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CULTURE AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN AFRICA

**A Review of the Cultural Effectiveness of
Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers in West and Central Africa**

**A REPORT PREPARED FOR THE
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VITALIZING AFRICAN CULTURAL ASSETS
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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

1. This study is commissioned as a background document for the *Conference on African Culture Sector Development* being held at Goree Island, Dakar, Senegal from 5-7 March 2007. The conference is organised in the framework of the *South – South Cultural Exchange Program in Africa*, a joint initiative of the Danish Centre for Culture and Development (DCCD), the International Network for Cultural Diversity (INCD) and UNESCO (Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity).

2. The study serves two main purposes. First, it makes a cultural review and critique of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) of nine countries in West and Central Africa, with a view to determining the manner and extent to which cultural issues and concerns have been taken into account.

3. Second, given that one theme of the conference is on developing creative industries in Africa, the study reveals how creative industries are incorporated and prioritised in the PRSP, national development strategies and budgets. On the basis of this review, it draws conclusions and proposes strategies for reinforcing the case for culture in PRSP and other sector development policies and strategies.

1.2. Policy Context

4. In preparing this study, a number of national, regional and international policy frameworks relevant to culture have been taken into consideration. These policy frameworks seek primarily to strengthen and highlight the important relationship between culture, economic development and poverty alleviation as well as to solidify the pride and confidence people have in their cultural and national identities, whilst enhancing inter-cultural dialogue and respect. This, in turn, nurtures and sustains cultural diversity and creativity at national, regional and international levels.

5. At the national level, the PRSPs of the nine countries selected for this study were examined, reviewed and analysed for their cultural relevance and effectiveness, to determine the extent to which the role and importance of culture in poverty reduction is recognised and practically acknowledged in the PRSPs.

6. On a regional level, several important policy frameworks have also been taken into consideration such as the Charter for the Cultural Renaissance of Africa (2005), the Nairobi Plan of Action for Cultural Industries in Africa (2005) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD, 2001).

7. The Charter sets standards for African states in respect to cultural diversity, identity and African renaissance, cultural development, enculturation and training, the use of African languages, role of the states, intra- and inter-African cooperation, and Africa and the Diaspora. The strategic objectives of the Charter are fully supportive of the economic value and potential of cultural resources and assets and hence call on African states to ensure the incorporation of cultural issues into their development frameworks and processes.

8. The Nairobi Plan of Action for Cultural Industries in Africa was approved in Kenya during the African Union Conference of Ministers of Culture in December 2005. The Plan proposes solutions to the problems that cultural industries face in Africa, based on a critical analysis of the economic, social and political perspectives bearing on the sector. Some of the major problems identified in the Plan include:

- the difficulty of accessing credit by artists and cultural producers;
- problems of access to export markets;
- excessive taxation of cultural goods;
- the poor social status of artists; and
- inadequate packaging of African cultural goods.

It strongly recommends that African states provide the enabling environment for the full exploitation, development and promotion of cultural industries in order to ensure the economic empowerment of artists and cultural producers, and strengthen the economic contribution of the culture sector to economic development.

9. The framework document of NEPAD is based on the need for solving Africa's development problems through her own means, resources and endowments, but with the active cooperation of partners and stakeholders at the local, national, sub-regional, regional and international levels. The foundation and rationale for NEPAD is based on African culture, creativity and endowments. For that reason the Strategy calls on African states to ensure the safeguarding, protection, nurturing, exploitation and promotion of the continent's rich endowments in traditional knowledge, wisdom and know-how and make them relevant to various areas of human endeavour and governmental activities.

10. In a similar vein, the study has taken note of on-going initiatives at the international level and in particular developments relating to the recent UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). When it comes into force, the Convention will provide African countries with the means to ensure the safeguarding and promotion of the diversity of the different forms of cultural expression found all through out the continent. Although the Convention still faces stiff challenges from some industrialised countries, it offers a positive approach to counter the difficulties artists and cultural producers face in Africa. As a legally-binding instrument with treaty obligations, it should strengthen the case for culture if the provisions are adequately translated into national policies, legal and regulatory frameworks and if an effective and efficient implementation, monitoring and evaluation mechanism is put in place.

II. POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PAPERS

11. This section addresses three key issues and concerns relating to the PRSP. First, it explores the conceptual framework for PRSP: what are the goals, objectives and desired outcomes; what is the process to prepare, implement and evaluate; and what are the main components of the PRSP?

12. The second part examines the PRSP of nine countries in West and Central Africa, by first reviewing the policy objectives and poverty reduction strategies, then identifying the cultural issues and priority actions planned for achieving the strategic objectives of reducing persistent poverty.

13. The third aspect is a cultural critique of the PRSPs reviewed, by examining and analysing three major challenges relating to culture's relationship to poverty issues. One challenge relates to the strategies for incorporating culture into the PRSP, either as an instrument to attain other broader economic objectives or as a strategic pillar for ensuring the growth and development of culture in its own right. The other challenge is to ascertain in verifiable terms whether culture is a determinant or cause of poverty, or whether it is a correlate, in the absence of enough empirical evidence to substantiate either assertion. The third challenge is to demonstrate in concrete ways the supportive role of culture in enhancing job creation, wealth generation and hence poverty reduction. Given the three challenges, the next challenge is to address the implications of these in poverty reduction policies, programmes and plans in order to attain the strategic objective of reducing persistent poverty in Africa.

II.1. Conceptual Framework for Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP)

II.1.1. What is a PRSP?

14. The PRSP approach began in 1999. It describes a country's macroeconomic, structural and social policies and programs to promote growth and reduce poverty, as well as associated external financing needs. PRSPs are prepared by governments through a participatory process involving civil society and development partners, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. It is a new development aid mechanism that redefines the relationship between the donor and the aid recipient. In this way, the recipient countries are empowered to prepare customised development strategies that respond to national priorities and donors are encouraged to provide predictable harmonised assistance that is aligned with country priorities. In other words, it could be viewed as a mutual accountability framework between donors and recipient countries.

15. PRSPs are required for countries to receive concessional assistance from the World Bank and the IMF. In addition, they are the basis for the provision of debt relief under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. Furthermore, the World Bank's business plans for low income countries, the Country Assistance Strategies (CAS) are based upon PRSPs. In effect, the Bank's lending and non-lending activities for low income countries are organised under the CAS that in turn responds to the PRSP.

16. However, a country-owned poverty reduction strategy normally enjoys the support of all of that country's development partners, and provides a common framework for their assistance programs in the country. Most development partners support the goals, objectives and principles of the PRSP approach, their eagerness to work with governments in preparing strategies, and their intension to adjust their programs to support these strategies. For example the European Union decided to base its five-year assistance programs in African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries on PRSPs. In addition, some leading bilateral donors, including the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, view PRSPs as playing a leading role in shaping their development assistance.

17. PRSPs build on existing national and sectoral development strategies wherever possible. In some cases national strategies and development plans are prepared

and accepted by the international community, in so far as they are seen to be consistent with the guiding principles of the PRSP approach. For example Uganda's PRSP is its Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP); that of Nigeria is the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS); The Gambia's is the Strategy for Poverty Alleviation (SPA); and that of Ghana is the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), all of which pre-date the PRSP initiative.

18. The PRSP however, faces certain challenges that tend to undermine its credibility and effectiveness. One is the requirement by development partners that country-owned strategies be based on broad-based participation and effective analysis, versus the goal of low income countries to move forward quickly with strategy preparations to enable access to concessional assistance and debt relief. This tension is now partly resolved by the use of Interim PRSPs (I-PRSP), which do not require the participatory processes or the degree of analysis expected for full PRSPs. However, in view of the fact that both development partners and the countries have become increasingly concerned about the time required to move from I-PRSPs to full PRSPs, it has now become a requirement that a full strategy be completed within one year of the I-PRSP preparation. The second major challenge is between the World Bank and the IMF on the one hand and the countries on the other hand. The tension reflects two conflicting principles: the country's eagerness to ensure that strategies genuinely reflect national priorities, against the Bank/Fund's insistence that concessional assistance and debt relief be used in a policy environment and for purposes that promote poverty reduction. This is normally addressed through policy dialogue between the country and the Bank/Fund.

II.1.2. Process of Preparing, Implementing and Evaluating PRSP

19. To ensure national ownership of the poverty reduction strategy, the PRSP preparation process is supported by a consultative and participatory process involving:

- public and parapublic administrations, including parliamentarians and local government and administrative workers;
- economic operators in the private sector;
- labour unions and professional organisations; and
- civil society organisations, especially NGOs, community-based initiative groups, savings and loan cooperatives, community credit unions, women's associations and youth groups, associations representing the physically challenged, traditional authorities and religious institutions.

20. This form of participatory approach is complementary to the quantitative or monetary approach, and is designed to understand the manifestations and characteristics of poverty as they are perceived by poor people themselves. Such an understanding is essential for targeting pockets of poverty and for deciding the most appropriate actions to take in the light of the needs expressed by the populations concerned. It also provides governments with a better appreciation of the nature and volume of resources required for priority programs and projects to combat poverty.

21. The preparatory process moves in two main phases. The first phase involves the preparation of the preliminary draft PRSP with the participation of experts from the relevant agencies in the public and private sector. The second phase provides

citizens with the opportunity to ascertain that their major concerns have been reflected in the Strategy. These consultations take place at the local level with various community stakeholders, and at the central level with government agencies, civil society and private sector agencies, development partners and other institutions representative of the people such as the Legislature and the Economic and Social Councils.

22. The implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the PRSP are key factors for its success. That framework must be based on clear institutional arrangements and mechanisms tailored to match the multi-sector, multifaceted nature of the poverty reduction strategy. As PRSP is a policy framework designed to establish coherence among the various sectoral policies and strategies, it takes on more of a coordinating, monitoring and evaluative role. Responsibility for execution normally rests with different sector agencies, private sector and civil society organisations. In this respect, a country would normally establish a Supervisory Committee at the highest possible level of government to supervise implementation. Beneath this Supervisory Committee, a Technical Committee for monitoring programme and project implementation would be established, to keep in close contact with all the agencies involved. Such a committee would issue half-yearly reports on execution of the PRSP, based on the data and information provided by the implementing agencies.

23. Once the periodic PRSP reports have been validated by the Supervisory Committee, they will then be disseminated through channels that reach as many segments of the population as possible, particularly the poor. Participatory evaluation of the outcomes will take place in the context of meetings between the authorities, civil society organisations and local communities, designed not just to inform all the parties concerned but also to collect relevant observations and suggestions from all sides regarding monitoring of the strategy and to devise possible corrective measures when performance is unsatisfactory.

24. As PRSP is an iterative and evolving process, it is subject to full revision every three to five years. To ensure effective monitoring, an Annual Progress Report (APR) is prepared each year to inform the society and the international community about changes in key poverty indicators and key developments on the policy front. These are submitted to the boards of the World Bank and the IMF. The Bank and the Fund then undertake a Joint Staff Assessments (JSA) of the APR and prepare Joint Staff Advisory Notes (JSANs) for the attention of the competent authorities in the country. JSANs assist the country in revising the PRSP and ensuring that the Strategic Pillars and priority actions in its programmes remain appropriate to the reduction of poverty.

II.1.3. The Components of a PRSP

25. As a PRSP is the major government policy framework for guiding interventions in overall national development, a clear conceptual understanding of the strategy, the process involved in the preparation, implementation and evaluation, and the structure or presentation format of the Paper itself, is important for artists and cultural practitioners. Such an understanding will enhance the ability of the cultural community to create a niche or entry point for arts and culture in the PRSP. For this reason, a brief description of the major components of PRSP will be highlighted to

show how and at what point in the Paper, arts and cultural affairs could be appropriately incorporated.

26. Although each Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper is based on the specific country circumstances, the Bank and the Fund-initiated *Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies*, provides standard guidelines to serve as a resource for the preparation of the PRSP by a country. In this respect, a PRSP would normally have the following basic components and on most occasions in the following order.

? ***Background and Context***

Information on the situation of the economy and poverty are provided. Also included is the mission, goals, objectives, guiding principles and description of the process of participation in the preparation of the strategy;

? ***Diagnosis of Poverty***

In this section the following issues are examined and analysed:

- ? Definitions and perspectives of poverty (monetary and human);
- ? Characteristics and dynamics of poverty; and
- ? Determinants and trends of poverty

? ***Poverty Reduction Strategies***

At this point, the Strategic Areas (or Pillars) and Priority Actions needed to realise the goals and objectives of the strategy are spelled out.

? ***Institutional Framework for Implementation of PRSP***

The duties and responsibilities of the committees set up to supervise and coordinate implementation, monitoring and evaluation are spelled out here. Also defined are the duties and responsibilities of the various executing agencies of the PRSP programs and projects.

? ***Financing and Expenditure Framework***

An estimate of the funds required to implement the PRSP is provided, the allocation or distribution of resources among the different agencies involved, as well as the different sources of funding.

? ***Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms***

The different mechanisms put in place for ensuring an efficient and effective monitoring and evaluation of the PRSP.

? ***Risk Analysis***

Poverty is a multidimensional concept involving complex issues. This section outlines the risks, whether related to the capacity and competence to deliver

the priority actions, or the sensitivities involved in dealing with some of the Strategic Areas. Risks are analysed at the beginning of the implementation and the results are noted during program delivery.

? **Implementation Matrix**

To facilitate implementation an attached matrix spells out the following elements of the strategy.

- ? Strategic Areas or Pillars;
- ? Strategic Objectives;
- ? Activities;
- ? Expected Results;
- ? Performance Indicators;
- ? Means of Verification
- ? Timing;
- ? Responsibility; and
- ? Indicative Costs

II.2. Review of Country-Specific Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

27. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) of nine countries in West and Central Africa will be reviewed in terms of policy objectives, determinants of poverty, poverty reduction strategies, and the cultural issues and priority actions.

II.2.1. Benin

28. Benin's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper was prepared in 2002 and covers the period 2003 – 2005. It is expected to be updated annually and reviewed every three years. This means that PRSP I, the subject of this study, is currently under review in preparation for PRSP II which will cover the period 2007 – 2009.

29. In the preparation of PRSP I, Benin acknowledged poverty is a multidimensional concept that is difficult to measure and an operational definition is therefore required to guide her efforts to reduce persistent poverty. Benin used the definition of poverty that came out of the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development:

Poverty has various manifestations, including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illnesses; unsafe environments; and social discrimination and exclusion.

30. On the basis of this definition, which takes the multidimensional nature of poverty into account, two policy objectives were set for reducing persistent poverty in Benin in accordance with the goals set in the country's Vision 2025. These twofold objectives were designed to achieve macroeconomic stability and appropriately respond to social demands:

? *Objective 1*

To strengthen macroeconomic policies, accelerate structural and Institutional reforms, improve governance, and promote private investment; and

? Objective 2:

Accord greater priority to the social sectors by: (i) allocating more of the proceeds from growth and from external assistance to them; (ii) implementing social policies developed with the participation of the people; and (iii) strengthening resource management, absorptive and monitoring capacities in the social sectors at the central and local levels.

31. With a view to ensuring targeted interventions into pockets of poverty, relevant data and information is required to identify the determinants of poverty. The Government therefore launched various studies and consultations in all the regions of the country. These consultations identified the following as the main determinants of poverty in Benin:

- lack of financial resources and the difficulty of accessing micro-finance;
- limited number of income-generating activitiesland tenure problems, especially in the south of the country;
- lack of market access;
- inappropriate agricultural and fisheries tools and techniques;
- socio-cultural impediments ;
- difficult access to safe drinking water and primary health care;
- silting and deterioration of waterways;
- emigration of boys and girls;
- illiteracy and school drop out;
- poor organisation and equipment of rural people;
- environmental deterioration;
- inadequate employment programs for the physically challenged;
- lack of adequate care for the elderly and those suffering from AIDS and other deadly diseases; and
- poor management of development projects and community *funds*.

32. The Paper identifies various poverty reduction strategies for attaining the policy objectives. In this respect four main Pillars are identified, with each further broken down into priority action areas for operationalising the poverty reduction strategies. The pillars and their components have been arranged as follows:

- *PI: Strengthening the Macroeconomic Framework over the Medium Term*
 - ?Consolidation of macroeconomic stability;
 - ? Consolidation of the sources of growth;
 - ? Strengthening basic infrastructure to make productive factors available at reduced costs .
- *PII: Development of Human Capital and Environmental Management*

?Education, health, literacy, drinking water, housing, environment and sanitation, rural electrification, development of rural feeder roads and nutrition and food security.

- PIII: *Strengthening Good Governance and Institutional Capacities*

- ?Fighting corruption and strengthening capacities for management and absorption of public funds;
- ?Acceleration of administrative reform;
- ?Acceleration of devolution;
- ?Strengthening the legal and judicial system; and
- ?Consolidation of democracy and of the internal social dialogue

- PIV: *Promotion of Sustainable Employment and Participation of the Poor in the Decision and Productive Process*

- ?Promotion of community development;
- ?Promotion of sustainable employment and income-generating activities;
- ?Social protection and gender promotion;
- ?Development of micro-finance;
- ?Making vulnerable zones secure; and
- ?Promotion of development hubs.

33. Given the Strategic Pillars and the Priority Action Areas identified for attaining the goals and policy objectives for poverty reduction, it is now necessary to examine place and role of culture.

34. As can be seen, “socio-cultural impediments” have been identified as one of the determinants (or causes) of poverty in Benin. However in the strategies, culture does not surface as one of the Strategic Pillars nor even as one of the components or Priority Action Areas.

35. In the Implementation Matrix, culture has been programmed under Pillar I (Strengthening the Macroeconomic Framework over the Medium Term), Priority Action Area II (Consolidation of the Sources of Growth), Component A (Agriculture, Livestock, Fishing and Craft Industry) and under Component B (Services Sector – Tourism).

36. The cultural issues and recommended forms of action are in the following areas.

- *The craft industry* – Actions envisaged under this domain include updating the institutional and regulatory framework, taking steps to promote local crafts, and promoting micro-finance to strengthen the ability of vulnerable groups to generate income for themselves through participation in the production process.
- *Land tenure system* – The existing land tenure system limits the ownership and control of land due to socio-cultural reasons and the PRSP recommends

the review of the country's tenure system, in order to achieve equitable re-distribution of landed property.

- *Development of appropriate technology* – Given the high level of illiteracy and the fact that a large proportion of the population is rural and depends on agriculture both for subsistence and commercial purposes, the PRSP recommends the development of “relatively simple processing units (in agriculture, fisheries and handicrafts) with a view to encouraging participatory development of technology.”
- *Tourism development and promotion* – Cultural issues surface in the tourism development and promotion strategies. Here again, the PRSP recommends the development of cultural and natural assets and resources with a view to promoting cultural and eco-tourism.

37. However, interestingly enough, the other Strategic Pillars (II), (III) and (IV), all of which have critical cultural issues of relevance to the poverty reduction strategy, no cultural activities have been identified.

II.2.2. Burkina Faso

38. Burkina Faso's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) covers the period 2004-2006. Like Benin, the preparation of PRSP II for the period 2007-2009 is underway.

39. In the preparation of PRSP I, the country acknowledges that, as “poverty is a polysemous concept that can best be grasped from a multidimensional perspective,” different and complementary approaches are needed to adequately highlight the two essential dimensions of poverty; the monetary and the human.

40. While no attempts are made to provide any operational definition of poverty as the basis for the preparation of the strategy, 11 Guiding Principles were listed:

- ?Taking a resolutely long-term approach;
- ?Promoting good governance;
- ?Developing human capital;
- ?Sustainable management of natural resources;
- ? Gender mainstreaming;
- ?Promoting employment and youth development;
- ?Cultural adaptation and openness;
- ?Promoting new information and communication technologies;
- ?Reducing regional disparities;
- ?Factoring in the sub-regional dimension; and
- ?Promoting a new partnership with the donors.

41. Two main policy objectives were identified for the attainment of the goals of the Strategy.

? *Objective 1:*

To target the especially underprivileged groups, based on a number of indicators (income, expenditure, satisfaction of needs, and access to basic services such as healthcare, housing, and education);

? Objective 2:

To increase the effectiveness of poverty reduction efforts, identified as a priority by the population and the development partner, particularly the World Bank and the IMF

42. Drawing from the principles and objectives, the country launched a national Poverty Profile Survey in 1994, which is now in its third edition. The results of these surveys identified the following as the main determinants of poverty in Burkina Faso:

- ?Low productivity of farming and non-farm activities;
- ?Strong price fluctuations within and between years;
- ? Villages with little connection to the outside world,
- ?Gender relations and socio-cultural factors that tend to limit access to factors of production by certain underprivileged segments of society;
- ?Level of education of the head of the household and other adult members
- ?Gender of the head of the household;
- ?Number of children under 14 years in the household;
- ?Household head's access to employment; and
- ?Marital status and type of household (polygamous or monogamous).

43. The diagnosis of the different perspectives, characteristics and determinants of poverty in Burkina Faso resulted in the identification of the following Strategic Pillars and Components (or Priority Actions) for attaining the objectives of poverty reduction.

? Pillar 1: Accelerating broad-based growth

- o Requirements for broad-based growth
- o Maintaining a stable macroeconomic environment
- o Support for productive sectors and accelerating rural development

? Pillar II: Promoting access to basic social services by the poor

- o Human resources capacity building
- o Promoting access to basic education services for the poor
- o Promoting access for the poor to healthcare services and nutrition programmes
- o Fighting HIV/AIDS
- o Promoting access to water for the poor
- o Improving living conditions for the poor
- o Providing social protection for the poor.

? Pillar III: Equitably increasing employment and income-generating activities for the poor

- o Agriculture as a source of jobs and income
- o Reducing the vulnerability of agricultural activity
- o More intensive and more modern farming
- o Increasing and diversifying rural incomes
- o Reducing the isolation of rural areas

- Support for producers' associations
- Improving living and working conditions for rural women
- Promoting jobs and vocational training

? *Pillar IV: Promoting good governance*

- Democratic governance, including public security and the promotion of human rights
- Administrative governance
- Economic governance
- Local governance

44. Given the Strategic Pillars and corresponding components identified as part of Burkina Faso's poverty reduction strategies, we may now examine how and where cultural issues are integrated in the strategy. It is interesting to note that although culture has been listed as one of the key elements in the guiding principles, this recognition is not adequately reflected in the strategies and programmes for poverty reduction. However, it has been programmed as part of the activities for tourism development and promotion under Pillar 1, Component 3 (Support for productive sectors and accelerating rural development). The strategy here is based on:

- Enhancing the synergies between culture and tourism by developing the national cultural heritage such as the National Museum, traditional villages, monuments, cultural and historical sites; and
- Building on its reputation associated with international-class events such as the Pan-African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO), National Cultural Week (SNC), and the International African Arts and Crafts Show (SIAO).

45. Cultural issues and concerns in the area of health care services have also been given prominence in the Strategy under Pillar II, Component 3 (Promoting access for the poor to healthcare services and nutrition programs). Cultural issues relate particularly to the area of:

- Building diagnostic and treatment capacities for dealing with AIDS patients' opportunistic infections in local healthcare facilities;
- Developing alternatives to hospitalisation by promoting and strengthening the local solidarity systems; and
- Promoting traditional medicine and remedies as a sub-sector of the private medical care system.

II.2.3. Cameroon

46. Cameroon's PRSP I, covering the period 2003-2005, is under review .

47. In the preparation of its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), Cameroon defined poverty as "*a complex phenomenon that generally refers to the inadequacy of resources and the deprivation of choices that would enable people to enjoy decent living conditions.*" It acknowledges that poverty has a multiplicity of dimensions, including poor health and education conditions, lack of access to knowledge, the

impossibility of exercising civil rights, lack of dignity and personal confidence, degradation of the environment, etc.

48. The Government intends to use the PRSP as a framework for blending a new generation of economic and social policies into a coherent set for accelerating growth and fighting poverty in a sustainable fashion.

49. The purposes of the PRSP are:

- An integrated development framework for Cameroon for accelerating growth, reducing poverty, and helping the country achieve the Millennium Development Goals .
- A consultation mechanism involving civil society and development partners.
- A framework for coordinating government programs and donor assistance strategies.
- A medium-term consistency framework for setting budgetary priorities and allocating resources accordingly.
- A framework for defining and organising important analytical work programmes and strengthening capacities.

50. The government has indicated that the ultimate objective of the Strategy is to achieve a sustainable and visible improvement in the standard of living of Cameroonians that would come from tackling the very roots of poverty. The government believes this will result from implementing policies designed to create the conditions for strong and sustainable economic growth and from aligning its poverty reduction policies to that of the Millennium Development Goals.

51. In preparing the PRSP, the Cameroonian government commissioned surveys in 1996 and 2001 to assess poverty and identify its characteristics and determinants. The following were identified as the major determinants of poverty in Cameroon:

- Level of education – Household where the head has some higher education is more likely to escape from poverty than a household where the head had no education.
- Socio-economic category of the household head – Households where the head works in the public or the formal private sector are better off than others. People in the former group enjoy adequate social protection unlike farmers who are at a higher risk.
- Physical environment/economic infrastructure. For example, the poor state of urban roads and the isolation of villages makes life difficult for villagers.

52. The main findings and conclusions of the diagnostic studies have enabled the Government of Cameroon to identify the following seven medium-term Strategic Areas for poverty reduction, in line with the country's development objectives:

Strategic Area 1: Promoting a stable macroeconomic environment

Strategic Area 2: Diversifying the economy for accelerated growth.

- Development of the rural sector.
- Development of the manufacturing industries.
- Promotion of tourism, IEC, transport and finances .

Strategic Area 3: Strengthening the private sector as the main engine of growth.

Strategic Area 4: Developing infrastructure to support the production and social sector.

- Improving access to drinking water.
- Sustainably managing and protecting the environment.
- Extending telecommunication services and power to rural areas .

Strategic Area 5: Accelerating regional integration.

Strategic Area 6: Building capacity and enhancing human resources .

- Improving access to basic education as well as vocational and professional training .
- Improving health care.
- Implementing a targeted poverty reduction strategy in the urban areas .
- Undertaking other social development policies and strategies .
- Creating employment opportunities and integrating vulnerable groups into the economy.

Strategic Area 7: Improving governance, the efficiency of administrative services and the institutional framework

53. Culture has been incorporated within the PRSP under Strategic Area 2 and as part of the tourism promotion strategy. For the promotion of tourism and the cultural services sector, the PRSP recommends the following lines of action:

- Undertake a general inventory of Cameroon's material and spiritual patrimony;
- Define and implement a strategy for developing the cinema industry and audiovisual products;
- Create a National Museum of Cameroon; and
- Create a National Arts and Culture Institute

II.2.4. The Republic of Congo

54. The Republic of Congo is currently implementing an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy for the period 2005-2007.

55. After Congo's internal upheavals of 1997-1998, the country prepared an Interim Post-Conflict Program (PIPC), designed to steer the transition from crisis management to growth and sustainable development. In spite of the progress achieved under this program, the country continued to encounter major social and economic problems: very high unemployment, increasing poverty, reduced life expectancy at birth, deteriorating health care, food insecurity and very high indebtedness.

56. These circumstances, together with the vision and the orientations of Congo's "nouvelle espérance" programme, provided the basis for the launch of the I-PRSP. The Government claims that in the preparation of the I-PRSP, its objectives are in line with those of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the HIPC Initiative for poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

57. As an interim strategy, there are no strict requirements for a thorough and conclusive diagnostic study to establish the characteristics and determinants of poverty, and the country did not undertake one in preparing its I-PRSP. However, Congo has plans to carry out in-depth studies to identify the needs and requirements for achieving the policy objectives, in the context of preparations for the full PRSP.

58. To accelerate its poverty reduction efforts, the Government set the following objectives for its I-PRSP:

- To create the conditions for growth that are essential to job creation, income generation and poverty reduction; and
- To progressively implement the 20/20 Initiative, by substantially increasing the resource allocation to social sectors in support of poverty reduction.

58. To achieve these policy objectives, the Government's strategy rests on the following five Strategic Pillars:

Strategic Pillar I: Consolidating the peace and promoting good governance.

- Strengthening of the national disarmament and rehabilitation program.
- Implementation of the prevention, management and conflict resolution mechanisms.
- Enhancement of cooperation in policy and program implementation.
- Promotion of economic governance.
- Promotion of decentralisation and grassroots community participation.
- State reform

Strategic Pillar II: Consolidating the macro-economic framework.

- Revitalisation of public finances .
- Capacity building in public expenditure management
- Revitalisation of the private sector.
- Promotion of rural economic development.
- Enhancing transparency and good governance in the petrol sector.
- Enhancing transparency and good governance in the forestry sector.
- Development of micro-finance

Strategic Pillar III: Improving access to basic social services and social protection

- Improve access to and quality of education.
- Improve access to and quality of health care services.
- Improve access to health and sanitation services and potable water.
- Promote social protection and employment.
- Improve political, economic and socio-cultural status of women

Strategic Pillar IV: Improving the infrastructure

- Improve transport systems and harmonise the various modes .
- Facilitate public access to electricity.
- Develop and organise the national telephone network.

Strategic Pillar V: Strengthen the fight against HIV/AIDS

60. The following cultural issues and concerns have been integrated in the PRSP:

- Development and promotion of micro-finance (Strategic Pillar II).
- Promotion and support for traditional medicine (Strategic Pillar III).
- Remove socio-cultural barriers to the advancement of women (Strategic Pillar III).
- Community coping strategies and home-based care for AIDS patients (Strategic Pillar V).

II.2.5. The Gambia

61. The process of formulating The Gambia's Strategy for Poverty Alleviation (SPA) was initiated in 1992, following the completion of the ILO study on *Poverty in The Gambia*. The Gambia's SPA cannot be considered in isolation from the macroeconomic framework which guides the country's economic and sectoral policies and programs.

62. The serious monetary and public financial crises of the early 1980's virtually paralysed the operations of the public sector. To address these crises, the Government began to implement an Economic Recovery Program (ERP) in 1985 that helped to restore the international competitiveness of the economy. In spite of its gains, the ERP did not have the expected positive influence on farmers' incomes. It did have a considerable impact on public sector employment through retrenchment of civil servants and staff reductions in the parastatal enterprises. To consolidate the gains of the ERP, the government introduced the Programme for Sustained Development (PSD).

63. Several developments affecting the performance of the Gambian economy necessitated a review of the country's macroeconomic and social policies. Among these was the 1993 population census, which recorded an annual growth rate of 4.1 percent; the 1992 ILO study on *Poverty in The Gambia*; the 1993 World Bank poverty

assessment based on the ILO and SDA reports. These reports confirmed the generic nature of poverty in The Gambia.

64. The above factors prompted the Government to initiate a national dialogue process through a participatory approach to formulate its first Strategy for Poverty Alleviation in 1994, known as SPA I. The Strategy was based on (i) a review of economic and social developments in The Gambia, and (ii) a qualitative analysis of the perception of poverty by the poor and the ways in which the development process has impacted on their lives. As a policy framework, SPA I constituted the first comprehensive and coordinated approach to poverty alleviation in The Gambia, with the following objectives:

- Enhance the productive capacity of the poor;
- Improve access and performance of the social services;
- Build the capacity of the local communities; and
- Promote a participatory communication process.

65. After four years of implementation, SPA I was evaluated through a participatory assessment, based on the perceptions of its intended beneficiaries. Although improvements were recorded in some of the social indicators, some shortcomings were also registered, such as the limited scale and scope of program interventions, and the dominant role of the central line agencies which affected decentralisation to local communities and civil society organisations.

66. Against this background, the government started the process of formulating an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper in October 2002. The IPRSP set out a road map for the formulation of SPA II. The main objectives of SPA II, which constituted the main pillars of the strategy, are to:

- Create an enabling environment to promote economic growth and poverty reduction;
- Enhance the productive capacity and social protection of the poor and the vulnerable;
- Improve coverage of the basic social service needs of the poor and the vulnerable;
- Build the capacity of local communities and civil society organisations to play an active role in the process of poverty reduction; and
- Mainstream poverty-related, cross-cutting issues in the strategy such as environment, gender, nutrition, population, HIV/AIDS and governance.

67. The lack of integration of cultural issues in SPA I was identified as one of the shortcomings of the strategy by the 1998 assessment, however, this failed to bring about a genuine incorporation of cultural issues in the second strategy. When SPA II was launched and the inadequate integration of culture in the strategy was noticed, a study was commissioned later in 1998, in collaboration with UNESCO and the Government of Japan, to fill the knowledge gap on culture.

68. Accordingly, a strategic framework for mainstreaming culture into SPA II was prepared and integrated into the implementation matrix. This has the following four main axes:

- *Health Culture* – Promote traditional healthcare;
- *Food Culture* – Promote the development, use and marketing of local food and beverage items;
- *Creative Culture* – Promote the development, use and marketing of traditional technologies such as weaving, tie and dye, batik, textiles, pottery, smithing, leatherwork, carving, etc;
- *National Program for Cultural Orientation* – Promote positive behavioural, attitudinal and value changes, with a view to encouraging sustainable household resource management, and accountability in public service.

II.2.6. Ghana

69. Ghana's first poverty reduction strategy, known as the *Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy* (GPRS I), issued in 2003, was primarily directed towards the attainment of the anti-poverty objectives of the Millennium Development Goals. In 2004, when Ghana started the formulation of its second poverty reduction strategy, the name of the Paper changed to *Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy* (GPRS II). Although the initials remain the same, there was a fundamental shift in strategic focus, with the central goal of the second strategy focused on "accelerating the growth of the economy so that Ghana can achieve middle-income status within a measurable planning period." The second strategy covers the period 2006-2009.

70. The characteristics and determinants of poverty and the strategic pillars identified as part of the preparations for the first strategy remain virtually the same for the both GPRS I and GPRS II. The poverty reduction strategies mapped for GPRS II follow the following axis:

Strategic Pillar I: Macro economic Context and Strategic Direction.

Strategic Pillar II: Priorities for Private Sector Competitiveness.

Strategic Pillar III: Human Resources Development.

Strategic Pillar IV: Good Governance and Civic Responsibility.

71. The Paper acknowledges the importance of the creative industries in view of their potential for employment creation and income generation. With a view to promoting and supporting the development of creative industries, the following cultural issues and concerns have been incorporated in the PRSP:

- ***Developing Information and Communication Technology (ICT)***

To take advantage of opportunities in this sector, the Government intends to implement a national ICT strategy in the music industry, through promotion and support to e-commerce to facilitate trade and commerce in the music industry as well as the issues of technological upgrading.

- ***Developing the Tourism Sector for Revenue and Employment Generation***

The Paper notes that tourism accounts for almost 4 percent of GDP, and at current annual growth rate of 12 percent, it has the potential of becoming Ghana's main foreign exchange earner.

Ghana's historical, cultural and archaeological sites that attract regional and international tourists provide the potential for the development of this sector. In this regard the broad policy objective is designed "to realise the potential of the sector by making Ghana a competitive and quality tourism destination whilst preserving the country's cultural, historical and environmental heritage". Key policy objectives and strategies expected to be pursued during the implementation of the strategy include the:

- Promotion of tourism as a major source of domestic revenue;
- Promotion of domestic tourism to foster national cohesion as well as redistribution of income;
- Promotion of sustainable and responsible tourism in a way that will ensure the preservation of historical, cultural and natural heritage; and
- Promotion of the crafts industry for tourist trade and the export market.

- ***The Music and Film Industry for Growth and Job Creation.***

The Paper acknowledges that the music and film industry, while potential sources for employment generation, wealth creation and human skills development, equally serve as powerful medium for enhancing the country's identity and distinctiveness, generating social capital and promoting social cohesion and harmony.

In spite of this potential, the industry is confronted with series of constraints and challenges that need to be addressed, in order to tap the full potential of the industry. In this respect, the policy objectives proposed under the Strategy to enhance the development and promotion of the industry are aimed at:

- Providing the appropriate legal and regulatory framework for the promotion of the music and film industry;
- Promoting the use of ICT and the support of Multimedia Technology in the industry; and
- Supporting the development of both human and institutional capacity for the industry.

- ***Integrating Traditional Authorities into Formal Institutional Structures for Governance.***

- ***Involving Traditional Authorities in Development.***

II.2.7. Mali

72. The PRSP for Mali covers the period 2002-2006. The Government considers the PRSP as the primary framework for its medium-term policies and strategies and the core document for negotiations with all technical and financial partners.

73. Poverty assessment studies carried out in 2001 and 2002 show that 63.8 percent of the population lives in poverty and 21 percent in extreme poverty. The Paper notes that while poverty in Mali was largely construed as a rural phenomenon, there is an emerging trend of increasing urban poverty, due largely to the deteriorating labour market and rural-urban migration.

74. This situation posed a two-fold challenge for the Government:

- The need to articulate a national policy that is capable of ensuring strong and sustainable growth and more effective development; and
- The need to put in place the ways and means of involving the poor in this process of growth and development.

75. In the preparation of the PRSP, the government acknowledged that poverty is a multidimensional issue that is difficult to define or measure. To avoid the difficulties involved in trying to come up with operational definitions of poverty, it chose to focus the assessment on three perspectives of poverty:

- *Poverty of living conditions*, defined as lack of food, education, health, housing, etc;
- *Monetary or income poverty*, defined as the lack of sufficient funds, resulting in low levels of consumption; and
- *Potential poverty*, defined as the lack of capital (access to land, equipment, credit, employment etc.).

76. The government considers that since the PRSP is a long-term initiative, it must be part of a long-term vision for the Malian society and economy. This vision was therefore formulated within the framework of the *National Long-term Perspective Studies* carried out during the elaboration of the *Mali Vision 2025*. The *Vision 2005* notes that “culture constitutes the core element around which the Malian society revolves, which binds it together and on which development actions must be based”. Mali’s PRSP drew its inspiration from this.

77. In this respect, the following objectives were defined for attaining the goals of the PRSP:

- Promote a strong and sustainable growth, with a view to creating wealth that is better distributed in favour of the poor;
- Provide economic and human development policies better oriented toward addressing the needs and aspirations of the poor;
- Consolidate democratic governance, by involving the population and civil society at all levels; and
- Implement specific action programmes to encourage enterprises to provide better job opportunities for the poor.

78. On the basis of the poverty assessment studies and the general objectives defined for the PRSP under review, three Strategic Pillars and Priority Action Areas were identified as the Government's poverty reduction strategies.

Strategic Pillar I: Ensuring Institutional Development, Improved Governance and Participation.

- Improving public sector performance;
- Consolidating the democratic, participatory and decentralisation processes;
- The fight against corruption; and
- Culture, religion, harmony and security.

Strategic Pillar II: Sustainable Human Development and Strengthening of Access to Basic Social Services .

- Strengthening health, nutrition and population services;
- Strengthening education and literacy programs;
- The fight against poverty: improvements in living standards;
- Cross-cutting issues .

Strategic Pillar III: Development of Basic Infrastructure and Productive Sectors.

- Development of basic infrastructure;
- Development of the productive sector;
- Developing revenue-generating activities

79. In respect of the integration of cultural issues and concerns in the PRSP, not only is culture accorded a central place as one of the "core elements" and the "basis" for both Mali *Vision 2025* and the PRSP, but it has been programmed as one of the priority action areas of Strategic Pillar I, under the theme "Culture, Religion, Harmony and Security"

80. In order to make the most of the potential of culture in promoting cultural and religious values and creating a climate of harmony and security, the Government set the following cultural objectives of the poverty reduction strategies:

- *Ensuring greater increase in value and better management of the cultural and artistic heritage and encouraging creativity by:*
 - Promoting the full exploitation of the social and cultural endowments;
 - Strengthening the creativity of craftsmen and artists through training workshops;
 - Development and promotion of cultural events; and
 - Development and promotion of cultural tourism.
- *Strengthening dialogue within and between communities, with a view to promoting a culture of social cohesion and harmony, by :*

- Introducing the culture of harmony in training programs;
 - Making better use of traditional mechanisms of prevention, management and resolution of conflicts; and
 - Raising awareness among young people of the traditional values of tolerance and helping one another.
- *Preserving the secularism of the State and consolidating inter- and intra-denominational tolerance*

II.2.8. Nigeria

81. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) is Nigeria's equivalent of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and covers the period 2003-2007. NEEDS provides the framework for a nationally-coordinated development program of action by the federal, state and local governments.

82. Poverty reduction is considered to be one of the most difficult challenges in the implementation of the NEEDS. Social conditions in Nigeria present a startling paradox: despite a rich endowment of natural and human resources, most of the country is estimated to be poor, with an increase in poverty rate from 27 percent in 1980, to 66 percent in 1996, to 70 percent in 1999.

83. A participatory poverty assessment study undertaken in 2002 in preparation for the design of NEEDS shows that poverty has many manifestations and dimensions in Nigeria including: joblessness, over-indebtedness, economic dependence, lack of freedom, inability to provide the basic needs of life for self and family, lack of access to land and credit, and inability to save or own assets.

84. The study identified following as some of the main causes or determinants of poverty:

- Inadequate growth, compounded by the volatility of the oil sector.
- Problems in the productive sector. The limited growth of investment and technological innovation has constrained the labour absorption capacity of the non-agricultural sector, especially manufacturing, and exacerbated poverty, especially in the urban areas.
- Widening income inequality, due to the fact that economic growth has tended to benefit those who work in the public sector management.
- Weak governance, including corruption.
- Social conflict, due to the social and economic dislocations caused by internal conflict, which affects the economic well-being of individuals and businesses in many ways.
- For socio-cultural reasons (such as traditional property rights and inheritance practices) women are more vulnerable to poverty than men.
- Evidence from some empirical studies suggest that the rural sector, where about 70 percent of Nigerians live, has been facing a more serious poverty situation than the urban sector.
- Empirical evidence shows that poverty and environmental degradation are inextricably linked in Nigeria, as 75 percent of rural people depend on natural

resources for their livelihood. Environmental degradation reduces opportunities for poor people to earn sustainable incomes;

85. On the basis of the poverty assessment studies in addition to other empirical studies to determine the state of the Nigerian economy and development needs, NEEDS identified three Strategic Pillars for reducing poverty and promoting sustained development:

Strategic Pillar I: Empowering People.

Strategic Pillar II: Promoting Private Investment.

Strategic Pillar III: Changing the Way the Government Does its Work.

86. Cultural issues and concerns are incorporated in NEEDS as follows.

- Under Pillar I cultural issues have been integrated in the following sectoral strategies:
 - *Health* – Culture-related health strategies to meet the goals of NEEDS are designed to:
 - Integrate all tiers of care, including traditional medical practitioners. Traditional medical practitioners are included in the referral chains of medical care, as they are considered to provide low-cost care and are the first point of contact for rural dwellers;
 - Strengthen the ability of the Nigeria Natural Medicine Development Agency to develop standards and monitor practitioners to carry out clinical trials to confirm the efficacy and proper dosage of preparations; and
 - Intensify the campaign to eradicate harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation and child marriage.
 - *Empowering People through Education* – Strategies for attaining the educational goals and objectives of NEEDS include:
 - Integrating local craftspeople in curricular delivery to accelerate the number of craftspeople and improve access to their products; and
 - Involving parents and community leaders in the planning and management of schools in their communities.
 - *Empowering Women* – To integrate women fully in all aspects of Nigerian life, the following cultural issues and concerns will be addressed:
 - Supporting legislation for the abolition of all forms of harmful traditional practices against women; and
 - Promoting access to microfinance and other poverty alleviation strategies, with a view to reducing poverty among women.
 - *Empowering Youth* – Specific interventions to promote more job creation and income generating opportunities for the youth, with a cultural dimension include the :

- Promoting employment potential in arts and culture industries and enterprises; and
 - Eliminating all factors that promote the ethnic, religious and social marginalisation of Nigerian youth.
- Under Pillar II, the sectoral strategies for attaining the culture-related goals and objectives of NEEDS are incorporated under the following programs:
 - *Tourism*
Strategies in this sector are designed to promote the development of Nigeria's artistic and cultural heritage, with a view to developing cultural and eco tourism;
 - *Film Industry*
NEEDS notes that the Nigerian film industry has a significant foreign exchange earning, but the potential of the industry is held back by several constraints. The government's policy thrust is to facilitate the development of a technologically competitive, private sector-led film industry in Nigeria that will create employment, wealth and net foreign exchange earnings.

To attain these policy objectives, the government plans to undertake the following actions:

- Strengthen the regulatory and promotional agencies to promote the industry, facilitate healthy competition, upgrade quality, ensure appropriate controls, monitor and enforce standards, promote standardisation, and ensure compliance with the law;
- Encourage the development of a window of special funding for the industry through the banking industry;
- Design, develop and implement a formal fast-track export scheme to bring export transactions into the formal sector; and
- Provide incentives for further private sector investment in the sector.

II.2.9. Senegal

87. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Senegal reviewed was for the period 2003-2005. The Paper acknowledges poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon, and for that reason several definitions and approaches exist for determining and delimiting it. It draws distinctions between approaches based on wellbeing, basic needs and capacities.

88. These distinctions made it possible to identify the main determinants of poverty in Senegal to include the following:

- Absence or insufficiency of income;
- Access to basic social services;
- Economic environment;
- Access to and level of education;
- Access to health facilities and services; and

- Access to drinking water.

89. The PRSP outlines the following Strategic Pillars for attaining the goals for poverty reduction:

Strategic Pillar I: Creation of wealth within a healthy macroeconomic framework.

Strategic Pillar II: Capacity-building and promotion of basic social services.

Strategic Pillar III: Improving the living conditions of vulnerable groups.

90. Culture features prominently as a poverty reduction strategy under Strategic Pillar I. Considering the importance of crafts in the development process and as a valuable source of job creation and income generation, the Paper identifies the ‘promotion of craft activities’ as one of the principal poverty reduction strategies.

91. In spite of the potential value of crafts for poverty reduction, the PRSP acknowledges the difficulties the industry faces in Senegal such as:

- Weakness of the advisory services and basic infrastructure;
- Lack of operating funds and inadequate self-financing;
- Difficulties in accessing markets, particularly in the case of public contracts ;
- Limited access to formal credit, due largely to reluctance from formal financial institutions; and
- The problem of access to quality inputs.

92. To address these constraints faced by the industry, the following strategies have been identified for the attainment of the poverty reduction objectives of the Paper:

- *Financing of the Sector*
The strategies for addressing this issue include building the management capacity of the decentralised financing mechanisms by means of staff training and monitoring the supervision of their activities and bringing the financing system into line with the realities of the sector.
- *Marketing and Promotion of Craft Products*
Strategies under this key area include: improving the quality of the products, meeting local market demands by creating a distribution system based on “craft villages” and setting up decentralised distribution systems. The products will also be promoted in the international market by participating in fairs, exhibitions, cultural events, festivals, etc
- *Training*
Seek partnership and cooperation in training and capacity building for artisans, and the rehabilitation and modernization of training centres .

II.3. Cultural Effectiveness of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP)

93. Having examined the country-specific Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), it should now be possible to examine and analyse the observable trends and perspectives across the PRSPs, as it relates to the manner in which cultural issues and concerns have been incorporated and programmed in poverty reduction strategies. To enable this, we will begin this by posing new questions or re-stating old concerns.

II.3.1. Culture as an Instrument or a Pillar in Poverty Reduction Strategies

94. The opposing points of view in the neo-liberal and structural-functionalist perspectives of the role of culture in development frameworks and processes are well documented in the intellectual discourse (UNESCO, 1996; World Bank, 1998; Agovi, 1990; Lewis, 1986). The neo-liberal perspective treats culture as an “instrument” to further other development objectives, and thereby emphasises its instrumental function. The structural-functionalist perspective on the other hand, treats culture as an organic and holistic entity that cannot be compartmentalised and instrumentalised to fulfil other goals and objectives, and therefore emphasises its intrinsic function, arguing for its right to grow and develop, just like other sectors of development. Given these opposing view points, what trends and perspectives can we observe from the country-specific strategies examined in this study?

95. Five countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, The Gambia and the Republic of Congo) incorporate cultural issues and concerns in their poverty reduction strategies mainly as instruments to further the objectives of other development sectors, such as the promotion of cultural tourism or traditional healthcare. In this regard, culture does not feature as a Strategic Pillar or a major component of the poverty reduction strategies, but rather is subsumed under the tourism and health sector strategies, to facilitate the development and promotion of these sectors.

96. Four countries (Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal) integrate culture in their PRSPs as Strategic Pillars or major axes. This gives culture the opportunity to stand out as a major contributor in its own right to poverty reduction, rather than being subsumed under other development sectors as instruments to fulfil the objectives of those sectors. In the case of Ghana, emphasis is placed on the development and promotion of the Music and Film Industries as potential sources of employment generation, wealth creation and human skill development. The PRSP for Mali links culture with religion, social harmony and security, as a major axis in the country's poverty reduction strategies. This is in recognition of the potential of Malian culture in promoting traditional and religious values with a view to creating a climate of social harmony and security. In recognition of the tremendous potential of Nollywood, the country's home video industry, and traditional health care for the national economy the Nigerian PRSP programmes culture as a major axis in the poverty reduction strategies. Senegal as well recognises the potential value of crafts to the national economy and programmes it as one of the principal poverty reduction strategies.

II.3.2. Culture as a Determinant or a Correlate of Poverty

97. An examination of the country strategies under review show that lists of factors have been identified as the principal determinants or causes of poverty in the respective countries. These range from access to and level of education, family or

household size, geographic location (whether rural or urban), gender relations, marital status to socio-cultural factors.

98. However, further examination of the documents shows that the listing of these factors has been based on very superficial premises. Many of the countries failed to undertake empirical studies at the time of preparing the country PRSPs, to provide verifiable accounts of the causes or determinants of poverty. In situations where participatory poverty assessment studies were carried out, such as in Benin, Cameroon or Mali, the World Bank notes that the studies were inconclusive to support the poverty intervention strategies proposed. For example, there appears to be no conclusive evidence to support the assumption that family or household size is a determinant of poverty, as at each level of household or family size, there are still high shares of poor people. Why are many in a traditional agricultural environment still poor with large household size, or why are many in a heavily urbanised environment still poor with small household size?

99. As causality could not be verified because of the inconclusiveness of the poverty assessment studies, it might be helpful to refer to the relationship between these factors and poverty levels in terms of “correlation”. In that case one might refer to the correlation between access to education and level of poverty. Formal education provides one with the opportunity to earn gainful employment without actually being a guarantee of employment, as many educated people are still unemployed and living below the poverty level. Thus, while education might not be the actual cause or determinant of poverty in any given situation, there could be a correlation between the two, as the above example shows. Only a careful examination and analysis of the issues will portray the real picture.

100. This scenario shows that more empirical research is required to provide conclusive evidence or verifiable account of the real causes or determinants of poverty in any given situation, to ensure realistic intervention strategies for poverty reduction.

II.3.3. Culture as a Vector for Poverty Reduction and Economic Development

101. All PRSPs under review show that culture has a tremendous potential and value for poverty reduction and economic development, whether resort is made to its instrumental or intrinsic function. Country Papers that project the instrumental role of culture in promoting cultural and ecotourism (such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, The Gambia, Senegal, Mali and Ghana), recognise the value of creative industries and enterprises, traditional village tourism, cultural and natural sites or historic and cultural buildings and monuments, as significant tourist attractions. The development and promotion of these and inclusion in the tourist circuits can ensure job creation, wealth generation and poverty reduction for the tourism operators, service providers, artists and cultural producers alike.

102. Some PRSPs acknowledge the potential and value of traditional health care to improved health and wellbeing in the respective countries (Nigeria, Republic of Congo and Burkina Faso). In this respect, traditional healthcare has been integrated in HIV/AIDS prevention and care strategies and in the overall national health care delivery system to improve access to basic health care for a broad spectrum of

society. Those involved in the traditional health care value chain are therefore expected to benefit from employment opportunities, wealth creation and technology upgrading to meet the market demand for traditional medicinal products.

103. PRSPs in Ghana, Mali, Senegal and Nigeria recognise the value of creative industries and enterprises, and seek to ensure the comprehensive development of these industries, as a growth sector of the national economy, and an essential component of poverty reduction strategies. In that respect, the potential of creative industries for employment creation, income generation and poverty reduction could be fully exploited. From the nine country PRSPs reviewed, that of Ghana and Mali stand out particularly as exemplary cases or best practices, in terms of the extent and manner in which culture is incorporated as a strategic component of the poverty reduction strategies.

II.3.5. Why Culture is not more prominent in PRSPs

104. The PRSP is the overall government development policy framework and all sectoral policies, strategies and programmes draw from it. In this respect, it enunciates government's philosophy and approach to national development and as such, both the public budgeting process and expenditure framework are closely tied to it, to ensure the realisation of the poverty reduction objectives and targets.

105. For culture to secure the public attention that it deserves as an important vector for economic development and poverty reduction, it is imperative that the sector is fully reflected in the PRSP.

106. To enhance this, it is important that cultural practitioners are actively involved in the entire PRSP process from the conceptualisation, participatory poverty assessment studies, planning, programming, implementation, evaluation and monitoring. For a start, cultural specialists would need to ensure that clearly defined and realistic cultural variables are adequately incorporated into the research framework for the poverty assessment studies, and that the cultural issues to emanate from the studies are effectively analysed and integrated into the strategy and subsequent sector policies, programmes and projects.

107. The PRSP serves as the framework for coordinating and monitoring sectoral policies and programmes to ensure coherence towards the attainment of the poverty reduction targets, but the culture sector generally plays a marginal role in such an important national policy framework. What factors could account for such a marginal position?

108. Participation, consultation and the involvement of the poor at all levels is fundamental to the PRSP processes. The preparation of a PRSP is based on guidelines prepared by the Bretton Woods institutions and active participation is a condition for accepting and funding the Strategy. However, an examination of the Joint Staff Advisory Notes (JSANs) prepared by the Bank and the Fund generally express concern on the scope and depth of the consultations. Among the major factors advanced for this shortcoming are the following:

- Sometimes poor governance considerations limit the participation of segments of the population from the PRSP process.
- Funding constraints inhibit the carrying out of full-scale studies, thus limiting the comprehensiveness of certain studies and the conclusiveness of their results.
- Countries experiencing serious budgetary deficit problems view the PRSP as an opportunity to access concessional loans from the Bank and the Fund. In this respect, the JSANs note that certain countries rushed the PRSP process without adequately addressing some of the fundamental issues in order to obtain quick access to the funds.

109. For the nine countries surveyed, the degree and level of involvement of the cultural community could be attributed to the following three main factors:

- 1) The existence of a strong intellectual capacity and institutional infrastructure for cultural research and dissemination (through educational systems and mass media) ensured a solid foundation and historical tradition in countries such as Ghana, Senegal, Nigeria and Mali. These countries have a broad based network of institutions dealing with research, training and advocacy in several domains of culture and probably for a much longer period than the other countries included in this study. This is also supported by a strong and varied intellectual capacity and competence to easily advocate for the integration of cultural issues in many national issues, including PRSPs.
- 2) The political history of the four countries reveals the leadership role played by their political leaders in the struggles for African Cultural Renaissance (Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana; Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal; Modibo Keita of Mali and Nnamdi Azikwe of Nigeria). Therefore the political elites and policy- and decision-makers are accustomed to the idea of projecting culture in all spheres of governmental activities, and take pride in the role the founding fathers of their countries played in this respect.
- 3) The means that the four countries have already developed a tradition of incorporating cultural issues in policy formulation and decision-making processes. This, in turn, makes it easier for planners and programme managers to grasp the potential of culture in poverty reduction. There is evidence of cultural specialists being involved in the PRSP negotiations in Ghana and Mali.

110. Apart from the enabling environment (strong intellectual tradition and political history) that favours cultural research and dissemination in the four countries, there are other factors that generally limit the involvement of the cultural sector in the PRSP process.

- From the information available to this study, some countries (Gambia, Benin and Congo) involved cultural specialists with no relevant expertise or experience in dealing with culture and development issues. In some cases archaeologists, conservationists or historians were associated with the PRSP process to provide relevant cultural advice, but they were unfamiliar with the concepts and issues involved.

- Because the PRSP concept is based on the neo-liberal economic approach, there is bound to be very limited policy space for culture as the instrumental function is bound to be given more prominence than the intrinsic value. An examination of the objectives and performance indicators of the PRSPs under review, clearly shows that these are largely based on economic and social considerations. As a result, the strategies identified for the realisation of the policy objectives equally give prominence to economic and social issues. In this respect, only a determined government intervention could ensure a significant role for culture. This explains the case for Ghana, Mali, Senegal and Nigeria.

111. It might be necessary to demonstrate the outcome of incorporating culture in PRSP in the countries under review. The PRSP forms the basis for the preparation of the World Bank and the IMF business plans, commonly known as Country Assistance Strategies. To what extent has the cultural inputs in the country PRSPs under review, been translated into concrete programmes? In Senegal, Mali and Ghana, cultural industries have been incorporated in their CAS signed with the World Bank. This resulted in the provision of development assistance funds for the development and promotion of cultural industries in these countries (music and film industry in Ghana, crafts in Mali and music in Senegal).

112. It is important to note that the digital revolution has transformed the structure of the creative industries, mainly through the overlap that technological convergence creates with other sectors such as ICTs. Convergence makes it possible for creative goods and services to be increasingly made available digitally in homes, workplaces and over mobile systems at ever greater speeds, using a wide variety of means. However, in spite of the diversification of the dissemination channels, there are accusations that authenticity and diversity are being compromised through mass production, dumping of low-quality pirated products in developing markets and increasing homogenisation of products and services. This makes the dissemination medium as important as the content and form of the products and services. However, an examination of the cultural inputs of the PRSPs under review shows that emphasis has been placed more on the issue of connectivity and accessibility to the new technologies, rather than on the content being disseminated. Yet the impact of the content may be profound, and may reduce cultural diversity and increase cultural alienation, particularly of youth. In appraising the contribution of ICT to poverty reduction, the PRSPs place emphasis on the social benefits and economic returns as it relates to the number of internet hosts, personal computers, main lines, mobile sets, television and radio sets and the coverage of radio and television programs (nationally or regionally), with limited or no consideration for the cultural impact of these technologies on the local populations.

113. These issues brings to the fore the question of developing and strengthening national capacity to carry out effective analysis of the cultural impact of poverty reduction strategies, in order to ensure the safeguarding and promotion of cultural diversity.

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

114. The aforesaid issues pose several challenges for policy, planning and programming.

115. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper exercise can be seen as a work-in-progress. The idea was initiated in 1999 and became fully operational in 2000. The PRSP is still an experimental project of the Bretton Woods Institutions, designed to provide a new development aid mechanism to redefine the relationship between the donors and recipient countries. The first comprehensive review and evaluation of the strategy was done only in 2005, with the participation of the different levels and categories of the stakeholder community to enable the Bank and the Fund to draw lessons from the first five years of experimentation. The results of the review and evaluation exercise are expected to help in improving the efficiency of the performance of PRSPs.

116. It is expected that the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the PRSP is bound to be faced with internal shortcomings, weaknesses and possible tensions between the various parties that could curtail its credibility, efficiency and effectiveness.

117. Because the PRSP is a requirement for countries to receive concessional assistance from the World Bank and the IMF, as well as to benefit from debt relief under the HIPC Initiative, it provides an opportunity for a country to rush the preparation in order to benefit quickly from the aid regime. This factor drives countries to skip time-consuming, but essential, poverty assessment studies that should provide them with conclusive and empirical evidence of the poverty situation in their respective countries. In almost all the PRSPs under review, this anomaly leads to weak analysis of the causes or determinants of poverty, resulting in poor intervention strategies for poverty reduction. The situation has always been a major source of tension between the Bank and the Fund on the one hand, and recipient countries on the other hand.

118. The tension underlines the dangers inherent in flawed strategies that compromise standards and quality, and hence pose problems for delivery and impact on poverty reduction. It also reveals the disadvantages in linking PRSPs with concessional assistance and debt relief for countries eager to receive quick relief for their difficult financial situations.

119. Another implication for policy and planning has to do with the tension on the issue of priorities. The definition of priorities of two parties (the Bank/Fund and the recipient countries) is another area of tension that tends to undermine the credibility of the system. While countries insist that strategies reflect genuine national priorities which could reduce poverty, the Bank and the Fund insist more on methodological and accountability issues, ensuring that the funds are wisely used in a transparent policy environment and solely for the purpose for which they were granted.

120. In spite of the shortcomings of the PRSP, it can be viewed as a mutual accountability framework between the donor community and recipient country. In that way, recipient countries are empowered to prepare customised development strategies that respond to national priorities, and donors are in turn encouraged to provide predictable harmonised assistance that is aligned with country priorities.

121. This points to certain fundamental issues or problem areas that need to be addressed if the cultural relevance and effectiveness of poverty reduction strategies are to be enhanced.

- Low level of awareness of the role and importance of culture in the PRSP process, by those involved in the planning, programming, implementation and evaluation.
- Lack of or limited level of involvement by cultural specialists in the PRSP preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation process.
- Poor governance issues limit broad-based participation of the poor in the PRSP process and in some cases leads to inaccurate reporting of Annual Progress Reports (APRs) on the situation of poverty in a given country.
- Politicising the PRSP process, by circumventing the implementation and standard expenditure process through the use of “exceptional” protocols and procedures.
- In some circumstances where cultural experts have been involved, the case for culture has not been adequately made, leading to flawed conclusions and inappropriate interventions.
- There is also the difficulty of institutionally absorbing the results of poverty assessment data. Some PRSP planners and programme managers complain of the size and the scientific details involved in anthropological studies. In the absence of suitable guidelines on how to make use of these studies, it limits their ability to mainstream cultural issues into PRSP process.
- For cultural policies that are cast in the traditional perspective and narrow concept and understanding of culture, the links with development sectors of the economy are not clearly established. Thus, developing cultural policies based on an expanded concept of culture, with clearly established linkages to other economic sectors, facilitates the task of ensuring culture’s contribution to economic development and poverty reduction.

IV. THE WAY FORWARD: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

122. The following conclusions and recommendations for follow-up action would seem to be appropriate.

- The case for culture has not been adequately in many instances and there is a need to develop and implement ***policy advocacy programmes*** for high-level decision makers, as well as ***awareness-raising and sensitisation*** activities for senior level planning and programming officers involved in the PRSP process. These should cover the potential role of culture in poverty reduction strategies and projects and can use a best practices approach.

- To ensure the desired outcome for culturally-relevant poverty reduction activities, it is necessary to develop realistic **cultural indicators and methodological tools** to enhance the incorporation of cultural issues into PRSPs, as well as to ensure the efficient measurement of the performance of these projects.
- More **action research**, based on empirical evidence, is needed to enhance our understanding of the relationship between culture and poverty issues.
- More targeted **training and capacity building** is needed for cultural experts to enhance their understanding of poverty and development issues, and for planners and programme managers involved in the implementation and management of poverty reduction projects, to develop their capability to better understand and incorporate cultural issues into poverty reduction strategies, programmes and projects
- There is need to advocate for the inclusion of culture in the PRSP as a:
 - **Cross-cutting issue** for all sector policies, programmes and projects;
 - **Strategic Pillar** which should ensure its comprehensive development as a growth sector of the economy, rather than as an instrument to further the development objectives of other sectors;
 - **Benchmark indicator** for measuring the performance of the PRSP.
 - Cultural Agencies and Institutions require **representation on the PRSP supervisory and technical committees** responsible for the supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the delivery of poverty reduction programmes and projects .

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