history, traditions, languages, philosophy and religions. In the face of new requirements due to digitally technological expansion three challenges have popped up, including preserving our traditions, opening to modernity and keeping our identity.

Standing by its commitments, FESPACO has resolved through its various editions to support professionals of the movie industry in Africa by setting up a framework for exchange to improve discussions on the condition of our cinematography with the establishment of a discussion theme. FESPACO 2007 theme, *"African Cinema and Cultural Diversity"*, stands as a prospective reflection on the status of Africa's audiovisual and film industry in the context of production and distribution channels expansion, growing decrease in cinema rooms, multiplication of video cinemas, and so on.

The colloquium on the theme should come up with proposed strategies to be implemented around key questions. They are: with the new means they are provided with, what should be the responsibility of African professionals

across the continent and the Diaspora as well regarding how to film Africa and Africans today? What should be the role of governments and regional integration organizations, international agencies engaged in the fight against a standardized world? What legal mechanisms can be put in place to regulate the liberation of waves and to foster funding for endogenous productions? Discussions around these issues are of significant importance at a time when FESPACO celebrates this year its 20th edition.

Finally, through this theme, FESPACO intends to support the UNESCO convention ratified in October 2005, stipulating that:

- Each State has the supreme right to adopt, implement, preserve and develop cultural policies meant to ensure a space for the diversity of its own cultural creations and productions
- Cultural goods and services are of specific nature and can not only be considered based on their commercial value
- International cooperation needs to be strengthened for cultural creation, production and distribution capacity building for developing countries
- The convention is not subordinated to other treaties, specifically trade and mutual assistance agreements, and that international agreements are complementary
- International cultural cooperation has to be fostered as well as circulation of works by authors and artists performances.

“As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for human beings as biodiversity for any living order. Therefore, it constitutes the common heritage of humanity”. UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, November 2001.