

AKINYI ODONGO art centre

21 recommendations to the National Assembly of the Republic of Kenya

INDUSTRY SUBMISSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE

Creative Economy Bill, 2026

Strengthening the Recognition, Representation and Development of Kenya's Fashion Industry Within the Creative Economy

SUBMITTED TO	The National Assembly of the Republic of Kenya
THROUGH	The Clerk of the National Assembly
DATE	29 September 2026

SUBMISSION DETAILS

SUBMITTED TO	The National Assembly of the Republic of Kenya
THROUGH	The Clerk of the National Assembly, Parliament Buildings, P.O. Box 41842-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
SUBMITTED BY	Akinyi Odongo Art Centre (AOAC)
LEAD INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTOR	**Akinyi Odongo, O.G.W., President, Founder & Chairperson, AOAC; Founder & Creative Director, Akinyi Odongo Kenya™; Founder, MEFA Institute of Design**
DATE	**29 September 2026**

SUMMARY

Executive summary

AOAC welcomes the development of legislation establishing a stronger legal and institutional framework for Kenya's creative economy. The Bill presents an opportunity to move Kenya's creative industries toward a coordinated ecosystem of skills development, enterprise growth, investment, intellectual property creation, market access, innovation and employment.

The publicly available stakeholder draft expressly includes **fashion** within "design and creative services." AOAC's central submission is therefore not that fashion is absent, but that recognition at the scope level should be matched by substantive representation, funding, skills infrastructure, market access, research, data and value-chain development.

AOAC recommends that the framework recognise fashion as a significant creative and economic subsector; recognise the full fashion value chain; provide structured practitioner representation; incorporate fashion into national creative economy planning; ensure equitable access to financing; strengthen fashion education and recognition of prior learning; develop fashion production and innovation infrastructure; support Kenyan fashion brands in regional and international markets; connect fashion with agriculture and manufacturing; strengthen research and sustainability; coordinate intellectual property support; and develop reliable industry data.

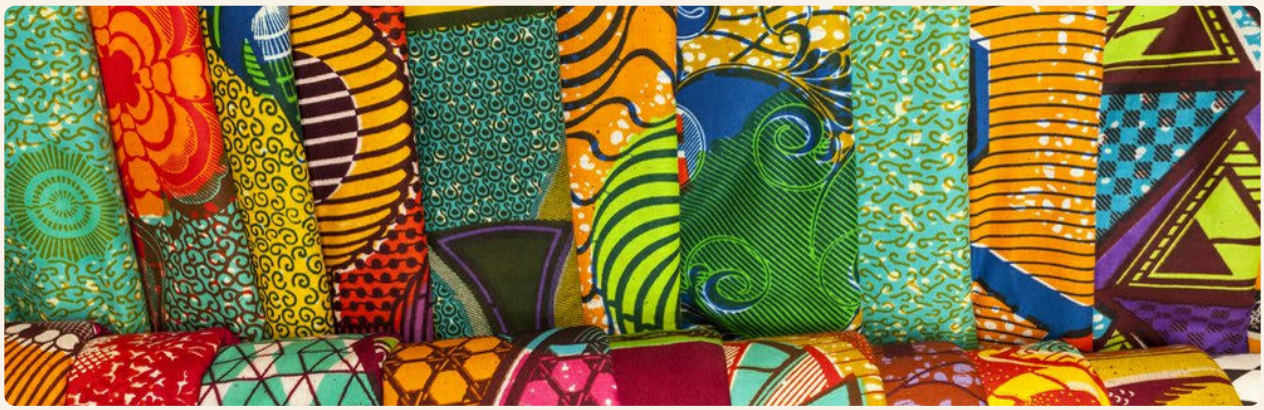
SECTION 01

Introduction

AOAC is a Kenyan creative and cultural organisation working at the intersection of **fashion, art, agriculture, sustainability, education, enterprise development, innovation and economic empowerment.** The Centre builds upon years of work within Kenya and the wider African fashion ecosystem, including initiatives previously undertaken under Fashion Agenda Africa.

AOAC's approach understands fashion as an interconnected economic and cultural ecosystem:

Agriculture → Fibre → Raw Materials → Textile Development → Design → Manufacturing →
Artisanship → Branding → Retail → Digital Commerce → Export → Culture → Tourism →
Intellectual Property → Employment → Enterprise Development



Kenyan kitenge and wax-print textiles: culture, craft and commerce in a single cloth.

SECTION 02

Core position

Fashion should not merely be included within the definition of the creative economy. Fashion should be *meaningfully represented* within the mechanisms through which the creative economy is planned, financed, trained, researched, developed, promoted and measured.

SECTION 03

Key recommendations

01

Explicitly recognise fashion as a strategic creative economy subsector

Define the fashion industry broadly to cover conception, design, development, production, manufacture, branding, marketing, distribution, retail, exhibition, export and commercialisation of apparel, textiles, accessories, footwear, fashion technology and related creative enterprises.

02

Define the wider fashion value chain

Recognise designers, tailors, textile producers, artisans, manufacturers, educators, models, stylists, photographers, media, event producers, retailers, e-commerce enterprises, innovators, farmers, cooperatives, exporters and related professionals.

03

Establish sectoral representation

Create a Creative Economy Sectoral Advisory Council or equivalent mechanism with meaningful representation from fashion and design, music, audiovisual arts, visual arts, performing arts, literary arts, crafts, digital/new media and other recognised subsectors.

04

Create fashion technical working structures

Use sectoral technical panels or working groups to advise on fashion development, skills, standards, manufacturing, enterprise, exports, sustainability, agriculture-to-fashion value chains, IP, data, technology and markets.

05

Include fashion in the National Creative Economy Development Plan

Require subsector strategies and measurable indicators covering enterprise development, textiles, local raw materials, skills, finance, innovation, sustainability, exports, technology, IP, culture, regional ecosystems and data.

06

Strengthen fashion education and skills development

Ensure creative training infrastructure supports fashion design, garment technology, pattern making, textiles, apparel production, fashion business, merchandising, digital fashion, entrepreneurship and sustainable production.

07

Recognise prior learning

Create pathways for experienced tailors, artisans, pattern makers, textile practitioners and indigenous craft practitioners to obtain appropriate skills recognition, certification and progression.

08

Include fashion in creative economy funding

Ensure eligible funding supports equipment, sampling, product development, manufacturing, studios, technology, branding, market access, export readiness, sustainability, research, apprenticeships and innovation.

09

Include fashion in creative vouchers

Permit training, equipment, product-development, market-access, digitalisation, export-readiness and sustainability vouchers to be used by eligible fashion enterprises.

10

Develop fashion creative hubs and production centres

Support shared industrial sewing, cutting, pattern-making, textile research, digital design, photography, e-commerce, incubation, mentorship and exhibition facilities.

11

Connect fashion to agriculture and manufacturing

Develop a Kenya Farm-to-Fashion / Fibre-to-Fashion Strategy linking cotton and natural fibres to processing, textile development, manufacturing, design and markets.

12

Support indigenous materials and cultural heritage

Encourage responsible use and commercialisation of indigenous textiles, traditional crafts, natural fibres, cultural expressions and local materials while respecting applicable IP and traditional-knowledge laws.

13

Strengthen IP coordination

Create practical coordination between creative-economy implementation and institutions such as KIPI and KECOBO for awareness, registration, licensing, commercialisation, enforcement referral and capacity building.

14

Establish a national creative industry database

Capture subsector-specific information on designers, manufacturers, tailors, artisans, textile businesses, schools, enterprises, cooperatives, exporters, retailers, professionals and apprentices.

15

Create a Kenyan fashion market-access programme

Connect fashion enterprises to regional African markets, AfCFTA opportunities, trade fairs, tourism, diplomatic missions, cultural events, e-commerce, retail networks and international buyers.

16

Consider lawful public-procurement opportunities

Explore transparent and compliant mechanisms enabling qualified Kenyan fashion enterprises to participate in procurement of uniforms, ceremonial apparel, cultural products, merchandise and related creative services.

17

Promote sustainable and circular fashion

Encourage responsible sourcing, natural fibres, repair, reuse, upcycling, recycling, waste reduction, circular production, traceability and environmentally responsible manufacturing.

18

Support women and youth as producers and owners

Implement enterprise-development approaches that treat women and youth as producers, owners, employers, investors and value-chain participants, not only beneficiaries.

19

Strengthen regional creative economy development

Develop regional fashion ecosystems around cotton, textiles, leather, indigenous crafts, natural fibres, cultural tourism and existing enterprise clusters.

20

Support fashion research and innovation

Prioritise indigenous fibres, cotton, water hyacinth, sustainable textiles, natural dyes, textile waste, circular design, digital fashion, AI, production efficiency and African design systems.

21

Include fashion in national creative economy reporting

Annual reporting should include fashion-specific indicators for enterprises, jobs, training, finance, exports, market access, infrastructure, innovation, regional distribution, women/youth participation and sustainability.

SECTION 04

Proposed fashion value-chain framework

01 Raw Materials

02 Agriculture & Community Production

03 Processing

04 Design

05 Production

06 Brand Development

07 Distribution

08 Market Access

09 Cultural & Creative Value

10 Economic Value

The framework should connect the Kenyan farmer to the manufacturer, artisan to designer, student to employment, entrepreneur to investment, community to enterprise, and Kenyan culture to global markets.

SECTION 05

Proposed legislative principle

PROPOSED WORDING

> **"The Government shall promote the development of the creative economy through a value-chain approach that recognises the distinct characteristics, needs and economic contribution of individual creative subsectors, including fashion, design, music, audiovisual arts, visual arts, performing arts, literary arts, crafts and digital creative industries."**

SECTION 06

Proposed fashion representation clause

PROPOSED WORDING

> **“The Cabinet Secretary shall ensure equitable and meaningful representation of recognised creative economy subsectors in consultative, technical and advisory structures established under this Act, including representation from fashion and design, music, audiovisual arts, visual arts, performing arts, literary arts, crafts and digital creative industries.”**

SECTION 07

AOAC practical industry experience

LEAD INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTOR

Akinyi Odongo, O.G.W.

President, Founder & Chairperson, AOAC
Founder & Creative Director, Akinyi Odongo Kenya™
Founder, MEFA Institute of Design

26+
years of industry experience

Founder
& first Chairperson, Kenya Fashion Council

O.G.W.
Order of the Grand Warrior

1,000s
emerging practitioners mentored



These recommendations arise from practical experience within Kenya’s fashion and creative industries. Akinyi Odongo has worked for more than **26 years** across fashion, education, enterprise development, mentorship, creative strategy and industry development.

Her work has included the development of fashion enterprises, training initiatives, industry mentorship and the advancement of local creative talent. She has also been involved in the development of structures intended to strengthen Kenya’s fashion industry, including her role as the Founder and first Chairperson of the Kenya Fashion Council.

Through Fashion Agenda Africa and related initiatives, she has mentored thousands of emerging fashion practitioners. Her recognition with the **Order of the Grand Warrior (O.G.W.)**, conferred by the fourth President of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, forms part of this wider history of contribution to the Kenyan fashion sector, including initiatives during COVID-19 that created opportunities for local tailors and designers to produce cloth masks.

SECTION 08

Fashion + agriculture

Fashion + Agriculture + Culture + Sustainability + Enterprise

AOAC's work focuses on the convergence of **Fashion + Agriculture + Culture + Sustainability + Enterprise**, including fibre-to-fashion value chains, indigenous materials, cotton development, community enterprise, women's empowerment, youth development, research and innovation.



Hand-picking cotton: the first link in the fibre-to-fashion value chain.

SECTION 09

Summary of key recommendations

NO.	RECOMMENDATION	POLICY OUTCOME
01	Explicitly recognise fashion as a strategic creative economy subsector	Clear policy recognition
02	Define the wider fashion value chain	Value-chain approach
03	Establish sectoral representation	Practitioner voice
04	Create fashion technical working structures	Industry expertise
05	Include fashion in the National Creative Economy Development Plan	Measurable strategy
06	Strengthen fashion education and skills development	Industry-ready skills
07	Recognise prior learning	Certification pathways
08	Include fashion in creative economy funding	Improved finance
09	Include fashion in creative vouchers	Accessible enterprise support
10	Develop fashion creative hubs and production centres	Shared infrastructure
11	Connect fashion to agriculture and manufacturing	Farm-to-fashion linkages
12	Support indigenous materials and cultural heritage	Culture-linked enterprise
13	Strengthen IP coordination	Better IP coordination
14	Establish a national creative industry database	Evidence-based policy
15	Create a Kenyan fashion market-access programme	Domestic/African/global markets
16	Consider lawful public-procurement opportunities	Expanded compliant market opportunities
17	Promote sustainable and circular fashion	Circular production
18	Support women and youth as producers and owners	Inclusive participation
19	Strengthen regional creative economy development	Decentralised development
20	Support fashion research and innovation	Innovation
21	Include fashion in national creative economy reporting	Accountability and measurement

SECTION 10

Conclusion

AOAC welcomes the opportunity to contribute to Kenya's creative economy legislation. The recognition of fashion within the creative economy is a constructive starting point. The next step is to ensure that recognition translates into **representation, resources, infrastructure, skills, finance, market access, research, data and measurable economic opportunity.**

Fashion sits at the intersection of creativity and productive industry. It connects agriculture to manufacturing, culture to commerce, education to employment, creativity to entrepreneurship and local production to international markets.

AOAC respectfully requests that Parliament and the relevant Committee consider these recommendations during scrutiny, public participation and amendment of the Creative Economy Bill, 2026. AOAC remains available to provide further technical input, participate in stakeholder consultations and make an oral presentation on the fashion sector and its role in Kenya's creative economy.

SUBMITTED BY



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