



Association for the  
Development of  
Education in  
Africa



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**ADEA/AUC/GBA  
CONTINENTAL FRAMEWORK ON BOOK AND READING POLICY FORMULATION  
IN AFRICA**

Nairobi - June 2019

(Commissioned by the Africa Union Commission (AUC) in 2009 and revised by Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) in 2019 with the technical support of Ruth Makotsi, Aliou Sow and Lily Nyariki.)

**BOOKS AND LEARNING MATERIALS SECTION: INTER COUNTRY QUALITY NODE  
ON TEACHING AND LEARNING.**

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
AU	African Union
COMEDAF	Council of Ministers of Education in Africa
CFNBRPFs	Continental Framework on National Book and Reading Policies Formulation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GBA	Global Book Alliance
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICT	Information Communication Technology
ISBN	International Standard Book Number
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NBDCs	National Book Development Councils
NBRP	National Book and Reading Policy
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
POD	Print on demand
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
R&D	Research and Development (innovation)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
STI	Science Technology and Innovation
TORs	Terms of reference
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VAT	Value Added Tax
WGBLM	Working Group on Books and Learning Materials

## INTRODUCTION

Formulation of National Book Policies<sup>1</sup> (NBPs) in developing countries began in earnest in the 80s alongside the establishment of UNESCO-fronted National Book Development Councils (NBDCs). Several forums were convened to discuss the modalities and structures for establishing these institutions. During one such forum held in New Delhi in August 1993 the delegates, mostly from Asia and Africa, underscored the need for formulation of national book policies to guide development of book industries under the coordination of national book development councils. This prompted UNESCO to issue guidelines on the development of national book policies in 1997.

UNESCO's publication, *National Book Policy, a guide for users in the field*, recognises that the complex structure of the book industry requires a multi-disciplinary approach to its development involving both government and private sector. It further identifies some of the factors at play in the book industry, including copyright, language, indigenous knowledge, technology and trade practices, which necessitate formulation of comprehensive legislation to guide its development and govern the practices of stakeholders. Although calls to formulate book policies have continued since, no African country can boast a comprehensive national book policy i.e., one that addresses all the crosscutting issues in the book industry.

A policy is a statement of government intent. It can be described as a basic set of principles by which a government is guided to pursue certain objectives and actions in a particular sector. Thus, policy formulation, though often carried out through a public participatory process, is the mandate of government. In Africa, government's recognition of the book sector is limited to implementation of the school curriculum, hence the focus on textbook-specific policies. The value of general, cultural and, even, scholarly books remains unrecognised. In the few countries where some progress has been made towards developing a more expanded book policy, such effort has tended to be driven mostly by the private sector. Consequently, national governments have been reluctant to ratify policy documents originated outside of their administrative or political structures.

Lack of all-inclusive enabling policies continues to impede the growth of Africa's book industry – its competitiveness in the world market and capacity to adequately fulfil the desirable educational, cultural and social needs of the continent. Africa's contribution to global book trade remains low (estimated at below 5%, of which more than 80% are textbooks), while local book trade's contribution to national GDP is negligible. It is, perhaps, the meagre contribution to the national kitty that makes governments unenthusiastic towards the book sector. Besides direct economic contribution however, the book industry is key to the educational and social development of a country, and hence to true nationhood.

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<sup>1</sup> The preferred term currently is National Book and Reading Policies (NBRP's)

## 1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

### *1.1 Background*

The AU has a vision of an integrated, peaceful, prosperous Africa driven by its own competent people to take its rightful place in the global community and the knowledge economy, articulated in Africa's Agenda 2063. This vision is predicated on the development of Africa's human resources. The Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA) therefore calls for reorienting Africa's education and training systems to meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, innovation and creativity required to nurture African core values and promote sustainable development. While education is main instrument for achieving human social and economic development, the continent still faces severe education challenges at every level. To address these challenges, Summits of Heads of State and Government, and Conferences of Ministers of Education have continued to reiterate the need to increase access to education, improve quality and relevance, and ensure equity. Key in access and quality is availability of quality relevant teaching and learning materials, including books, within the school system and for lifelong learning.

Recognising that access to a wide range of books is central to providing the knowledge and skills necessary for the increase of productivity and wealth creation, African book practitioners have not relented in their efforts to lobby governments for inclusion of the book sector in national development plans. Enactment of policies to facilitate, among others, expansion of library networks, promotion of reading, removal of taxes and duties from books, support to local language publishing, etc., would enable African publishers diversify their lists and produce books that are relevant to Africa's development agenda. Additionally, an invigorated book sector would lead to expanded markets, generate more revenue and increase its monetary contribution to the economy.

It is against this background that the largest conglomerate of African governments charged with spearheading the continent's development, the African Union, has taken decisive steps to facilitate the formulation and subsequent enactment of National Book and Reading Policies (NBRPs) by developing a Continental Framework on Book and Reading Policy Formulation (CFNBRPF).

Renewed efforts towards development of national book and reading policies began in earnest at the launch of the AU second decade of Education for Africa, during the Second Conference of Ministers of Education of the AU held on 7th September 2006, in Maputo, Mozambique. This forum recognised the need for a home-grown education system for Africa to best serve the socio-cultural, political and economic needs of the continent. A call was made to place more value on local knowledge and to develop a more positive view of Africa's ability to find solutions to the numerous challenges facing the continent, including harnessing the Diaspora. Teaching and learning materials' development was identified as one of the seven areas in the AU second decade of Education. The need for enhanced production of and access to quality teaching and learning materials is also incorporated in the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025.

The AU organised the First Pan African Conference on Rebuilding Education in March 2009, which involved key book sector organisations from across Africa. The conference focussed on four key themes, namely African languages, curriculum, reading and writing and book sector development. One of the outcomes of the conference was a draft continental book policy framework, outlining areas that need to be urgently developed across the book chain if the sector is to truly meet the renaissance educational needs of the continent.

In June 2019, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and the Global Book Alliance (GBA) was joined by the AUC in convening a high level regional workshop on national book and reading policies in Africa to update the first draft and consolidate efforts to encourage African governments and international key partners to facilitate the formulation, ratification and implementation of NBRPs in the continent. This Continental Framework on Book and Reading Policies Formulation therefore represent the concerns, interests and intentions of Africa's policy makers in the relevant ministries and at the highest levels.

## ***1.2 Justification for Book and Reading Policy Formulation***

*SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*, identifies education as a key enabler for sustainable development. After teachers, books are the main tools for enabling literacy and are therefore central to the delivery of educational goals. Improving access to relevant books is therefore a prerequisite for providing continuous learning opportunities and guaranteeing functional literacy.

Sustainable development also requires that relevant information is effectively communicated to people to help them address the causes of poverty. Books in local languages would enable greater access to sustainable development knowledge and skills in all sectors such as education, health, environment, water, energy, industry, gender equality, peace and security, and income generation) by the majority of citizens.

AU's Agenda 2063, Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future, aims to facilitate Africa's socio-cultural, political and economic development. A key goal of the agenda is: Well educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation. This calls for review of education systems and availability of suitably responsive learning resources to meet the needs of expanded education and training programmes. Respectively, books are the most accessible, affordable and sustainable sources of the scientific knowledge. Also, locally researched and published books influence citizens to think and act within the moral rubric of their society and provide the 'qualitative baseline' for guiding policy formulation in the new African renaissance narrative. Developing Africa's publishing, especially in the areas of culture and Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), will therefore guarantee an expanded knowledge base for home grown solutions to the continent's development.

As an artistic expression of culture, indigenous publishing is instrumental to achieving cultural diversity and pluralism by enabling open communication within any given context. Global cultural pluralism creates understanding and appreciation of diverse identities and promotes tolerance and cooperation among different societies. The merit of strengthening African publishing to competitive international standards, and exposing African scholarship and culture to the global community, cannot therefore be overemphasised. Increased cross-border book trade will enable greater understanding among African nations and between Africa and other communities and thus promote collaboration, external trade, peace and security.

### *1.3 Areas of Policy Attention*

Despite the value of books and the roles they play in the development of societies, Africa's book industry still lags behind. The challenges facing the development of the industry include inadequate skills, especially in ICT; underdeveloped markets (both locally and internationally); unfair competition from multinational players and state publishers; high taxation; educational systems that do not nurture the reading culture; and lack of legal frameworks and enabling political environments to support overall book sector development.

The book industry in Africa may be characterised as follows:

1.3.1 In the area of **authorship**, majority of writers develop mostly school textbooks, which have more assured markets through government funded projects. General books such as literature and trade books, local language, and tertiary or academic texts (particularly in the physical sciences) are still dominated by foreign publishers. Reasons for limited authorship in these areas include lack of training opportunities for writers in Africa, censorship by some governments on books that are considered politically-incorrect, lack of incentives such as literary awards and research funding to writers, piracy, and low earnings from royalties, and absence of effective organised writers associations to promote and develop African authorship.

Similarly, there aren't adequate numbers of trained book illustrators, especially of children's books.

1.3.2 Book **publishing** is still textbook-dominated, although there has been increased investment in children's readers over the last two decades accruing from purchases through donor-funded projects. Product quality has also improved but there's still need for more professionalism in editing and more creativity in design and illustration, while Low funding to public and institutional libraries continues to hamper the publishing of academic texts and books on developmental subjects such as environment, health, peace and security, and gender studies.

1.3.3 It is a proven pedagogical fact that one thinks and functions best in their first

language. Of Africa's population with basic literacy, 80% can read and write in their mother tongues while only 20% can do so in English and other international languages. Yet, in most African countries, language policies support the use of **local languages** as mediums of instruction in school only for the first three years. Thereafter, English and French become the predominant languages of instruction and study, as well as the official languages. It is advantageous for governments to review language policies to strengthen the study of African languages. Support to writing and publishing of books in local languages will ensure sustenance of majority's literacy needs.

Additionally, empowerment and emancipation of African people require that development policies are informed by African philosophy and not foreign ideologies. This calls for language policies that facilitate development of cultural resources as key drivers of sustainable economic development and social progress. Governments need to strengthen African languages as the languages of science and culture by supporting writing, translation, publishing and distribution of African language scholarly works that enhance creativity and innovation. Priority should be given to books in **cross-border languages** such as Kiswahili, Luo, Oromo and Somali in Eastern Africa, Hausa and Ewe in Western Africa, Gbaya and Kongo in Central Africa, and Barwe and Shona in Southern Africa so as to expand book markets.

- 1.3.4 In the 90s, publishers had successfully lobbied **government** to end monopoly of the textbook market. Unfortunately, in recent years, government has reverted to the old policies and, in some countries, has taken over both the publishing and distribution of textbooks. This trend is severely affecting bookselling and will further stunt book markets as bookshops begin to close down.
- 1.3.5 **Printing** and production have greatly improved owing to competition from printers from Asia, but there is still need for investment in modern technologies such as Print-On-Demand and digital printing. Also, because of high taxation on paper, printing inks and equipment, the cost of book production and, consequently, book prices remain high on the continent.
- 1.3.6 Book **distribution** in Africa has tended to be seasonal, with stocks in the majority of bookshops, especially those situated in rural areas, being textbooks. Marketing and promotion activities are small-scale and are mostly undertaken by the international companies. Accessibility to markets is further restricted by poor road infrastructure in most countries. Even with the advent of regional integration, cross-border trade in physical books remains low due to cumbersome border regulations. The sale of digital books, especially to institutional libraries, is steadily increasing but there is need for more aggressive promotion of the new book brand to the general market. Reading platforms for digital books are both costly and not easily accessible by most people.

- 1.3.7 The growth rate of Africa’s publishing industry has been slow and intermittent, depending mostly on the textbook policies in place. The **business** of book publishing has been made more unprofitable by high taxation and other levies. Most countries charge Value Added Tax (VAT) or **Sales Tax** on books. These range from 14% to 18%, which publishers naturally pass on to the buyers. As a result, books are too expensive for the public to afford and purchase for leisure reading beyond the classroom. The cumulative shortcomings are low reading culture, stunted markets, increased piracy and other unethical practices along the book chain.
- 1.3.8 Increased Internet availability, even in the rural areas, has triggered interest and involvement in **digital** publishing, open licensing<sup>2</sup> and copyright. However, while the digital era promises to open up more avenues for distribution of books to wider markets, it presents a number of challenges in such areas as online copyright permissions and protection, pricing of e-content, ICT training, accessibility of user-platforms, and reliability and affordability of internet connectivity.
- 1.3.9 Need for professional **training** in all the areas of book publishing is still high. While publishing courses are now available in some institutions of higher learning, these are not specific to book publishing and are not available in most countries. Additionally, because of the dynamism of publishing, there is need for continuous skills update for industry personnel, especially in digital publishing. In-service courses tailored to book publishing can be offered by industry associations but they require donor funding which has diminished in recent years. There is need to set up book publishing and creative arts institute either at the national or regional levels.
- 1.3.10 There are quite a number of mostly non-governmental book **organisations** across the continent. Of these, majority are publishers associations, which also often spearhead book development activities. However, for these efforts to create significant impact, capacities of book organisations (at the national, regional and continental levels) need to be strengthened in the areas of governance, management and programming.
- 1.3.11 The negative effects of the poor **reading culture** across the continent are not limited to the book industry. Achievement of sustainable development across sectors is dependent on a foundation of functional literacy that necessitates continuous access to new knowledge through reading. Unfortunately the various reading promotion activities undertaken across the continent, mostly by private sector, are too inconsistent to build a strong reading culture. There’s need for substantial government involvement and support to regularise and strengthen the attested

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<sup>2</sup> Open licensing is a form of licence that permits users to share and, under some licences, translate or otherwise adapt the work of others without requesting permission or payment. Open licences do not replace copyright; instead they revise ‘all rights reserved’ to ‘some rights reserved.’ They can be applied to any creative work, including music, books, articles, photos, and videos. Output can be online and/or offline. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, all open licences require that the original work, author, and publisher be acknowledged



reading promotion approaches. Mainstreaming “Reading” in the school curriculum, and the use of school libraries as resources, would also nurture a reading culture in learners from an early age.

- 1.3.12 **Libraries** would be the alternative resource to learning. Unfortunately, although most countries have public library services, these tend to be inadequately funded, poorly stocked brick-and mortar buildings that are sparsely populated, and therefore too far for most ‘after-school’ learners. There’s need for a library policy to strengthen library networks, extend them into community and mobile libraries and fund them sustainably. Further, there’s need to consolidate the roles and functions of public libraries and institutional libraries (school). A standardized assessment of libraries and library policies in Africa would provide the basis for policy and programmatic interventions by governments at the continental level.

While faced with the many challenges above, it is regrettable that Africa’s book industry continues to operate in a near policy vacuum. The need for development of national book and reading policies is therefore dire. In addition to addressing the shortcomings listed above, national book and reading policies would provide a platform for the different stakeholders to harmonise practices and, jointly with government, formulate sustainable programmes on book sector development.

#### ***1.4 Functions of the Book and Reading Policy Framework***

- i. Enhances the enjoyment of the human rights on education, information, expression and culture.
- ii. Underscores the importance of books as information, cultural and educational resources, and key contributors to spiritual, socio-cultural, political and economic development of both the individual and society.
- iii. Provides a sustainable mechanism for enabling access to books by the citizenry.
- iv. Fosters the reading culture.
- v. Guarantees material and financial support to African book publishing and trade.
- vi. Provides a platform for stakeholders to collaborate with government and development agencies in policy formulation and thus foster partnerships with government and other funders of development.
- vii. Provides a structure for systematic development of the book sector in line with the ideals of pan-Africanism and promoting African writers across the continent.
- viii. Establishes capacity building of book sector professionals and organisations, and enriches ownership of the sector.
- ix. Provides a legal framework for management and regulation of book organisations; clarifies roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the development of the book sector; promotes collaboration among

practitioners; aligns book industry regulations with national laws so as to arrest unethical practices.

- x. Harmonises national book policies in African countries.
- xi. Enhances regional collaboration.
- xii. Promotes national, intra-African and international book trade.
- xiii. Increases the book sector's contribution to the economy.

## 1.5 *Mandate and Scope of the Continental Framework on Book and reading Policies*

The continental framework on book and reading policies derives its mandate from developmental goals and objectives of various international and continental charters, statutes, plans and programmes. Additionally, owing to the multi-sectoral nature of the book sector, the policy framework links book policies with policies of other sectors that enhance book authorship, publishing, distribution and to reading promotion.

### 1.5.1 International scope

#### i. *United Nations Charter on Human and People's Rights and UNESCO's Vision*

The Charter, Articles 19, 26 and 27, confers upon every World citizen the rights to freedom of expression, quality education, and cultural life and the arts, science and technology.

Accordingly, these rights are upheld in *UNESCO's Mission*: To build peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences and Culture. UNESCO helps countries adopt international standards and manages programmes that foster the free flow of ideas and knowledge sharing.

The *Berne Convention*, adopted in 1886, which deals with the protection of works and the rights of their authors. It provides creators such as authors, musicians, poets, painters etc. with the means to control how their works are used, by whom, and on what terms.

The *Florence Agreement* on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials, which is a UNESCO treaty whereby states agree to not impose customs duties on certain educational, scientific, and cultural materials that are imported.

### 1.5.2 Continental scope

- i. *African Charter of Human and People's Rights* of 1981, which mirrors the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. The charter safeguards freedom of expression and information, including the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other form of communication, including across frontiers. The charter further asserts the right to education and its focus on full development of the human personality. It promotes the right to participation in cultural life

and enjoyment of the arts, and supports the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from literary and artistic productions.

- ii. *The Social Development Policy for Africa* of 2005, which proposes strategies on poverty eradication in Africa. The policy underpins education and the labour market as two of the seven pillars of the economy and urges governments to support Research & Development, especially in science and technology, and development of culture as priority interventions to meeting the objectives of education and consequently improving the labour market.
- iii. *The Charter for African Cultural Renaissance* of 2006, which affirms that any human community is necessarily governed by rules and principles based on culture; and that culture encompasses, among others, art and literature. The charter details the functions of African states in cultural rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, protection and promotion. These include facilitating access to education and culture by all segments of the population, strengthening of the role of science and technology - including endogenous systems of knowledge – in the lives of the African peoples by incorporating the use of African languages; promoting the exchange and dissemination of cultural goods and knowledge between African countries and with international communities; enacting national and inter-African laws and regulations to guarantee the protection of copyright; protecting the freedom of artists; materially and financially supporting the development of cultural initiatives and providing incentive measures in fiscal, legislative and administrative plans; building the capacity of cultural sector stakeholders through training; promoting the establishment of publishing and distribution of books particularly in African languages; ensuring the advancement of African languages by formulating and implementing appropriate national language policies; and incorporating African languages into the education curriculum.
- iv. *AU Second Decade of Education for Africa Plan of Action* of 2006, which identifies gender and culture, higher education and curriculum development as three of the seven areas of focus in meeting the goals of delivering equitable, quality and relevant education to the African people. It also presents strategies to be applied within these areas of focus including, promotion of cultural industries, functional literacy for economic empowerment of women and men; increasing synergies between culture and education; mainstreaming African languages in education systems; facilitation of mediums for dissemination of information on entrepreneurship, civic education, preventative health education covering HIV and AIDS and malaria among others; and development of appropriate teaching and learning materials for all levels of education.

- v. *The Pan African Charter of the Book* of 2010 which underscores the centrality of books in delivery of education and their contribution to Africa’s social, cultural, political and economic advancement. The charter advocates for support towards the expansion of Africa’s book industry beyond textbooks, development of authorship of books especially in African languages, promotion of the reading culture especially among children, enabling access to books by the majority populations living in rural areas, facilitation of book trade within and beyond national borders, and advancement of ICT in book production, distribution and use.
  
- vi. *The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025)* which is driven by the desire to set up a qualitative system of education and training to provide the African continent with efficient human resources adapted to African core values. Specifically, the objectives of the strategy, SO 2: Build, rehabilitate, preserve education infrastructure and develop policies that ensure a permanent, healthy and conducive learning environment in all sub-sectors and for all, so as to expand access to quality education, and SO 6: Launch comprehensive and effective literacy programmes across the continent to eradicate the scourge of illiteracy are in sync with the vision of the national book and reading policy.
  
- vii. *The African Continental Free Trade Area* whose main objectives are to create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of business persons and investments, and thus pave the way for accelerating the establishment of the Customs Union. AfCFTA will also expand intra-African trade through better harmonization and coordination of trade liberalization and facilitation and instruments across the RECs and across Africa in general. AfCFTA will facilitate cross-border trade in books and expand intra-African book trade, especially if education curricula of regional countries are harmonised.

### 1.5.3 Regional scope

The various treaties, protocols and agreements of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), which are aimed at achieving full regional integration and establishing regional economic communities.

Accordingly, most RECs (E.g. ECOWAS, SADC, EAC) have agreed on measures towards stabilization of tariff and non-tariff barriers, customs duties and internal taxes; establishment of free trade areas and customs unions; harmonization of monetary, financial and fiscal policies; alignment of common sector policies; and free movement of goods. All these measures are of great benefit to the book sector, especially with regard to the expansion of book markets. Expanded markets from national to regional scale will result in diversification and specialization, and thus strengthen the book sector’s output to better service all areas of development.

The above measures are of great benefit to the book sector, especially with regard to the expansion of book markets. Expanded markets from national to regional scale will result in diversification and specialization, and thus strengthen the book sector's output to better service all areas of development. Based on the agreed parameters for aligning sector policies, national book and reading policies should advance the objectives of the RECs.

#### 1.5.4 National scope

Adaptation of the continental book and reading policy framework to national book policies shall draw potency from relevant sectoral policy regulatory instruments in place, including:

- i. *Education development plans* whose mission is to ensure the delivery of education at all levels including general literacy, continuing education and lifelong learning. National book and reading policies spell out clear roles of the book sector in textbook development, production and distribution towards the fulfilment of national education goals, incorporating the book sector as a key stakeholder in the education sector.
- ii. *ICT policies* whose functions are to regulate information dissemination and usage; facilitate efficient communication, especially through the Internet; and develop and promote information and communication technology. The developmental vision of ICT policies in Africa is to transform the continent into a knowledge-based economy. National book and reading policies should ensure the book sector benefits from ICT policy strategies of promoting ICT in knowledge development, distribution and use; protecting intellectual property; and building capacities in ICT.
- iii. *Cultural policies*, which encourage the development and promotion of cultural industries. National book and reading policies should aim to develop all facets of the book chain. Cultural books, particularly books that preserve and promote indigenous African knowledge and African languages, and African literature should be classified as cultural products, developed and promoted accordingly.
- iv. *Language policies* that define the means of communication and language application in education curricula. National book and reading policies should formulate strategies for developing, preserving and promoting the use of African languages.
- v. *Library policies* on knowledge management, whose mission is to ensure provision of access to information for sustaining the reading culture. National book and reading policies should place special emphasis on the development and funding of school and community libraries and on

mainstreaming leisure reading in education curricula and promoting reading for lifelong learning.

- vi. *Copyright acts* whose mandate is protection of intellectual property. National book and reading policies should put in place strategies for effectively protecting both print and digital intellectual property especially within the framework of open licensing and copyright, for dealing with piracy, and for developing, recognising, rewarding and promoting local authors.
- vii. *Trade policies* that regulate commerce and taxation, and promote trade. National book and reading policies should secure government's support towards book trade by enabling the book industry to benefit from international trade agreements; and for supportive interventions such as lowering or removal of taxes and other tariffs on book production, importation, distribution and sales, in order to lower prices and facilitate cross-border trade.

## 2 POLICY DIRECTION

### 2.1 *Vision*

A vibrant and sustainable African book industry contributing adequately to development through education, culture, and information.

### 2.2 *Mission*

To provide structural and legal guidelines on writing, publishing and distribution of books, to cultivate a reading culture and enhance book trade.

### 2.3 *Overall Goal*

The overall goal of the continental framework on book and reading policy formulation is to facilitate enactment and implementation of national book and reading policies in Africa.

### 2.4 *Objectives of National Book and Reading Policies, Inherent in the Continental Framework on Book and Reading Policy formulation*

As recognised by national governments, the objectives of National Book and Reading Policies include the following:

- i. To facilitate authorship and publishing of books in all subject areas.
- ii. To develop and promote production, access, and use of books in African languages.
- iii. To regulate book production, distribution and use.
- iv. To expand book trade nationally, regionally and internationally.

- v. To improve access to diversified, quality, relevant and affordable books by all peoples, including the marginalized groups.
- vi. To enhance and sustain literacy.
- vii. To promote reading as a means for personal and social growth.
- viii. To facilitate and strengthen book sector organisations.
- ix. To provide a mechanism for coordination, consultation and collaboration among governmental and private sector book sector stakeholders.
- x. To enforce a code of conduct and ethics among book sector practitioners.
- xi. To increase and improve human and technological capacities in the book industry.
- xii. Etc.

## 2.5 Policy Strategies

The following policy elements are focused on shared areas requiring policy attention across the continent. They are, however, not uniform and every country's national stakeholders should interrogate and confirm the validity of each policy element, and implement-ability of the strategies before adoption. Expected outcomes of each strategy and organs/institutions/offices/responsible for implementation of the strategies, and the time frame for completion should be stated.

### 2.5.1 Development of authorship

The aim of this policy is to establish mechanisms for developing authorship.

#### 2.5.1.1 *Objective 1: Support, promote and protect African writers*

##### Strategies

- i. Establish a book development training institute/Undertake training activities for authors of all categories and age groups.
- ii. Mainstream creative writing as a curriculum subject from primary level of education.
- iii. Establish and support literary awards.
- iv. Formulate, enact and enforce copyright laws.
- v. Establish and support Reprographic Rights Organisations/fight against piracy.
- vi. Establish and support African writers associations.
- vii. Develop programmes on promotion of African writers through journals, media, author parades, book launches, etc.
- viii. Etc.

#### 2.5.1.2 *Objective 2: Encourage writing in African languages*

##### Strategies

- i. Carry out surveys on the status of African languages.

- ii. Initiate writing projects for preservation of endangered African languages.
- iii. Support standardisation and orthography especially for major trans-border languages.
- iv. Computerise and encourage use of African languages in other forms of ICT including cell phones.
- v. Mainstream African languages in curricula as mediums of instruction and as languages of study at all levels.
- vi. Establish incentives for translations and indigenous African language books e.g. buy back schemes.
- vii. Launch school writing competitions in African languages.
- viii. Undertake advocacy and promotion on African languages.
- ix. Etc.

### 2.5.1.3 *Objective 3: Facilitate writing of academic and scholarly books*

#### Strategies

- i. Make available adequate financial support to research in institutions of higher learning and support sabbaticals for academic writers.
- ii. Encourage Research and Development and support the publication and distribution of scientific African scholarship.
- iii. Establish and support university presses.
- iv. Establish and support regional and international forums for interaction among academic and scholarly writers.
- v. Etc.

## 2.5.2 **Development of African publishing**

The aim of this policy is to develop indigenous African publishing to ensure that books produced and used in all sectors in Africa are relevant and appropriate in meeting the continent's social, cultural, educational and communication needs.

### 2.5.2.1 *Objective 1: Support African publishers*

#### Strategies

- i. Liberalise textbook production and distribution.
- ii. Establish a viable capacity building program through book development and production training.
- iii. Adopt multi-text book policies.
- iv. Formulate, through a consultative process, acceptable and inclusive textbook policies (content and technical specifications, vetting and approval systems, purchase and distribution structures, and monitoring and evaluation processes).
- v. Ensure as many books as possible are published into Braille and audio books for the sight and hearing impaired people.
- vi. Establish book funds to benefit indigenous publishers.



- vii. Establish a national copyright fund to enable publishers and authors to use copyright as collateral for accessing capital loans.
- viii. Promote open licensing where it has the potential of increasing opportunity for children to access reading materials efficiently.
- ix. Establish buy-back schemes for publishing and distributing books in areas of book scarcity such as African language books, children's books, cultural books, books for people with special needs e.g. audio books, sign language books and braille.
- x. Review curricula to increase content on African culture, and integrate local knowledge in curricula.
- xi. Harmonise education curricula at the regional levels.
- xii. Establish all-inclusive publishers associations to promote and regulate local publishers, including NGOs involved in both commercial and non-commercial publishing.
- xiii. Support publishers associations in aspects of registration, governance, programme development, data collection and management, and advocacy.
- xiv. Support publishing awards for local language books at national and regional levels.
- xv. Support community book fairs for local language books.
- xvi. Etc.

#### 2.5.2.2 *Objective 2: Diversify and improve the quality of African published books*

##### Strategies

- i. Establish mechanisms for training publishers in editing, ICT, design and illustration, pre-press, marketing, sales, warehousing, book business management, etc.
- ii. Establish awards of excellence to indigenous publishers at national and/or regional levels.
- iii. Promote the use of different technologies in publishing, e.g. E-publishing, digital publishing, audio books, etc.
- iv. Encourage cross-border partnerships among African publishers such as co-publishing, licensing and exchange programmes also with international publishers, etc.
- v. Support partnerships between publishers and NGOs (both local and international) on developmental books in subject areas such as health, environment, governance, etc.
- vi. Establish a mechanism for checking biases in book content such as on gender, religion, race, ethnicity, etc.
- vii. Etc.

#### 2.5.3 **Expansion of book distribution and facilitation of book trade**

The aim of this policy is to maximise economic returns from books and ensure availability of books to the majority.

### 2.5.3.1 *Objective 1: Expand national book markets*

#### Strategies

- i. Reduce/abolish VAT/sales tax on books.
- ii. Allocate adequate budgets to public libraries, schools and institutions of higher learning for both textbooks and general books.
- iii. Establish libraries in all public schools and colleges.
- iv. Expand networks of public and community libraries.
- v. Achieve and maintain 1:1 book to pupil textbook ratios.
- vi. Offer fiscal incentives, such as credit facilities, to booksellers.
- vii. Regulate bookselling
- viii. Develop a mechanism to control retail prices, particularly on textbooks e.g. by ensuring prices are printed on book covers.
- ix. Avail training opportunities to booksellers.
- x. Facilitate lower rates to book advertising in the media.
- xi. Support community, national and regional book fairs and exhibitions.
- xii. Restrict book imports of scholarly books to enable increased local publishing.
- xiii. Establish and support book selling associations in the areas of registration, management and regulation.
- xiv. Etc.

### 2.5.3.2 *Objective 2: Promote cross border and international book trade*

#### Strategies

- i. Remove customs duty on books and eliminate cumbersome border procedures in accordance with the Florence Agreement and its Nairobi Protocol<sup>3</sup>.
- ii. Ensure books are accorded Preferential Goods treatment by RECs' protocols.
- iii. Harmonise curricula and textbook policies among regional countries.
- iv. Review and lower postal and book transport charges.
- v. Establish special foreign exchange regulations that favour easy cross-border payments on book purchases e.g. waive commissions.
- vi. Support Pan-African book trade forums including book fairs, buyers and sellers meetings, etc.
- vii. Sponsor publishers and booksellers to international book fairs and academic forums. Support e-commerce by establishing websites for African books and make special arrangements with banking institutions to facilitate online purchases.
- viii. Etc.

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<sup>3</sup> The **Agreement** on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials (also known as the **Florence Agreement**) is a 1950 UNESCO **treaty** whereby states agree to not impose customs duties on certain educational, scientific, and cultural materials that are imported.

### 2.5.3.3 *Objective 3: Ensure accessibility to books by all*

#### Strategies

- i. Support research and publishing of books in special areas, such as indigenous knowledge and languages, the arts and tourism.
- ii. Develop innovative book distribution mechanisms such as book clubs.
- iii. Enforce price controls for books.
- iv. Reduce or abolish VAT and sales tax on books to ensure affordability.
- v. Encourage nationwide hosting of book exhibitions.
- vi. Facilitate adequate funding to community libraries.
- vii. Develop programmes to ensure book access by persons with special needs including visually and mentally handicapped, hearing impaired, etc.
- viii. Etc.

### 2.5.4 **Develop local book production**

This policy aims to expand and advance local printing, speed up production, lower costs and improve quality of locally produced books.

#### 2.5.4.1 *Objective 1: Accelerate and lower the cost of book production, improve quality of locally produced books*

#### Strategies

- i. Support modernisation of the printing and book production industry by funding installation of new technologies for Print-on-Demand books, and production of e-readers and audio books.
- ii. Fund purchases of e-books and audio books for use in schools and public libraries.
- iii. Waive or reduce taxes on book production equipment and implements.
- iv. Develop training programmes for the printing and book production sub-sector.
- v. Etc.

### 2.5.5 **Reading promotion**

This policy will aim to accelerate the acquisition of knowledge by imbuing the reading culture in society and making literacy functional.

#### 2.5.5.1 *Objective 1: Strengthen library networks*

#### Strategies

- i. Undertake nationwide surveys to determine readership levels and book preferences.
- ii. Establish and adequately fund school, institutional, community, public libraries.

- iii. Build capacity of librarians through training in readership development skills.
- iv. Establish school/classroom libraries and mainstream reading as a subject in schools curricula.
- v. Offer training for teachers in basic library skills and innovative methodologies for teaching reading
- vi. Establish a nation-wide network of mobile libraries.
- vii. Avail books for special needs' people such as Braille, and make libraries accessible to people with special needs e.g. the physically handicapped.
- viii. Etc.

#### 2.5.5.2 *Objective 2: Develop a reading culture*

##### Strategies

- i. Undertake research on reading needs (Sectoral, geographical, linguistic, education and social levels, etc.) and develop strategies for promoting the reading culture based on the findings.
- ii. Periodically gather data on the book industry and archive it in public libraries.
- iii. Review curricula to make learning resource-based i.e. to enable use of a range of teaching and learning resources and materials such as ICT platforms, reference books, etc.
- iv. Establish continuous assessment and examination systems that test learners on personal skills and talents. Support ICT programmes in schools, community and public libraries.
- v. Support production and distribution of local language books through community and mobile libraries.
- vi. Launch reading promotion campaigns to popularise reading as a cultural activity, including media programmes, outdoor publicity such as book marches, etc.
- vii. Establish and celebrate national book days, national book weeks, and literacy and copyright days.
- viii. Organise reading promotion activities in schools, institutions of higher learning and community centres, including book fairs, reading tents, reading and storytelling and poetry competitions, etc.
- ix. Establish networks for promoting, lobbying and advocacy on reading.
- x. Support forums on best practices and experience sharing in reading promotion.
- xi. Involve political, community, religious leaders in reading promotion projects and campaigns.
- xii. Etc.

#### 2.5.5.3 *Objective 3: Improve functionality of literacy*

##### Strategies

- i. Review curricula to make them more responsive to the national economic development needs.
- ii. Incorporate life skills and crosscutting issues such as HIV and AIDS, income generation, civic education, etc. in curricula.
- iii. Support adult literacy programmes.
- iv. Establish buy-back schemes and information kiosks for distributing books on income generation, agricultural techniques, environmental management, civic education, health management and sanitation financial literacy, media literacy, etc.
- v. Etc.

## 2.5.6 Industry co-ordination and regulation

The purpose of this policy is to ensure professionalism and ethical practices among industry players and to strengthen collaboration across the sector.

### 2.5.6.1 *Objective 1: Establish legal frameworks for regulating industry*

#### Strategies

- i. Ratify the Berne Convention, Florence Agreement and its Nairobi Protocol in order to facilitate enactment/implementation of national copyright laws.
- ii. Enact copyright laws and establish enforcement agencies to prevent infringement and piracy.
- iii. Review or revise copyright policies to enhance and manage Collective Management Organisations, community knowledge and heritage.
- iv. Ensure copyright protection for online and e-books.
- v. Establish a mandatory mechanism for collection and documentation of data on the industry, such as registers of authors, publishers, printers, booksellers, librarians, etc.; number of published books, printed copies and book sales; financial performance of the various companies; etc.
- vi. Enforce adherence to ISBN system and legal depository centres.
- vii. Formulate and make obligatory memorandums of understanding between different industry players e.g. authors, illustrators and publishers, publishers and booksellers, and publishers and printers.
- viii. Assign institutional authorities to coordinate the implementation of national book policy.
- ix. Appoint committees to draft national book policies.
- x. Etc.

### 2.5.6.2 *Promote collaboration among book sector stakeholders and with government*

#### Strategies

- i. Ensure formation of legally recognised and democratic organisations across the book chain.

- ii. Establish, strengthen and support national, regional and continental book organisations.
- iii. Support forums for book sector collaboration e.g. seminars, conferences, etc.
- iv. Ensure representation of book sector on relevant government boards and committees.
- v. Establish and sustain NBDCs as semi-autonomous government agencies of boards under the two key ministries of education and/or culture.
- vi. Etc.

**2.5.7 Any other policies as may be identified in countries.**

### **3 DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF BOOK AND READING POLICY**

#### *3.1 Approach to Development of National Book and Reading Policies*

- 3.1.2 The continental framework on book and reading policy formulation is a flexible reference document to guide the formulation of national book and reading policies. Its adaptation should therefore not be rigid but submit to specific country needs.
- 3.1.3 The adoption of the continental framework on book and reading policy formulation into national book and reading policies should be undertaken through a consultative process.
- 3.1.4 Based on detailed surveys and analyses of all the aspects of book development, such as authorship, publishing, production, distribution and trade, and readership, national policies should identify the factors that impede development across the book chain and propose mechanisms for facilitating qualitative and quantitative growth. The SWOT analysis methodology would be ideal in translating identified needs into achievable remedial policy objectives and strategies.
- 3.1.5 With regard to industry organisation, it should be noted that the various organisations in the book sector operate independently and, in most cases, have formulated independent rules and regulations by which they operate. The national book and reading policies should consolidate these bylaws to ensure harmony and accountability among all book sector practitioners.
- 3.1.6 Where book and reading policies already exist these should be reviewed and embellished based on the continental framework on book and reading policy formulation. Where textbook policies exist, one of the policy objectives should be to align the textbook policy with the vision and objectives of the national book and reading policy.

#### *3.2 Government involvement*

- 3.2.1 Book and reading policies benefit all citizens and therefore ought to be a priority of governments. To guarantee implementation, development of the national book and reading policies should be spearheaded by government and approved by the highest authority in accordance with the political system. Development of the NBRPs, including drafting, should involve senior officers from the identified government departments.
- 3.2.2 Principally, NBRPs' primary objectives of enabling access to relevant teaching and learning materials, and preserving and enhancing cultural heritage influence the development of education and culture. Accordingly, high-ranking government officials from these sectors should lead and coordinate the drafting teams. Additionally, officers from other relevant government departments that deal with fiscal and monetary regulations, postal and transport regimes, constitutional and legal bylaws should be involved.

### 3.3 *Incorporating the private sector*

Although the private sector has been agitating for book policies for the last four decades, lobbying has been inconsistent and almost ineffectual. This can be attributed to the structure of the sector, which is made up of several complex tasks undertaken by different professionals. Currently, the sector cannot therefore be said to be speaking with one voice. The fact that some of the tasks along the book chain, such as authorship, publishing, printing and bookselling are commercial and mostly belong to the private sector, while others, such as curriculum development, adult literacy and public libraries fall within government's jurisdiction further complicates the scenario. In this respect, national book development councils, whose governance, management and programmes are representative and inclusive of both public and private sectors, remain the most ideal institutions to coordinate book sector development at national levels.

### 3.4 *Enactment*

- 3.4.1 By awarding attention to priority areas, a national book and reading policy serves as a roadmap on the development of the book sector. However, it is also a legislative tool for coordinating and enforcing appropriate practices. To this end, its adoption should be through enactment. Accordingly, one of the issues to be agreed upon during the formulation of NBRPs is the appropriate legal process for enactment.
- 3.4.2 In most countries, the official channel for enacting policies is through adoption by parliament (Passing of the Bill), and drafting of a government bill is the responsibility of the constitutional office.
- 3.4.3 As with other government policies, the NBRP should be disseminated to the public for input and approval. Thus, an advocacy programme on civic education should be developed as one of the enactment strategies.

### 3.5 *Implementation*

The preamble of the NBRP will affirm government's commitment to support the policy and realise the goals and objectives, while the articles will assign the responsibilities of implementing the strategies to the various stakeholders and agencies.

### 3.6 *Monitoring and evaluation*

The process of assessing performance of the NBRPs shall be implemented at three levels:

- 3.6.1 At the sector level, the relevant government ministries and departments, and private sector professional associations will continuously monitor implementation of the policy to ensure that the proposed strategies towards improving performance in their respective areas are accordingly implemented. This process should result in adjustment or amendments to the policy. This requires that an M&E plan is developed as one of the NBRP's strategies.
- 3.6.2 At the institutional level, the proposed NBDCs shall carry out planned periodic evaluations to assess growth in various aspects of the sector following implementation of the strategies. For example, increase in book output and trade, and readership levels shall be monitored after training programmes, changes in curricula, expansion of library networks, etc., have been undertaken. As part of the NBRP's programming, NBDCs shall develop detailed project plans forecasting inputs, outputs and outcomes.
- 3.6.3 At the national level, government, through its M&E departments, such as ministries of planning and bureaus of statistics, shall assess the macro policy outcomes e.g., changes in education quality, book sector's contribution to overall national development, etc.

### 3.7 *Financing*

Presently, within government and private sector, a number of activities are ongoing which contribute towards the objectives contained in the framework. Where possible, private sector should finance strategies for which they can fundraise. However, as has already been stated, the framework aims at harmonising book sector development under the coordination of a uniting institution. Consequently, financing of the proposed NBDCs should be another strategy of the objective to strengthen industry co-ordination and regulation. Governments must commit to supporting formulation and implementation of NBRPs and NBDCs will operate within the ambit of the state and their financing should be included in national budgets.

## 4 **ADOPTION OF THE AU CONTINENTAL BOOK AND READING POLICY PROMOTION FRAMEWORK**



- 4.1 This Continental Framework on Book and Reading Policy formulation, having received input from stakeholders from Member States, represents the interests of African governments and other book sector stakeholders.
- 4.2 The Continental Framework on Book and Reading Policy formulation will be shared with relevant ministries' departments and other stakeholders and revised based on their comments; thereafter, presented to a meeting of relevant ministers- in this case, those responsible for education and culture.