**UNCC/ADM/105/2020 20th January, 2020**

**PRESS RELEASE FOR THE REVAMPING OF THE CREATIVE SECTOR IN UGANDA**

Date: Monday 20th January 2020

Venue: Media Centre Kampala

Time: 12pm

Media Fraternity,

Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen

I bring you warm greetings from Uganda National Cultural Centre.

As you may all know, Uganda National Cultural Centre commonly known as the National Theatre was established in 1959 by the Uganda National Cultural Centre Act 1959 (and amended in 1965) with the mandate to Preserve, Promote and Popularize Uganda’s Cultural heritage in Uganda and beyond. UNCC, is a semi-autonomous body under the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social development. The organisation is governed by a Board of Trustees who are appointed by the Minister of GLSD

Over years UNCC has been an icon in this country as a center for nurturing culture especially performing and visual artists and a number of celebrities here in Uganda have been groomed by and through UNCC.

In an effort to execute our mandate, today we are initiating a campaign to ensure that cultural initiatives and activities are revamped and contribute effectively to socio - economic development in Uganda.

This campaign is aimed addressing the following:

* Creating visual literacy to the people and especially young people in the country.
* Contributing to employment creation for the youth through the Arts
* Strengthen the vibrancy of the sector which is economically empowered
* Establish opportunities and collaborations for the stakeholders locally like taking precedence in the National functions and internationally.

You may wish to note and understand that the creative industry contributes enormously to the GDP of this country in the past few years. In terms of tax revenue, according to UBOS, 2014, cultural and creative goods and services contributed Ug. Shs. 12.6 billion (US$6.7million) between 2006 -2009, and import duty alone contributed Ug. Shs. 8.6 billion. This an indicator that the industry has great potential.

I would like to give an example of Nollywood in Nigeria which is second to oil as a revenue earner to the country and Hollywood in USA which we all know. I am sure the culture and creative Industry in Uganda can also achieve the same.

We have met a number of people to support this campaign to revamp the sector. Among them is Mr. Hamis Kiggudu whom you all know very well. He donated 200 copies of his recently released book entitled “Success and Failure based on reason and reality” to UNCC. The Board of Trustees would like to give these books to the artists in the sector through the Uganda National Culture Forum members. We are sure after reading the book, one cannot remain the same in the areas of personal growth and development. The book provides Ham Kiggundu's personal suggestions on mindset change, money, and family life issues among others. I would like to encourage the stakeholders in the creative industry to embrace the reading culture.

I am also happy to inform you that we have been given permission from the author to translate this book into all languages in Uganda. This will give many Ugandans an opportunity to read and understand it in their mother tongue. We’ll reach out to other people to bring them on board and support this campaign.

**ACTIVITIES TO REVAMP THE CREATIVE SECTOR**

UNCC together with the Uganda Culture Forum is starting a one one stop centre which is a digital platform to address some of the challenges facing the sector. Some of the benefits of the one stop centre include income for artists, revenue generation, employment creation and systematic collection of data on artists in country.

**NATIONAL EVENTS**

UNCC will become more visible in national events by supporting big numbers of artists to participate in them. We are are starting with the 26th NRM Liberation celebrations due on 26th January 2020 in Ibanda. UNCC will support and facilitate over 100 members of groups from western region. We will continue to support the same number of groups for the national events which happen frequently. Participation of these groups in the various national and international functions will result into revamping cultural performances for social economic transformation.

**CULTURAL EXCHANGES**

With support and through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Government of Uganda, UNCC has secured training and cultural exchange opportunities for artists in India, Turkey, Arab Republic of Egypt and Islamic Republic of Iran among others. These bi-lateral cultural relations are aimed at creating opportunities for the sector. We are calling upon artists who have interests in these countries to register interest with UNCC.

**FESTIVALS**

We are starting a UgaFest to become Uganda's official international festival to take place on 21-23, September 2020 in Kampala. This is in preparation for Uganda participation at the 2021 East African Arts and Culture Festival (locally known at Jamafest). This will provide an opportunity for over 122 districts to send groups to showcase at this Ugafest. This will add to the number of festivals in the country showcasing talent and creativity. We will be visiting the districts to interest them and to identify groups and individuals in the following areas (fashion, dance, oral traditions, puppetry, crafts, comedy, theatre, indigenous knowledge, cuisine (food preparation), film, music among others. Those in Kampala and neighboring districts can register with UNCC.

**REGIONAL CENTERS**

UNCC has embarked on a mission to create regional centers in the various parts of the country aimed at:

* Identifying and promoting talent in regions.
* Creating employment among the youth through performing Arts
* Bring about development in the different regions
* Take theatre to the people in the regions.

The cultural centres will be established in the selected four region that includes, Masaka in the Central, Kisoro in the West, Gulu in the North and Mbale in the East as the target headquarters of the regional Cultural centres. The process of implementing the project will entail acquiring resources that will be used to purchase land in the proposed areas and establish Centres. The Institution will after the establishment of the venture have an operational staff that will be charged with advancing the institution’s mandate

I would like therefore to call upon all well-wishers and lovers of the creative sector both locally and internationally, to come out and support this campaign through:

1. Capacity Building opportunities
2. Infrastructural development including equipment
3. Financial contributions
4. Research and publication

We would like to further interact with you, please visit us at our offices at Dewinton road plot 2, 4 & 6. Or call 0414254567

Thank you so much for your time.

For God and My country.

Sam Kelo Okello

**CHAIRPERSON BOARD OF TRUSTEES**