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**Circular Letter**

**All ARSO Members**

**The Chief Executive Officers**

**CC: Desk Officers.**

**Dear Sir/Madam,**

I wish to present the compliments of the **African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO)** to all the **Chief Executive Officers, Management and Staff of all the esteemed ARSO members**, and to refer to the above subject matter, please.

As you are aware, the 63rd ARSO Council in its virtual meeting on 26th November 2020 approved the theme for the ARSO 2021 - African Day of Standardisation and Essay Competitions, as the **"The role of Standardisation in promoting Arts, Culture and Heritage – The Creative Economy in Africa."** The theme is based on the AU 2021 theme as Arts, Culture, and Heritage. **On 13-14 October 2020, the AU officially declared the Year 2021 as The AU Year of the Arts, Culture, and Heritage and adopted the theme for 2021 as "Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building Africa We Want".**

Already under the Nairobi Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries in Africa 2005, the African Union is calling on its member States to **establish standardization and quality assurance mechanisms** to ensure competitiveness and marketability of African cultural goods and services. ARSO under its **ARSO TC 77 on Creative Economy** is aiming to harmonise African Standards and Conformity Assessment systems to facilitate the production and trade in the creative Industry in Africa. The theme is also a call on African countries to focus on the African World Heritage Day, May 5, which was proclaimed by the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO (November 2015), African World Heritage to promote African Heritage.

**The UN had also in 2019, under RESOLUTION 74/198 (A/C.2/74/L.16/Rev.1 - E - A/C.2/74/L.16/Rev.1 - Desktop (undocs.org))** on International Year on Creative Economy for Sustainable Development 2021, adopted, by consensus, **declared 2021 the International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development.** Under this declaration, the UN encourages all parties to acknowledge the potential contribution of creative economy sectors to achievement of the sustainable development goals. The UN underscores that, **2021 marks the right moment for all stakeholders, including governments, private sectors, civil society, international organizations, academics, and cultural and creative entities to work together, exchange knowledge and experiences, build networks, and scale up collaboration (International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development, 2021 | UNCTAD).**

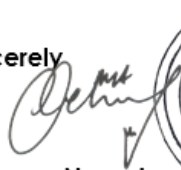
The UN encourages all to observe the year in accordance with national priorities to raise awareness, promote cooperation and networking, encourage sharing best practices and experiences, enhance human resource capacity, promote an enabling environment at all levels as well as tackle the challenges of the creative economy.

It is in this regard, therefore, that the Central Secretariat wishes to present **the Specific Document for the 8th Essay Competitions**, to facilitate the competitions within the Universities in the member States, and to kindly appoint (re-confirm) and designate responsible Officials for the Essay Competition Programme, to facilitate Direct communications and engagements to facilitate the outcomes of this programme. A form for this purpose is attached, for your kind attention. This is important because the Central Secretariat is organising special training for the Essay Competition Responsible Officials in order to improve the programme and learn from the best practices which have been documented in the program, to facilitate participation and quality of the essays.

**Please note that the deadline for the submission of the Essay to the ARSO Central Secretariat is 4th June 2021.**

Once more we thank all the members for the declared interest in the programme, and **I wish to once more, take this opportunity to renew to the Office of the Chief Executive Officers, Management and Staff of all the esteemed ARSO members, the Assurances of my highest considerations.**

Yours Sincerely

  
**Dr Hermogene Nsengimana**  
**Secretary General.**

