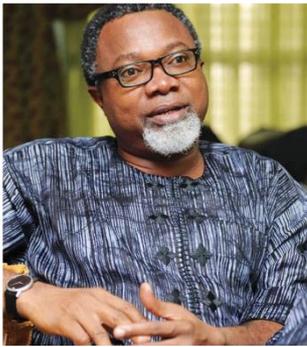


...enriches discourse on African Cinema

By Mahmood Ali-Balogun



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[Mahmood Ali-Balogun - Wikipedia](#)

OVER the years, the primordial recreational role of film has become more basic as it advances more directly into existentialist issues dealing with politics, economics and cultures from developmental perspectives.

This development communication function of film is what is expressed through the structured genre of documentary. Its collective appeal in Africa, to the level of generating exclusive content for film festivals as its universally popular progenitor had been quite limited.

The emergence in 2010 of the *iRepresent International Documentary Film Festival (iREP)* in Lagos was therefore very epochal, more so for Nigeria touted as one of the three leading filmmaking nations on the globe. It signaled both the growth of film making in Africa beyond the basics of entertainment storytelling and the diversity of audiences to ensure the sustenance of new creative frontiers.

True to its objectives, *iREP*, in the past 10 years, has established a stable platform for creatives, old and young adventurers to validate their aspirations as documentarists. It has raised the bar in terms of standards by helping to institute a benchmark for critical appraisal of indigenous documentary films in content and form on the continent; and for the locals, an embrace of documentary filmmaking as a viable career option. The increasing number and variety of films showcased year in year out attest to the growing acceptance of *iREP* as festival to include in your annual itinerary as a filmmaker.

Again, through its ever-constant theme, “*Africa in Self-Conversation*,” it has notably provoked radical conversations not only enriching the discourse on African Cinema but interrogating the direction of our collective march as a people through presentations by eminent scholars that should engage the attention of our political forerunners affirmatively.

Celebrating *iREP's* phenomenal credits in a decade of tireless activism/advocacy is a thing of pride for me having watched it emerge from its humble beginnings to a leading documentary festival not only in Africa but the globe.

I congratulate Femi and the dynamic team that has driven this great vision to achieve the remarkable milestone now being celebrated. I commend their resourcefulness, unity of purpose, focus and persistence. And I challenge them, beyond the fireworks and drumbeats of the 10th year celebration, to map the next 10 years objectively and begin immediately to cultivate deeper foundations towards ensuring that *iREP* outlives them and becomes a unique part of our national motion picture heritage to be enjoyed and celebrated by future generations. Happy 10th anniversary, *iREP*.

**Ali-Balogun, filmmaker is Chairman, Audio Visual Rights Society of Nigeria (AVRS)*
