FINAL COMMUNIQUE OF THE FIRST FRONTLINE FILM FESTIVAL

The First Frontline Film Festival and Workshop held in Harare, Zimbabwe, from 15 - 21 July 1990 under the aegis of the Ministry of Information Posts and Telecommunications and the unique support of the OAU, SADCC Secretariat and Fepaci, was the result of the need to identify actions in co-operation in order to reinforce solidarity and friendship among SADCC member states, particularly in the cultural field. It was also motivated by our recognition of the unique geographic and historic nature of this sub-region of the African continent.

While being held under the seemingly "optimistic" atmosphere in the region as regards the liberation of South Africa, the Workshop still regards the situation there as being far from the desired goals of the liberation of Africa.

The festival was attended by delegates from Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, members of the SADCC sub-group of the continent, as well as delegates from the ANC.

We also note the continued and valued support of the Nordic Council and the Commonwealth Foundation for the development of cinema in the region.

The Festival was also attended by personalities and eminent filmmakers from Africa, who brought to the Festival their rich experiences for the benefit of the development of the cinema in the region.

Representatives of progressive forces in the cinema field from Africa and Europe also participated in the Festival.

Being a follow up of earlier forums and the Niamey and Harare Declaration discussion, the film industry in Africa and the Southern African region in particular, the Workshop could not but feel disappointed by the inadequate steps taken towards solving the long existing problems facing cinema in Africa.

Analysing the existing conditions of cinema in the region the participants note:

1. That there is yet no regional policy and strategy for the development of culture and communication. There is also the absence of viable structures and mechanisms to develop real co-operation within the region. That situation does not permit the valorization of the cultural-historical heritage and potential existing in the region. The little co-operation that has been undertaken to date has been mainly bilateral and on a ad-hoc basis.
2. That there is quite a substantial stock of film equipment in the region which is grossly under-utilised owing to lack of knowledge of its availability and lack of communication between the owners and the prospective users.

3. That in the field of training there doesn't exist a regional policy and programme to enable the use of the existing facilities and institutions.

4. That there is a total absence of African and even Southern African films being distributed in the region owing to the inherited and yet unchanged distribution structures and the lack of promotion of the exhibition of those kinds of films.

5. That the aesthetic development of the African cinema is still very disturbing, and it requires greater efforts at instilling an African identity, more so in the areas of language, censorship and the role of women in the cinema.

6. That there is no permanent programme for the co-production of films and video in order to promote the culture and potential of the region.

7. That the national television networks in the region need to reorientate themselves and their role in the cultural development of the peoples of this region.

8. That to date National film workers associations do not exist in most of the countries of the region to help rally film workers towards film development in their countries, the region, and continent as a whole.

20 July 1990
Therefore, we SADCC delegates to the First Frontline Film Festival and Workshop recommend that:

1. That SADCC Council of Ministers adopt a Declaration on Culture from the SADCC region, outlining and clarifying the relationship between national and regional policies, objectives and responsibilities of member states in the development of film, information, culture and the arts.

2. Regional film makers and artists and experts from other cultural disciplines wishing to participate be included in the drafting of the proposed Declaration on Culture for SADCC.

3. Regional film makers and artists and experts from other cultural disciplines be charged with drafting a programme of action to implement the proposed Culture Charter for SADCC in such a way that short-term, medium and long-term phases and projects are detailed.

4. All member states of SADCC which have not yet done so, adopt national policies on culture and information incorporating the principles of the OAU Cultural Charter for Africa.

5. All member states of SADCC place levies on all films, film-projects, videos and television programmes from outside Africa in order to create a National Film Fund for financing training programmes, refurbishment of non-commercial cinema halls, construction of new halls, film production and film distribution.

6. All member states create National Film Boards with representatives from all sections of the the film industry and relevant policy making bodies.

7. The SADCC Council of Ministers, through the culture and information centre, set up a Regional Revolving Fund for film production to be financed from SADCC sourced funds.

8. All SADCC states set up national structures for distributing films which should be integrated into regional, Pan-African and international system.

9. All SADCC states reach agreement to join one film market for purposes of:

a) Acquiring international film;

b) Establishing a regional credit system acceptable to all regional film establishments for encouraging SADCC film-makers to use regional facilities in film production;
c) Making the UAPTA acceptable to all regional film establishments as payment for film production and other costs.

10. All SADCC states guide and rationalise donor-funded projects in order to safeguard the interests and objectives of the region and to prevent duplication and harmful competition.

11. All SADCC Ministers of Commerce and Industry, ensure that film is classified and registered as a trade commodity in all PTA directories or registers.

12. SADCC states stipulate minimum quotas for national, regional and Pan-African programme content in television, film and radio broadcasting for the purpose countering the overwhelming dominance of foreign programmes.

13. The SADCC Council of Ministers, through the Cultural/Information sector sponsor an inventory and assessment of existing regional facilities, skills and equipment in the fields of film, television and communications.

The inventory and assessment should include projects as well, whether they are near completion, pending or in the planning stage.

All major infrastructural projects in film to be undertaken only after thorough feasibility studies involving film-makers and governments should understand the full implications of their decisions on the projects in order to ensure their permanent support and commitment.

14. Following the regional survey of facilities and skills and the production of a thorough feasibility study, a regional film training school be established for film-makers at all levels.

15. The first Frontline Film Festival set up a steering committee of regional film-makers to be co-ordinated by the Zimbabwe Film, Television and Allied Workers Union and include one member each from Zambia, Mozambique and Angola.

The responsibility of the steering committee will be to set up a Regional Bureau of Film and Video which shall be responsible for:

a) Organising a regular Southern African Film Festival in conjunction with FEPACI;

B) Following up on the recommendations of the Workshop;

c) Encouraging SADCC film workers to form national unions affiliated to FEPACI and which should mobilise for their own protection and empowerment and for the creation of a regional film workers association.
d) Compiling and publishing a directory of film makers, skills, services and facilities in the region.

e) Creating and administering a computerised data base for the film industry;

f) Establish a newsletter on film making and film activities for the SADCC region.

g) Request and obtain observer status in the SADCC Consultative Annual Conferences;

h) Advocate regional co-operations and co-production while providing advice on such matters as insurane, customs and immigration;

i) Liaise with the SADCC Culture/Information sector and the SADCC Business Council on matters of film.

16. In each SADCC state, film-makers, film experts and other cultural workers initiate a thorough review of existing censorship structures as a prelude to the launching of national debates on censorship.

17. SADCC film-makers and their associations commit themselves individually and collectively to exercise positive discrimination in favour of women film-makers when considering training, employment, leadership and other opportunities in film.

In conclusion, we the delegates to this Workshop and First Frontline Film Festival call upon all film-workers in the region individually and collectively to address themselves continually to the issues raised in this communiqué and to persuade their governments and institutions to implement these recommendations.

ADOPTED BY DELEGATES FROM:

Angola,
Botswana,
Malawi,
Mozambique,
Namibia,
Swaziland,
Tanzania,
Zambia,
Zimbabwe.

20 July 1990
STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL

- To lobby for regional agreements to assist film production and distribution within a frame of a SADCC agreement on the promotion of cultural industries.

- To galvanise film-makers from the region to work together to undertake the task of developing cinema on a cultural basis as well as on an economic one.

- To improve the links between film-makers from the region.

- To make links with film-makers from other regions of Africa where cinema culture is more highly developed and to be able to draw on their experience.