

Mamaara Kafilakaya Kpuun

Preface to the **Minyanka Dictionary**

(Translated into English from French)

I am very delighted to compose a preface for this volume: the fruit of many years of hard, methodical work. I am inspired with enthusiasm for the great effort put forward by the many who took on the task with persistence, to produce this magnificent description of one of our national languages, the Minyanka.

UNESCO declared 2008 as the International Year for Languages saying: We encourage countries all over the world to develop their local languages, guarding them all from extinction or lack of use.

It is therefore my great joy to see that in this very year (2008) the ***Minyanka Dictionary: With translations in French, Bambara, and English*** was finalized. This illustrates the firm desire of Mali to develop its own national languages and to partner with still other languages.

Everyone can see clearly that our country firmly supports the belief that "Education for All" is a human right. We are fully engaged in helping to realize the goals set for this Century of Development: especially in assuring primary education for all, where teaching in our national languages is so very important.

The dictionary in hand permits learners to have access to other languages starting from their own Minyanka language. I am so delighted to see that the Minyanka words are explained not only in our national trade language of Bambara, but also in French and English. This dictionary is a rich source of information and a very helpful tool for multi-language education in our schools.

I believe strongly that this volume should be distributed as widely as possible: used in our schools as a textbook, be available to every community whether rural or urban, and be put into the hands of each teacher and student within the Minyanka cultural context.

I challenge each Minyanka speaker: May no one forget to enrich his mother tongue, whether he is in a rural area, or in an urban one. May you all pursue how to read and write in your own language.

As a Minyanka woman once said: "To know how to read and write my mother tongue is like a passport that permits me to enter the world of

literature.” In the same way I wish also that everyone avails themselves of this passport that is theirs for the taking!

In light of all of this, may this Dictionary encourage the development of a new generation of writers in Minyanka: those capable of producing quality works in Minyanka; to publish newspapers; to collect, write down and publish their history, their folktales and stories concerning their Minyanka culture; in short to preserve the Minyanka cultural region forever.

I am delighted in how well the Minyanka Association for the promotion of Minyanka, the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and the Language Institute of Abdoulaye Barry (ILAB) worked together in cooperation all the way from the first conception of this Dictionary to its final validation. It is strong partnerships like this between local Associations, International non-governmental organizations, and Government institutions, that contribute the most benefit to the politics of developing our national languages.

In closing I want to express my deepest heart felt appreciation and thanks to all, those both near and far, who helped make this magnificent volume a reality. This resource will undoubtedly be a joy to all who use it.

May this ***Minyanka Dictionary: With translations in French, Bambara, and English*** have great success!



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