

Madame Brigitte RASAMOELINA  
Ministre de la Culture et de l'Artisanat  
Bibliothèque Nationale - Anosy  
101 Antananarivo  
Madagascar

Brussels, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Dear Minister,

Subject: Not a single theatre left in Madagascar!

The International Federation of Actors (FIA) brings together some 90 trade unions, guilds and professional associations representing performers in over 70 countries worldwide. Our Federation fights for a fair recognition of the economic, moral and social rights of performers working in theatre, live performance, television, cinema, radio and new media. FIA also supports sustainable cultural policy-making, which embraces freedom of expression and upholds the right for all to have access to a rich and diverse cultural offer.

Our Federation has long followed with concern the deterioration of the Municipal Theatre of Isotry, the only theatre in Antananarivo, whose advanced state of dilapidation led to the end of theatrical performances in 2010 - performances which had been greatly appreciated by the population up to then. Today, this important theatre is primarily rented out to religious organisations for their gatherings. In their efforts to preserve their national heritage, Madagascan artists are often reduced to practising their art in venues not suited to theatrical performances – and furthermore at a high cost, as all equipment must be hired and brought in from elsewhere. This situation is one of grave concern to FIA, all the more so, as we consider that it flies in the face of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the diversity of Cultural Expressions: a Convention which your country has ratified. That text calls on all parties to commit to a high quality cultural offer and to the recognition of the essential contribution of artists to the creative process.

We believe that none of these commitments has been upheld given the current situation in Madagascar, where there is a great shortage of theatrical venues and artists are obliged to perform in conditions that show little regard for their important role in society.

Following an initiative from the *Association des Artistes du Théâtre Malagasy*, FIA alerted the President of the Special Delegation for Antananarivo to the situation in 2012, which led the latter to promise the renovation of the Municipal Theatre of Isotry.

Unfortunately, there has been no change in the situation since then, but the successful holding of free elections in 2015 has given us hope for a new impetus. Thus, we address ourselves with confidence to you and call on you to quickly take up this issue, so that the city of Antananarivo can renew its theatrical tradition and artists can take to the stage once more in the Municipal Theatre of Isotry.

Thank you in advance for your kind consideration of this matter.

Yours Sincerely,

  
Dominick Luquer  
General Secretary