

PRESS RELEASE

Culture Centers Urged to Set a Uniform Structure

Panelists Proposed Possible Solutions for the Challenges of Culture Centers

Monday August 5 2019 | Bahirdar – A consultative forum that aims to list out the challenges of culture centers and provide possible solution was held yesterday at Grand Resort and Spa, Bahir Dar.

The forum entitled “**The Role and Challenges of culture centers in Bahir Dar**”, ensemble more than 80 participants including university vice presidents, directors, regional culture sector representatives, and artists.

A brief explanation about the meanings and understanding of culture, cultural centers, and cultural institutions as well as the scope and limitation of these centers in Ethiopia has been presented by Dr. Waltenigus Mekonnen (Cultural Studies teacher in Bahir Dar University).

Mr. Endris Abdu, Amhara region culture and tourism bureau vice head, said:-

“Today’s forum can be said the first in its kind in-terms of being a holistic platform for all actors who are working on cultural centers.”

The forum was organized by SELAM ETHIOPIA – an international, non-government, and non-for-profit organization that operates in Ethiopia and other countries to create an enabling environment for cultural growth. SELAM ETHIOPIA is currently implementing a three-year project – Culture Leads the Way (CLtW) – in Addis Ababa and four regional states to strengthen and advance the participation of culture actors in the development process through different forms of cultural expressions as well as to showcase the importance of culture in the development of social, political, and cultural development in the country.

Most importantly, panelists raised a budget constraint and unclear allocation of professionals as part of the key challenges of culture centers that bans the centers from achieving their mission, vision, and capacity.

In addition to the aforementioned challenges faced by the culture centers include:

- Lack of proper Human resource professionals
- Low level of understanding/attitudinal problem by decision makers and the community in general towards culture or cultural centers
- Lack of materials such as music instruments, and printing presses to disseminate knowledge

Participants of the forum have discussed on mechanisms to alleviate the aforementioned challenges and other pertinent issues. Some of the recommended solutions were:

- To set a standardized/uniform structure for culture centers in Universities or other regional culture centers
- To establish a network of culture centers in Ethiopia that strengthen their collaboration, share experiences, reduce duplication of efforts, and integrate knowledge and resources
- Create follow-up or monitoring mechanisms of such forums

Note to Editors:-

SELAM is an international, non-government, and non-for-profit organization established in Sweden in 1997.

SELAM is committed to create an enabling environment for cultural growth that shall contribute to economic, political, and social development.

SELAM, through its country office SELAM ETHIOPIA, is a reputed name in the culture sector for:

- **Catalyzing Sectoral Transformation** through advocacy and engagement of relevant stakeholders, where we organized hundreds of networking and advocacy platforms – dubbed **Selam Cultural Forum** – a series of continual events for the last 10 years, with each edition focusing on a specific thematic topic in culture
- **Facilitating Cross-Cultural Exchange** mainly through organizing music festivals in Ethiopia, Sweden, Cuba, and other countries while providing opportunities and exposure to emerging artists and performers – our flagship annual music concert **Selam Festival Addis** is a testament.
- **Brokering Knowledge** via capacity building trainings by highly qualified international professionals to upgrade skills of Ethiopian musicians, sound engineers, artists, film makers, and professionals.

SELAM ETHIOPIA is currently implementing a three-year project – **Culture Leads the Way (CLtW)** – in Addis Ababa and four regional states that aim to strengthen and advance the participation of culture actors in the development processes through different forms of cultural expressions, including this edition of **Selam Cultural Forum**.

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