

**AFRICAN'S COMMISSION
UNION INTERNATIONALE DE LA MARIONNETTE**

Organisation Internationale fondée en 1929, rattachée à l'UNESCO/ www.unima.org

S/c Musée National du Mali

BP. 159, Bamako

Tel: (+223) 65 83 53 63;

E-mail: madousam2002@yahoo.fr

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The balance of this first mandate of the Commission is partly positive. We were unable to start the activities linked with some of our main objectives. Activities still determinant for the live of the structure in Africa. But the few achieved results give us the hope of a best future for the continental Organ, if we success to meet the requested conditions to deal with these objectives.

In first, we need to note that the beginning of the activities within the commission was hard. The president of the Commission having chosen for the participation of all the African responsables in the work, that constrained us, in first time, to deal with some difficulties which the management asked more time that foreseen.

This option not shared of the president had as aim to create a solidarity, for the convergence of our efforts in the work and, so, to encourage the set up of a strong basement of the UNIMA in Africa. So, in first, the Commission had to deal with these difficulties inherent with the work in group, the cooperative work, but also with the difficulties of the members to find their own organisation in order to spend a part of their time within the activities of the Commission.

Really, that contributed to distract us and to push us away from our task. In the course of the first year 2008-2009, there was the manifest intention of some councillors to put in place a system of discrimination among the UNIMA members in Africa. This discrimination that consisted to create members of first rate (the who are doing puppet theatre) and of second rate (the producers, the theoreticians and puppet sympathisers) didn't find its way.

So, it's after a trimester of exchanges of ideas and discussions that the Commission was able to elaborate and to submit its program of activities about diverse and various objectives.

For more efficacy in the task, we put in place a kind of internal original organisation cutting the Continent in "UNIMA Zone of development", each Zone being entrusted to an international councillor. So, we were able to start some activities during this first year:

- The creation of a collaborating network between the UNIMA Centres of Africa and the raising of links between our UNIMA Centres and the ones from the rest of the world.
- The implantation and the promotion of the UNIMA in Africa
- The conception of a roadmap for the elaboration of the repertory of the African companies
- The creation of the Newsletter of the Commission.

For the second year 2009-2010, we envisage to begin the execution of a part or of the totality of the rest of the program, in accordance with the scheduled calendar. But, it was more spent in the consolidation of activities begun during the first year.....

- The exchanges and collaboration between the African centres in one side and, on other side, between the African centres and the ones of the rest of the world.
- The implantation and the promotion of the UNIMA in Africa

- The Newsletter of the Commission

Among the activities that we were not able to raise during the second year, in spite of our will, essentially, we have to emphasize:

- The installation of a system of inter-African meeting of the puppet theatres.

- The production of a book or a CD Rom about the puppetry in Africa

- The elaboration of the repertory of the African puppet troupes and companies; in spite of the existence of a roadmap.

These different activities were sharing, in general, the fact to need a material and financial support that the Commission can't reach.

During the third year 2010-2011, not only we had difficulties to deal with other activities, but also to follow with the current activities like: the exchanges between national centres, the Newsletter of the Commission, the repertory of the troupes and companies of Africa. Furthermore the lack of material and financial means to begin new activities, the lassitude was making headway among the members of the Commission. This situation, very unfavourable to our progression, asked us to revise with more objectivity. So, we chose one or two activities that we should be able to deal with the mean allowed to the different Commissions. In consultation with the International General Secretary, unanimously, our choices were the edition of the first repertory of the African puppet troupes and companies and the organisation of a meeting of the Commission, that means the presidents of the UNIMA centres of Africa.

We took advantage of our participation in the UNIMA Council meeting in Dordrecht - Holland, to give this information, but also to evoke our concerns about the consequences of our difficulties to deal with some activities, regarding the future of the Commission. Lastly, but not less important, during this 3rd year, the Commission bought a laptop computer, in order to permit the president to make efficiently the work of his charge.

The fourth year didn't add a great change in the general situation of the Commission. For the edition of the repertory, Except some ones, the presidents of the UNIMA Zone of development and the presidents of the national centres, showed them unsuitable of the expectation, for the research and the supply of the informations about the troupes and companies being dependent on their zones, or their countries.

This state of fact took the fastness of a general demobilisation observed from the month of november 2011. A great majority of the members of the Commission only answered one sent message on four, speaking about the ones still staying in contact.

This is in this atmosphere that the president of the Commission was invited to take part to the meeting organised by the UNIMA section of Yaoundé, Cameroon, in the frame of the 2nd edition of his international festival *Noël en Marionnette*. In spite of the financial load he had to spend, he accepted the invitation. Because there was an opportunity in the perspective to work on the implantation and the promotion of the UNIMA en Africa. And the results have exceeded our estimation. Because, more than a lecture about the UNIMA during a conference, we had the occasion to take contact with puppeteers from other country of Central Africa. That permitted us to make a great step in the activities of the elaboration of the repertory.

The meeting of the members of the Commission, the second priority activity was obvious urgently.

Unfortunately, it had to be held only through Skype on Sunday March 17th, 2012, after three attempts to organise it respectively in Niamey, Douala and Bamako. In the agenda of this meeting by Skype, very hardly scheduled, we had:

- The texts managing the activities within the Commission: appreciations and propositions
- The objectives of the Commission: appreciations and propositions
- The succession of the President of the Commission: deliberation and propositions

It was not finished before the conclusion of this report. In fact, it was cut by an electricity cut-off in Bamako. The second session that was scheduled for the Monday 26, was not held because of connexion troubles in South Africa, Janni Younge being the coordinator and political and military difficulties in Mali.

In conclusion, we can remind that the Commission got results regarding some of its objectives: the creation of the Newsletter, the editing of the first repertory of African puppet troupes and companies, the implantation of the UNIMA in Africa.

With the help of the web master, Fabrice Guilliot, the Newsletter was created in March 2009. Published under the tittle *UNIMA AFRIKI KUNAFONI* it is in its fourth issue on March 2012. This is a enough rich publication that informs us about the development of the puppetry art and the well-being of the UNIMA in Africa.

The first repertory of the African troupes and companies which the task was stretched on the four of the mandate now is reality. Without to be exhaustive regarding the inventory of the companies, this is a very simple document that informs about the addresses of the puppet companies in a dozen of African countries and, often, from the diaspora.

Seeing the numbers, the implantation of the UNIMA in Africa was a satisfaction. Indeed, when the Commission saw the light, only seven (7) African countries had an UNIMA Centre in activity: South Africa, Algeria, Burkina Faso, Kenya, le Mali, Niger and Togo. The four years permit us the creation of an UNIMA Centre in Benin, Ivory Cost, Cameroon and Senegal. A fifth country, Egypt, that had its UNIMA Centre during these four years, had have to take contact directly with the International General Secretary

Currently, we have three other countries that could have their UNIMA Centre, at the end of the meeting of the Executive Committee organised in the frame of the Congress. There are: Congo Brazzaville, Chad and the Tunisia. That will give us a total number of fifteen countries members of the UNIMA in Africa.

With these different results, now, this is the hardest one that begins for the continental Organ. Because, from now on, we have to fight for the preservation of these acquirements, but, also, to try to go ahead. But, the activities that have to permit us to act in this way, are asking material and financial means that stay out of reach of the Commission*¹. We have a great wish that the steps made by the General Secretary near the direction of the UNESCO, will success to let us to show the full dimension of our volunteer and our dedication for the development of the puppetry art in Africa under the aegis of the Union Internationale de la Marionnette, UNIMA.

The President:

Mamadou Samaké.

*1 – See details in the annual report 2009-2010, dated on April, 14th, 2010.