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SUB-THEME: Strategies and Policies for Documenting the Diversity of Culture

TOPIC: *National and Institutional Strategies For Documentation: A Zambian Perspective*

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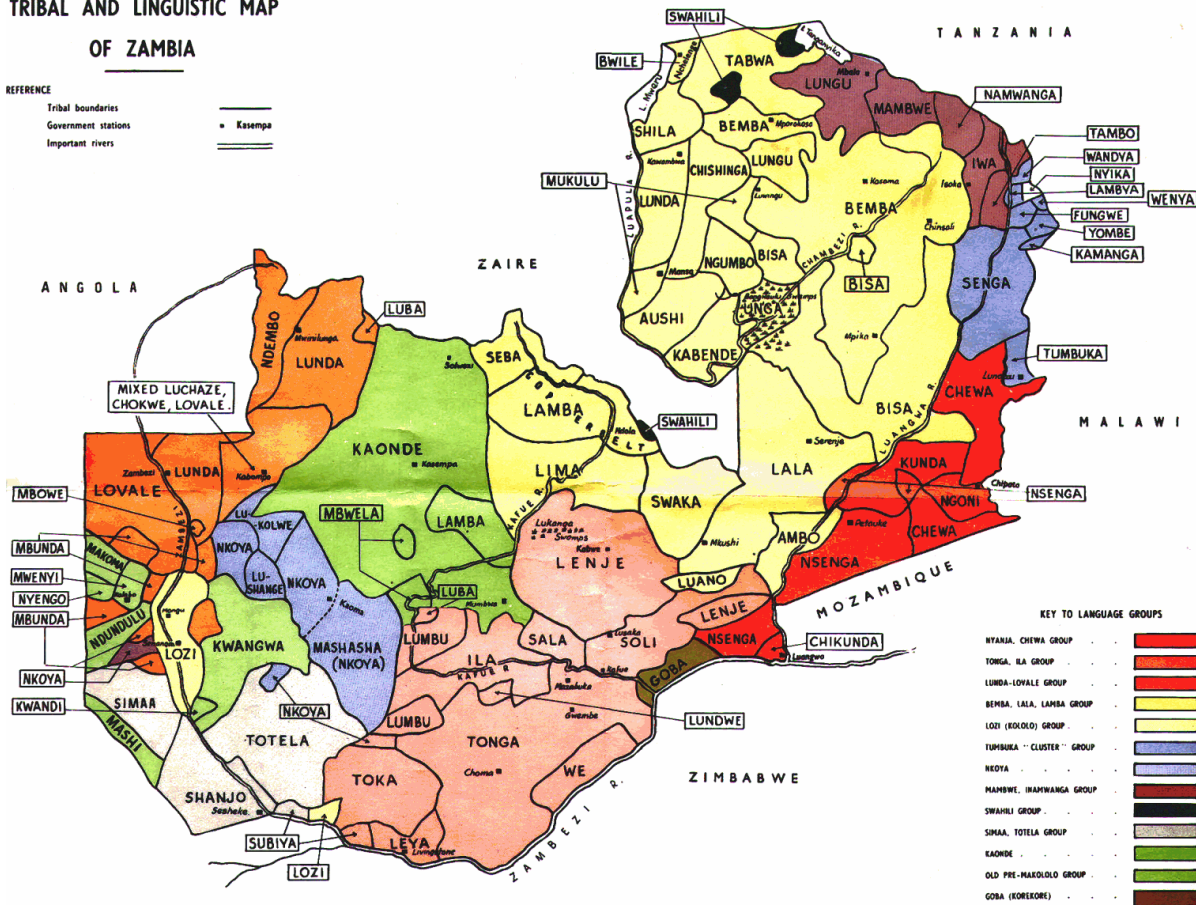
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ABSTRACT

Zambia is a country of great cultural diversity sharing historical ties with her neighbours and other nations outside the continent of Africa. It is also party to the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. Zambia's Cultural Policy is enshrined in the National constitution which is the supreme law of the Land, where it is stated that 'the State shall take measures to promote the practice, enjoyment and development by any person's culture, tradition, custom or language.' Government recognises that in today's highly globalised environment, respecting cultural diversity is critical in fostering sustainable development, peace and mutual understanding among nations.

**TRIBAL AND LINGUISTIC MAP
OF ZAMBIA**

REFERENCE
 Tribal boundaries ———
 Government stations • Kasempa
 Important rivers = = = = =



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KEY TERMS:

Strategies are carefully designed *plans or methods* for achieving a particular goal usually over a long period of time. In our case, it is the plan of documenting the diversity of culture

Policies are a set of principles, rules, and guidelines that are formulated or adopted by an organization in order for it to reach its long-term goals. In our case, it is the principles, rules and guidelines for documenting the diversity of culture.

Museum Documentation refers to all the recorded information that our museums hold about the objects and materials of cultural significance in our custody. It also describes the activity of gathering, storing, manipulating and retrieving that information. Museums documentation allows for proper management, understanding and interpretation of Museum collections now and in the future.

Culture is a total way of life of a society which can be observed as a system of thought, behavior, values and material creation of a society as it interacts with the environment. Culture is therefore related to the creation and maintenance of ideas, behavior patterns, values and other products of creation in the context of the influences that humans are subject to.

Cultural Diversity refers to different cultures respecting each other's differences. It encompasses acceptance and understanding that each individual is unique. The differences can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural identity and cultural self consciousness have become, particularly in this age of globalization, more crucial than ever. Besides being value in itself, cultural serves as a tool for development. Culture also helps to strengthen the independence of a nation. Therefore balanced and sustainable development can only be ensured by making cultural factors an integral part of the development strategies designed to attain the macroeconomic goals. Consequently, these strategies should be devised in the light of the historical, social, and cultural context of any nation.

Documenting diversity of culture can take a wide range of approaches in which societies have shaped their lifestyles according to their different environments. Thus the cultural landscapes are usually influenced by the physical landscapes. Diversity can take the form of race, language, creed and belief systems.

In light of the technological advances in a fast paced world, the indigenous cultures of most societies are gradually disintegrating at the expense of modern life. Museums are therefore faced with challenges

of how best to fit into this dynamic society, effectively document the diverse aspects of culture and remain relevant to the needs of society. The emphasis is on promoting positive aspects of culture that are vital in sustainable development.

RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS

Strategies to actualize this national framework are executed through institutions which include;

- ✓ The Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs and its statutory bodies such as the National Museums Board of Zambia and the National Heritage Conservation Commission
- ✓ The Ministry of Tourism and Arts and its statutory bodies such as the National Arts Council of Zambia
- ✓ The Ministry of Education, Science, and Vocational Training where all training institution for culture and artistic expressions belong.

The Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs

The Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs was established in 2011 to effectively administer the affairs of Chiefs through promoting and facilitating the preservation and conservation of heritage in order to enhance good governance and sustainable national development. Through its vision of promoting Zambia sustainable chieftaincy, rich heritage and cultural diversity, the Ministry is mandated to document this heritage that is expressed through the various cultural activities before then, documentation of cultural diversity was through the Ministry of Tourism, Museums and Heritage institutions, and the Ministry of Community development.

National Museums Board of Zambia

The National Museums Board of Zambia (NMB) is a legal entity established by an Act of Parliament **CAP 267** of 1966 the Laws of Zambia. The Board has a principle role of preserving Zambia's history and its moveable cultural and natural heritage which is vital in maintaining Zambia's identity and pride. The activities of the National Museums Board of Zambia are executed through the National Museums as well as the Community Museums.

There are 4 national Museums in Zambia namely;

Livingstone Museum opened in 1934 and has collections of natural and cultural history; Moto Moto Museum opened in 1940 and has a collection of Cultural History of the Northern region,

Copperbelt was established in 1962 and houses the material culture and natural resources material of the Copperbelt region.

Lusaka National Museum was opened on October 26, 1996. It is located in Zambia's capital city, Lusaka. The Museum has a theme of Cultural History.

The Two community Museums are Choma Museum and Crafts centre which is in the southern part of Zambia, and the Nayuma Museum, which is in the western province of Zambia. Both Community Museums have sustainable tradition crafts making projects.

Through its Acquisition Policy, the Museums ensure continued excellence in the collection of cultural relics. Furthermore, the Collections Management policy defines stewardship of the existing collections. In both acquiring new collections and in ensuring collections management, the aspect of documentation is undertaken explicitly when objects records with detailed accounts are entered for purposes of authenticity.

STRATEGIES THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED

Museum Documentation System:

The National Museums Board of Zambia has developed a Museum Documentation system as its strategic tool used in documenting the diversity of culture. Through this strategy, the Board has been able to collect different cultural relics which include Archaeological, History and Ethnographic Material culture. Other collections are scientific in nature such as botany, entomology, paleontology.

Using the system, Lusaka National Museum has managed to undertake a pilot project on creating a national Intangible cultural heritage inventories and registers.

Capacity Building Programmes for Museum employees

The National Museums Board has identified staff training as a major strategy of ensuring ability in identifying and inventorying diverse forms of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This has been achieved through engaging its workers in seminars and workshops, and by using a collaborative community approach in which communities are assisted in community based cultural resource management programmes. Training has been in documentation of aspects of Intangible and tangible cultural heritage, and collections conservation and management

Institutional Collaboration in Documenting Cultural Ceremonies and Festivities

Another strategy that has been used in the documentation of cultural diversity is institutional collaboration. This is usually between the public and private sector. While the private sector provides the financial assistance to procure equipment, the public sector provides expertise in the documenting different cultural festivities and ceremonies. This strategy has been employed in the light of challenging situations that our Museums have found themselves in due to restricted budgets. Public –private partnerships have thus offered good opportunities for Museums and private partners to work together and realize the common goal of preserving heritage through documentation.

INTER MINISTERIAL APPROACHES IN DOCUMENTATION OF DIVERSITY

This is another successful strategy, and policy initiative that has worked in documenting diversity. Through its Department of Arts and Culture, the Ministry of Tourism and Arts has the mandate of managing and coordinating Cultural activities for national programmes. The Department is organized at three (3) levels, Headquarters, Provincial and District. Among the main activities the department is involved in are;

DOCUMENTING FOLKLORE

A section for mandated to promote folklore has been established within the Ministry of Tourism and Arts. This section is responsible for the preservation, protection and promotion of folk culture, for cultural enrichment and national identity. The programme is aimed at fostering the safeguarding of the country's folklore and intangible cultural heritage, by promoting its inclusion into the mainstream of personal, community and national development. Some of the activities that are carried out under this programme are promotion of cultural dances, traditional ceremonies, oral tradition in form of oral information, art and cultural exhibitions.

DOCUMENTATION OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS

This is another policy and strategy that the Ministry of Tourism and Arts through the National Arts Council has devised in documenting diversity. Among these Artistic Expressions are;

The April International Theatre Festival (Lusaka)

The April International Theatre Festival which hosts theatrical groups from around Zambia and the region. The festival lasts for four days in the month of April at the Lusaka Play House and has been

taking place since 2002. The aim of the festival is to promote performing arts especially among children. The event provides a venue for theatrical groups to showcase their talent, thereby promoting the cultural heritage of the region.

The Shungu-namutitima International Film Festival of Zambia

The festival has been founded to pursue a focused vision of promoting the use of film as a tool to highlight issues on women, girls and women with disabilities. The festival aims at mainstreaming Disability and women in film-making, hence promoting inclusion. The festival also includes men, young and aspirant filmmakers to exhibit products with themes that educate, inspire, sensitize, advocate, and entertain.

The Chikuni Tonga Music Festival -Southern Zambia

This two day annual All Tonga Music Festival` which is place in Chikuni in Southern Province of Zambia in September and is hosted by community radio station called Radio Chikuni. Over the past years, the concert has grown bigger from 20 to more than 100 artists and from a couple of a hundred to more than 12,000 spectators who come to watch the festival which has more than thirty genres.

Mwela Arts Festival -Northern Zambia

The Mwela Arts Festival is an annual event that has been taking place since 2007 in Kasama in the Northern Province of Zambia amongst the Bemba and Mambwe speaking people. It comprises art disciplines such as theatre, traditional dance and poetry and visual arts and it is held over a period of three days in August. The festival participants and audience are drawn from the districts in the Province.

The Siavonga Music Festival

The Siavonga Music Festival is Zambia's only international music event. It showcases some of Zambia's top artists performing live music to an audience of over 3000 people. The festival participants are drawn from within Zambia and beyond the national boundaries such as Zimbabwe, Malawi, Namibia, and South Africa

Ngoma Awards Ceremony

This is a multiple disciplinary arts awards ceremony held annually. The ceremony is organized through the National Arts Council of Zambia whose objective is to encourage artistic excellence for both young and professional creative artist expressions in the country.

Mukuba Awards Ceremony

These are music Awards for Copperbelt province based Artist who are in the music industry. They are held annually on the Copperbelt province

PROMOTION OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Intercultural dialogue is a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange or interaction between individuals, groups and organizations with different cultural backgrounds or world views. Among its aims are: to develop a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and practices; to increase participation and the freedom and ability to make choices; to foster equality; and to enhance creative processes.

In this sense, intercultural dialogue processes or encounters go beyond a mere 'tolerance of the other' and involve creative abilities that convert challenges and insights into innovation processes and into new forms of expression. It is through this culture of tolerance that has promoted multi cultural festivities such as Muslim cultural night, Hindu Cultural Night, Chinese Cultural night, European Art and Cultural Festival, among others.

CONCLUSION

Cultural Diversity enriches our lives in countless ways every day. It is an important source of identity and basic human rights. The cultural diversity today is the outcome of thousand years of human interaction with nature and among people with different customs, beliefs, and ways of life. Formulation of strategies and policies on documenting cultural diversity must be a multi sector approach, where different players in the field of culture are provided with a platform to contribute in the development process. The private sector plays a significant role in collaboration programmes with cultural institutions such as Museums.

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