Absolutely, African languages are essential tools for sustainable, harmonious and complete development of individuals and the whole society! The conference in Saint-Louis goes back over that theme by trying to analyze what already exists with a view to identifying the failures of the past, determining the causes and recommending policies that should reflect linguistic realities of African countries. In other words, the purpose of the conference organized by the Recherches Sociolinguistiques et Didactiques laboratory is to determine the necessary means to make of African languages a true mainspring of sustainable development. The conference seeks to bring answers to a number of questions related to each of the following four areas:

- **Area 1: Language Planning**
- **Area 2: Language and Teaching**
- **Area 3: Translation and specialized lexicons**
- **Area 4: African languages and communication**

**Area 1: Language planning**

The aim of language planning is to help reach efficient communication allowing all citizens to participate fully in the development of the country. Yet, language policies in sub-Saharan Africa usually grant the advantage to the foreign languages, which results in keeping the vast majority of the non-speakers of those languages away from the issue of integrated development. The questions we reasonably ask ourselves today are the following: Are the linguistic policies implemented in these countries capable of boosting development? As most of the States are decentralizing their power so as to be nearer the populations as is the case in Senegal, isn’t it necessary, in the field of language planning, to lean more on local languages for a better implication of local communities in the management of the State and in the development process of their locality? Which role should be played by the local languages in the overall strategies elaborated for the fulfillment of the citizens and the improvement of their life quality?

**Area 2: Language and Teaching**

Great efforts have been made in several countries in sub-Saharan Africa in terms of the introduction and promotion of African languages in the educational system. One can mention, for example, – in the domain of scientific research, the organization of high level seminars, conferences and other fora – in the political field, the setting up of specialized structures (department of national languages, literacy, adult and informal education, etc.) – and in the framework of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, the contribution of NGOs and other partners. For the most part, these efforts have resulted in recommendations and specific action plans and permitted at the same time to define new visions and philosophies.
Unfortunately, in spite of all these efforts, African countries have so far not clearly carried out these visions, except for Tanzania! Many of them still use the language of the former colonizer as the sole language of instruction and State affairs. For relatively unclear reasons and contrary to the 1953 UNESCO recommendation, children start school using a foreign language; which has led to negative results denounced in several studies – like the low quality of teaching and education in general, the marginalization of the continent which, as a result, ends up totally excluded from the creation and global knowledge production.

The challenge is thus to determine the suitable language planning in the educational systems of African countries. The answers to the following questions constitute the main issues in this area. What is the purpose of language planning in the educational systems of African countries? Which curricula are needed? Which teaching materials and equipments? And, above all, which teacher training best fits into a multilingual education in line with the development prospects? What are the real costs of education in African languages? What is the share of the government on the one hand, and that of the partners and other sponsors, on the other? In a word, what should research on African languages and teaching focus on in order to match the development prospects?

**Area 3: Translation and specialized lexicons**

When it comes to help African languages serve integrated development, the translation and construction of specialized lexicons remain indispensable. In fact, access to development requires effective participation from the continent’s human resources in community life. Yet, as we know, the main stumbling block is the inaccessibility of information due to the use of a foreign language which the vast majority of the population does not master. Thus, communication through local languages remains the only way to spread the information and allow everybody to understand and contribute to the functioning of the various social, economic, political and judicial sectors of their states. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to get down to the translation/interpretation of resources in foreign languages into African ones and *vice versa*. However, in the sight of the lack of lexicographical resources in some fields, and thus the large terminological gap between source and target languages, enriching and updating the lexical stocks is a big challenge to take up. How to make African languages serve integrated development and how can translation contribute to it? How to equip African languages with specialized lexicons in the key sectors of development, particularly in the fields of education, health, trade, fishing, agriculture and rearing, etc.?

**Area 4: African Languages and communication**

With the advent of digital technology, it is no longer worth showing that languages and communication are the core of the economy. The initiatives for development (training, information, development tools…) require linguistic, communicative and technical skills just as well. The media (press, edition, telephone, ICTs…) are more and more used not only to inform but also to train and serve development initiatives. Difficulties related to what may be called “linguistic isolation” are better experienced with the advent of new communication tools, more operational, more efficient, provided that people are prepared for the situation. Getting the vast linguistic communities involved in the development process remains a must. This is mainly a question of promoting access to and use of ICTs by creating specialized lexicons in local languages and diffusing them into all the key sectors. Are African languages holding the appropriate place in communication compared to foreign languages in this age marked by the ICTs? In the same vein, one wonders the role African languages should play for a better appropriation of technological tools. In addition, considering the popularization of mobile communication devices and technological innovations (mobile banking, meteorology, pharmacopeia…), how can mass media be turned to good account in order to boost African languages and to make of them an actual tool for development?

**Registration Schedule**

Proposals should be sent to colloquersd2015@gmail.com on 30th September, 2014 at the latest. The proposal written in French or English should not exceed one page (font 12, Times New Roman, line spacing 1.5). The following elements will be included: the chosen area, the title of the article,
the abstract, five key words at most and an indicative bibliography. Moreover, the name of the author, status and affiliation, a mobile phone number and an e-mail address, the whole accompanied with a brief curriculum vitae will be mentioned.

- Notices by the scientific committee will be sent on **30th November, 2014**. Final texts for publication should be forwarded on **31st January, 2015** at the latest.

- The registration fees will be €50 (CFA 32,500F) and €25 (CFA 16,250F) for students.

**Languages of the conference:** French and English

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**Publication**

The conference proceedings will be published.

**Contact:** colloquersd2015@gmail.com