



AFRICOM NEWS

Issue No. 7, 2008

from the President...

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Remarkable Progress! Remarkable Challenges!

The past year has seen enormous developments and positive change at the AFRICOM Secretariat and in the workings of the Board. Whilst some of these may have taken longer than we would have wanted them to, patience and consistently keeping our eye on the objectives set for ourselves at the beginning of our term have begun to bear fruit.

We are very happy to report that the draft Strategic Plan is now available for comment. Critical comments have come through and we invite more. Some of the valuable feedback is that the plan is too ambitious. That is wonderful to hear. Reason; AFRICOM is an Africa wide and dare we say it, Diaspora body, which represents a cadre of heritage professionals who deserve to dream and think big.

The reality of our context however, tempers the dreaming and so, in keeping with our approach of a shared responsibility, accountability and inclusion - the Board eagerly awaits the arrival of the senior management team of the Secretariat. The team shall prioritise and ensure that key performance activities are identified and planned over a specific time frame.

We are pleased to announce that Burkina Faso will host the AFRICOM General Assembly 2009. This country presented an excellent and exciting proposal of collaborating and facilitating one of AFRICOM's key activities. We're making steady progress to ensure that there are sufficient funds to organize a GA of a high standard.

Over this period, we have maintained the wonderful support of two grant makers, the Getty Foundation and the Ford Foundation. We continue to sincerely appreciate their efforts of securing and conserving the rich heritage of Africa. We have just recently announced the Small Grants Fund and Consultancy Services Fund made possible by the Ford Foundation.

In the new funding portfolio, the Consultancy Services Fund provides underwriting and referral services to member museums and organizations in response to their requests that touch on technical advice and pragmatic assistance. The Small Grants Fund focuses on providing some grants to eligible organizations for programming.



Reflecting on this year through the lens of heritage on the African landscape, exciting initiatives are taking place. The re-invigoration and development of the Lagos National Museum is one such initiative.

At the opening of the Visioning Retreat for this program I stated that growth requires placing heritage in a prominent position and, without documentation of our past, it is easy to present a shallow future. We could lose valuable elements of our past, of great significance for all of Africa, unless we have a good holistic planning model in as Nigeria that can be replicated in other West African countries.

We also witnessed, with great excitement, the opening of the new Nairobi National Museum and wonderful initiatives in Mauritius and Egypt. In Tanzania, a community museum was established and it catalysed a policy review process at the government level so as to ensure inclusion and serious stakeholder participation in heritage matters.

All these are excellent examples of work in progress and committed efforts of heritage professionals with key stakeholders and partnerships. The heritage landscape of is becoming what we all and many before us dream it to be. It is a complex, challenging and dynamic landscape.

We wish you well as the year draws to a close and a new year is ushered in with all the religious and spiritual festivities across the continent. Be blessed.

Mrs. Deirdre Prins Solani
AFRICOM PRESIDENT

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AFRICOM has sought, wherever possible, to verify the information contained in this newsletter. Should you have any corrections, please send to the Secretariat for clarification in a subsequent issue.

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ISSN: 1813-0356

In-step with Africa's heritage

In these dynamic times, Africa has a real reason to boast of its illustrious and long history. Indeed, this is what this seventh edition of the new look AFRICOM Newsletter shares.

Heritage is the prime testimony of the continent's distinguished past and the bearer of its rich civilization. Kudos! Africa has a rich and diverse heritage. As you read this edition, you'll be inspired by the move by the United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization move to add Mauritius' Le Morne Cultural Landscape and Kenya's Miji Kenda Kaya Forests to the World Heritage List.

While the edition has captured more about the recognition of the historically rich African sites, it has also paid great attention to the protection of this region's cultural heritage.

Reflections on cultural activities in 2008 depict that commemorations and celebrations continued galore at the national level as some African states celebrated the International Museum Day under varied themes. Ghana and Eritrea observed this special day with much vigour that it deserves. Our hope is to get more stories regarding these captivating moments in 2009 and beyond.

Shockingly though, the sanctity of Africa's cultural heritage is under threat following the continued thievery of its artefacts. As revealed in Africa demands its artefacts; Africa has a reason to immediately put its foot down to protect and manage its diversity.

This edition wouldn't be complete without AFRICOM updating you about its forecast for Africa. Deirdre Prins-Solani, AFRICOM's President, along with the Board Members have charted out a roadmap touching on leadership of preserving this region's heritage. The story titled: *Transition plan on course*, enumerating the benefits of an empowered organization, couldn't have been better captured by Peter Okwaro, whose finger remains on the pulse of this progress and process.

Since culture is a formative and integral aspect of

development, AFRICOM is strongly committed to re-examining the role of culture in the development process. By participating in several internships and conferences, the AFRICOM team remains upbeat in improving people's well-being, enhancing their capabilities though increasing access to education, health and human and cultural development.

In this day and age thriving on the benefits of information and communications technology, our thumbs go up to the digitization efforts of Africa's heritage. *Aluka digitizes Africa's heritage*; is an article that speaks volumes in this regard. The piece gives AFRICOM members some insight of networking globally.

More worthwhile benefits are abounding to the membership as outlined in: *Be an AFRICOM Member today*. In focus is also how the heritage industry stakeholders can work together to protect and increase the importance of preserving the cultural heritage shared by all humankind.

Enjoy the read.

Humphrey Odhiambo

AFRICOM a membership based international NGO and an association for heritage professionals and stakeholders, is committed to the safe guarding, conserving, sharing African resources through resource mobilization, advocacy, capacity building, networking and awareness so as to achieve a rich vibrant heritage in Africa.

AFRICOM NEWS is an annual publication of the International Council of African Museums (AFRICOM). Please send your news and views to AFRICOM by fax, post or Email.

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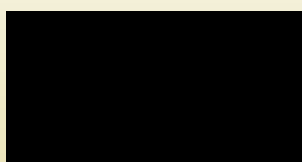
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THANK YOU!

AFRICOM and its activities in 2008 have been generously funded/supported by:



Be an AFRICOM member today

Compiled by Henry Cheruiyot

AFRICOM has embarked on a major membership drive that aims to give members the opportunity to join a network of more than 1,000 museum and heritage professionals.

With a wealth of knowledge, the professionals working in Africa's 52 countries and other countries around the world, have over the years, become great resources that have found and preserved the African heritage.

AFRICOM's focus and momentum of increasing membership is based on heightening the professionals' access to resources as they engage in the broader positioning and championing for vibrancy, dynamism, creativity and preservation of cultures within the continent.

Benefits

The benefits of being a member range from securing an AFRICOM Card that allows free entry/reduced rates to certain museums in Africa to obtaining the Annual newsletter, AFRICOM News, free of charge. In each issue, one finds information on professional topics related to museum development and AFRICOM's activities.

Members are also eligible for Consultancy Funds and Small Grants Fund. Both funds are supported by the Ford Foundation.

The Small Grants Fund means that heritage professionals or Institutions may apply for financial support in situations where they have developed a project and are short of funds or need support to travel or publish their material among other activities that are relevant to AFRICOM's mandate.

To qualify for support, the member institutions write proposals and forward them to AFRICOM to assess and make decisions on the relevance of the request. The Consultancy Fund slot enables AFRICOM to facilitate African heritage experts to undertake consultancies in museums on the continent who need assistance in a specific discipline of museum practice.

Members are also guaranteed access to AFRICOM L, a

forum where information is shared among members on matters of cultural and heritage interest through debates. They are also invited to participate in Conferences and General Assemblies and other capacity building forums that include exchange programmes.

Membership categories

There are five membership categories according to the AFRICOM Constitution. These comprise of Individual, Institutional, Associate, Student and Honorary Membership.

Those who qualify for the Individual Membership pay an annual fee of US\$ 10. They are rated as persons working full-time or part-time in Africa, museums and associated or affiliated institutions. Equally eligible in this category are former museum professionals. The Institutional Members comprise the museums or related institutions or other organizations working in Africa for the promotion of cultural and natural heritage. A membership fee of US \$ 50 is chargeable annually.

Associated Members, who according to the constitution pay an annual renewable fee of US\$ 20, are persons or organizations in Africa or elsewhere that demonstrate a marked interest in the objectives of AFRICOM and can support museums in Africa.

Honorary Members are rated as persons who have rendered exceptional services in the heritage sector in Africa or to AFRICOM qualify for free membership. The Student Members pay a fee of US \$ 5. The AFRICOM Constitution describes the Student Member as one who is undertaking studies in fields related to African museums.

Membership Forms

The admission and registration of members is done by the AFRICOM Secretariat. To apply, one is required to fill-up a form which can be accessed online via

<http://www.africom.museum/renewal-form.html>

One may also download membership forms from <http://www.africom.museum/membership-eng.pdf> or request forms from the secretariat on membership@africom.museum

All the filled forms should be emailed to membership@africom.museum or posted to: International Council of African Museums – AFRICOM, Museum Hill Road, P.O. Box 38706, Ngara, 00600 Nairobi, Kenya

New members, or even those renewing their applications, can send the filled-up membership forms through current regional representatives, who include:

- Mr. Nath Mayo Adediran
nmdiran@yahoo.com – West Africa
- Mr. Ossama Meguid
ossama7@aim.com : North Africa
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- Mrs. Saloni Deerpalsingh
saloni@servihoo.com : Indian Ocean
- Mrs. Alfreda Ibui
ibui2001@yahoo.co.uk : East Africa
- Augustine Don Ding:
dodig_tina@yahoo.fr : for Central Africa

Payments

Membership fees should be sent to AFRICOM by Western Union or Money Gram. The amount can as well be credited AFRICOM's bank account at the Standard Chartered Bank, Westlands Branch, Account Name: AFRICOM, Account: 8702092932600, Swiftcode: SCBLKENXXXX

The membership, according to the Secretariat, is annual and retroactive to the beginning of the current calendar year. New memberships received after September 30th become effective as from January 1st of the following year. All other conditions apply.

More African World Heritage Sites listed

By Peter Okwaro

The United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) meeting under the umbrella of the UN World Heritage Committee in early 2008 for its 32nd session in Canada's eastern city of Quebec, added 12 new world heritage sites to the World Heritage List.

Prominently featuring in the African heritage scene in the World Heritage's new sites were Mauritius' Le Morne cultural landscape and Kenya's Mijikenda Kaya Forests. Appreciative of this development, the AFRICOM President, Mrs. Deirdre Prins-Solani congratulated the respective countries.

In part, her congratulatory message read: "On behalf of the Board of AFRICOM, I would wish to congratulate the relevant Ministers, Senior Officials and Teams from Kenya and Mauritius on this wonderful achievement."

She added; "The inscription of these two sites challenges traditional notions of what is categorized as being of universal value and affirms the interrelationship on the continent between the sacred, human interaction with and the nurturing of the natural environment as well as the resilient spirit and resistance of humankind to oppression".

Currently, the World Heritage list has 851 properties of "outstanding universal value," including 661 cultural, 166 natural and 25 mixed properties in 141 countries.

Le Morne Cultural Landscape is a rugged isolated mountain of 555 meters granite and basalt rock that juts into the Indian Ocean in the southwest of Mauritius. It was used as a shelter by marooned slaves as they resisted slavery in the 18th and early years of the 19th centuries.

Protected by the mountain's isolated, wooded and almost inaccessible cliffs, the slaves who escaped formed small settlements in the caves and on the summit of Le Morne, which covers an area of more than 30 acres.

Oral traditions associated with those marooned, have made Le Morne a symbol of the slaves' fight for freedom, their suffering, and their sacrifice, all of which



Mijikenda Kaya - Kenya Coast

have relevance to the countries from which the slaves came - the African mainland, Madagascar, India, and South-East Asia.

The Mijikenda Kaya Forests are eleven separate forest sites spread over some 200 km along the coast and contain the remains of numerous fortified villages of the Mijikenda people of Kenya. Created during the 16th century, but abandoned by the 1940s, the Kayas are regarded as the abodes of ancestors, revered as sacred sites and maintained by councils of elders. The site is inscribed as one that bears unique testimony to a cultural tradition and for its direct link to a living tradition.

Related internet links;

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1259> for La Morne

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1231> for Kaya

http://www.gov.mu/portal/site/Mainhomepage/menuitem.a42b24128104d9845dabddd154508a0c/?content_id=12307496432bb110VgnVCM1000000a04a8c0RCRD



Le Morne mountain, South West of Mauritius

Standards handbook slated for publishing

An International Council of Museums (ICOM) Handbook of Standards documenting African collections from the African Portuguese speaking countries is slated for publishing in 2009.

The Portuguese version of the Handbook of Standards showcasing masks, clothes, baskets, ritual objects from diverse cultures in the community of African countries that have Portuguese as the official language, is aimed to be facts-file heritage reference material.

Among the countries to largely feature in the handbook include Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique as well as Saint Tome and Prince. The photographed objects are from heritage institutions such as the National Heritage Institute of Angola; Ethnographic Museum from Bissau; Culture National Institute from Praia; National Museum of Ethnology (Muset) from Nampula and Natural History Museum from Mozambique.

The Portuguese version of the Handbook of Standards had the active participation of African museum professionals who include Mrs. Eveline Marta Dialló (Bissau); Mr. Antonio Luís Ntimanga (Nampula); Mr. Mário Alberto Fonseca (Praia). Others who contributed to its compilation are Mr. Carlos Filomeno Agostinho das Neves (Saint Tome) and Mr. Ziva Domingos (Luanda).

Having AFRICOM and ICOM as partners, the Lusophone Project organized by Culturalia Foundation with the coordination of Brazilian museologists Luiza Monteiro and Paula Assunção dos Santos had its fundraising done by the Dutch culture activist Jorn Konijn. The project incorporated the Lusophone

University (Universidade Lusófona) whose main centre is in Lisbon, Portugal.

The project aims to build an international network through language and cultural links. The Dutch Foundation Prince Claus Fonds helped Culturalia Foundation to have the required resources for the publication and distribution of the Portuguese version of the Handbook of Standards.

Besides producing an important documentation instrument for present and future museums in this community of countries, the Lusophone Project raised awareness of this community itself within the African heritage area.

Egypt to set up an African museum

By Dr. Ossama Abdel Meguid

Preparations are underway to open an African museum in Cairo, Egypt to display old and modern African arts in areas that include sculpture, photography and architecture.

According to the Egyptian minister of Culture, Farouk Hosni, the museum, which will include a special wing for the masks associated with religious and popular ethnic and tribal values, will also showcase canvas (batik) printings, dance and music.

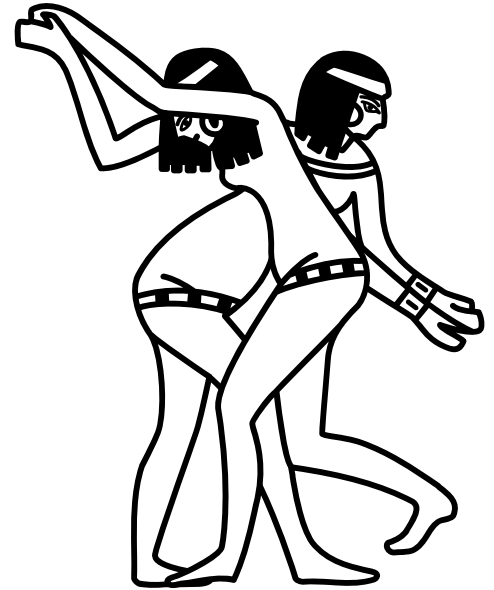
The minister, who intends to vie for the position of Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), says he has urged a number of African foreign ministers and ambassadors to explore what their countries could exhibit at the unique museum.

Stressing that the museum will represent African art as a whole, Hosni said that presentations from various geographic regions in the continent will reflect the unique diversity of the African continent.

In a bid to highlight the role of dance in African life, the continental museum will showcase music and dance from various countries, said the minister.

Hosni pointed out that the museum will include a wing for African architecture and, if necessary, transfer some models such as the old stone buildings that were discovered in Zimbabwe or those made from skin, clay or pottery. On display will also be models of palaces of African leaders such as those in Cameroon.

Models of crowns like those found on the banks of the River Niger between 10th and 16th centuries; statues made from burnt clay; tools, carvings; wall paintings and rocks like those discovered in Nigeria would also be displayed at the African Museum, said the minister.



Abasuba Community Peace Museum opens

By Gloria Borona

The new Abasuba Community Peace Museum, emerging as the gateway to the heritage of Abasuba people, formally opened its doors on Mfangano Island (Lake Victoria), Kenya on 17th October, 2008.

Established in 2000, the museum promotes and protects the cultural and natural heritage of the Abasuba, a small and endangered community. The facility is managed by community-selected representatives from various regions across the district.

Peace and conflict resolution

Working closely with TARA – the Trust for African Rock Art – and the National Museums of Kenya to protect and manage nearby rock art sites, the museum also serves as a centre for the promotion of traditional methods of peace and conflict resolution.

In 2007, TARA received a grant from the Kenyan Tourism Trust Fund (TTF) towards the construction of a new museum and community centre, and construction work started in February 2008.

The new Abasuba Community Peace Museum was officially opened by the Assistant Minister for Tourism, Hon. Cecily Mbarire flanked by the local Member of Parliament Hon. Otieno Kajwang (also the Minister for Immigration). Other dignitaries who graced the occasion included; Hon. Millie Odhiambo a nominated member of parliament, Ms. Rebecca Nabutola, permanent secretary Ministry of Tourism and Dr Achien'g Ongon'ga, the Kenya Tourism Board chief executive officer.

At the pompous ceremony was also the French Ambassador to Kenya, Madame Elisabeth Barbier, representatives from the Tourism Trust Fund and the European Union, cultural attachés from the United States of America and French Embassy, as well as representatives from the Provincial Administration.



International Museum Day 2008



Ghana commemorates Museum Day

By Acheampong Opoku

Ghana, a founding member of the International Council of Museum (ICOM), continues to uphold its commitment to commemorate the International Museum's Day, observed on the 18th May annually.

The activities aimed to draw the attention of both the government and citizenry to ways museums help in the preservation of the nation's cultural heritage were held under varied themes programmed through lectures, symposia, workshops and special exhibitions organised in Accra.

For the first time, activities were organized during a month-long programme that covered the entire country with the climax of the commemoration moved from Accra to the famous Cape Coast Castle in the Central Region, where an international symposium themed: Museums – Agents of Social Change and Development was held on 28th May, 2008.

As a prelude to the symposium, a press release was issued on the 18th of May, to announce the programmes lined up for the annual celebration. These included;

- Three day free visits to any of the facilities of Ghana Museums and Monuments Board – the museums and the forts and castles (from 27th – 29th May 2008),
- A month-long free show of historical/cultural films, documentaries and videos of what goes on in the museums with particular attention to conservation of artefact (objects) in regional offices and
- Interactions with the media, especially radio in the Central Region.

The Symposium was held at the Palaver Hall of the Cape Coast Castle and among the audience were civil servants, senior high school students, media personnel, businessmen and fisher folk, considering that the castle is close to a traditional fishing harbour.

The panel comprised the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Cape Coast, a Director at the Ministry of Chieftaincy and Culture, a Senior lecturer at the Department of Archaeology, University of Ghana and Lydia Kitungulu of the National Museums of Kenya. The Deputy Regional Minister of the Central Region was the Chairman for the occasion.

Contributions of museums

Mr. Joseph Prempeh Maisie, the Acting Director of Ghana Museums and Monuments Board said the contributions of museums in the development of nations, especially in the developing world, are difficult to evaluate in economic terms. This, he said, made the institutions appear non-productive. However, looking at the many job opportunities that museums generate, one can easily discount such evaluation.

Prof. D. D. Kuupole of the University of Cape Coast said history recounts past events, personalities, the state of things as they were at a particular point. He noted that the relevance of all these at the present time will also inform the future.

"Our museums are supposed to house the artefacts, ancient and contemporary scholarly documents, indeed part of our history," said Prof. Kuupole.

According to the professor, if one walks into a museum and sees displays of cowries, the person is actually living in the economic history of the people of Ghana when, cowries were the main medium of exchange.

The great pyramids of Egypt, as well as the Gbewaa palace of the Dagombas of Ghana, which had been built some hundreds of years ago, should tell us about the architectural technology of our great grandparents.

Pride and identity

"The many rich artefacts our ancestors left for us should evoke in us pride and identity, but sadly, we as a people, have abandoned these cultures and history and are blindly aping the Western culture," lamented Prof. Kuupole. He stressed the need for Africans to always remember that their culture is part of their identity and spirituality adding that there was need for Africans to preserve this part of themselves. The Professor noted that this could be done through contributions and reminders to governments and other stakeholders to allocate resources to maintain and improve the preservation and promotion of museums.

Ms. Kitungulu of the National Museums of Kenya, who was on a research trip in Ghana, commended the timeliness of the theme. "The celebration's theme is appropriate at this time when museums all over the world are continuously confronted by the question of their proactive role in responding to social action, she said.

According to Ms. Kitungulu, modern museums are versatile institutions with the potential to open up to new ideas and think out of the box. She encouraged museum managements to work with local communities and institutions with a corporate social responsibility in order to respond to issues affecting social change.

Eritrea promotes marine resources

As the International Museums Day was being commemorated worldwide on 18th May, 2008 for the 31st time, Eritrea observed the day in Massawa for the second time.

The event themed; Museums as Agents of Social Change and Development was observed at a parking lot in front of the Northern Red Sea Regional Museum.

Mr. Yohannes Ghebreyesus, Director of the Regional Museum, told the participants that, in addition to the historic and cultural assets of the region, the museum supports different aspects of the magnificent marine treasures of the Red Sea.

Nowadays the museum has been the main reference and showground for tourists and students from different parts of the country, Mr. Yohannes told high ranking officials and other invited guests as he emphasized on working hard to link the heritage site with the College of Marine Sciences and Technology (COMSAT) and the Ministry of Fisheries.

The museum is already displaying marine mammals such as dugong and whale skeleton, turtle carapaces, corals of different forms, fishes of different families and seashells.

The Northern Red Sea Museum was founded during the Commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the Fenkel Operation held in 2000. The natural (marine)

sector occupies around two-thirds of the size of the whole museum.

Since the first commemoration of International Museum Day by International Council of Museum (ICOM) in 1997, the organization has continued to encourage many countries to observe the day which aims at creating public awareness on the important role museums play in the development of the human race.

International Museum Day 2009

In June, the ICOM General Assembly voted on the theme for International Museum Day 2009, « Museums & Tourism ». On the homepage of icom.museum, you can read the joint declaration of the World Federation of Friends of Museums (WFFM) and ICOM outlining the ethical principles of sustainable, cultural tourism. ICOM News 1/2009 will be dedicated to exploring the theme in the first Spring 2009 issue next year.

In the meantime, all info to help you prepare for IMD is regularly available on icom.museum. Feel free to browse around previous year's activities to get ideas, prepare a kit for museums including a poster, activities, and information for the big day.

Please send information about your planned events in advance this year to bonomi@icom.museum and do not hesitate to contact the ICOM Secretariat for support.

IMD 2008: follow up on Second Life & in real life

This year's theme follows up on the highly successful 2008 IMD, "Museums as agents of social change and development", celebrated in more than 90 countries, with 15,000 museums participating as well as avatars at The Tech Museum of Innovation on the virtual platform Second Life. The experiment continues in both the real and virtual worlds!

Please send us film, photos, and press on your International Museum Day 2008 for ICOM NEWS!

ICOM has 3 volumes of press from around the world on IMD 2008 and it continues to grow! ICOM-Mexico has had a conference this September on the theme, and some of the participating museums will be featured in the next issue of ICOM News 3-4/2008, our Fall/Winter issue.

Other International and National Committees, working groups and ICOM discussion groups have expressed an interest in meeting on Second Life. Some museum professionals wish to participate in prototyping exhibits in this new forum and participate in workshops to learn how to see how to download Second Life, get your avatar and utilize the ICOM space at The Tech, click on the Step by Step instructions in English, French or Spanish: http://icom.museum/2008_contents.html

Please contact the new Virtual Community Manager at The Tech to learn how to get involved in Second Life activities, sign up for training sessions, and use the ICOM space. Please contact Bob Ketner: rketter@thetech.org

IMD 2007: New Universal Heritage Museum Partnerships "Museums & Universal Heritage,"

The IMD and General Conference theme in 2007, has led to publications on this theme by many ICOM committees and numerous ongoing initiatives including "Universal Heritage Museum Partnerships". Partnerships, in light of the ICOM Strategic Plan 2008-2010, are how museums mobilize energy as

part of the ICOM global community. ICOM News will publish information about "Universal Heritage Museum Partnerships" which "promote the sharing of knowledge, documentation and collections with museums and cultural organizations in the countries and communities of origin" including; co-editions between museums in the developing world and museums in the developed countries; long-term programmes established for developing museums through exchanges of collections and partnerships inspired by the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums that "promote the sharing of knowledge, documentation and collections with museums and cultural organizations in the countries and communities of origin" and in particular, co-operation "with museums in countries or areas that have lost a significant part of their heritage".

Those partnerships resulting in the restitution of cultural property to countries of origin and long-term co-curatorship arrangements will be featured.

Contact the Editor in chief of ICOM News: Lysa Hochroth - hochroth@icom.museum

Public treated to an Open Day

The National Museums of Kenya (NMK) Directorate of Research and Collections recently organised an Open Day to showcase its activities to the public.

In a rare show, NMK, a multidisciplinary state cooperation and a centre for excellence in research, heritage conservation and management, opened its doors to the public on 20th -21st November, 2008.

Guided by the institution's vision "to be a repository of knowledge and center of excellence in heritage management and research for the benefit of humanity", NMK's Directorate of Research and Collections undertakes research mainly in the fields of earth sciences, zoology, botany and culture which has yielded remarkable findings.

Among the institution's ground-breaking research successes are the discovery of new species through studies to new insights in human evolution among others.



Regional Highlights

Digging into sounds of Burkina Faso

By Jean-Paul Koudougou

Cultural sound recordings believed to have been deposited at the Museum of Man in Paris, France nearly 76 years ago are finally back in Burkina Faso, the land of its origin.

Repatriation of sound recordings on 35 CDs, was as a result of a successful month-long (October 11 to November 8, 2007) mission at the Research Center in Ethnomusicologie (C.R.E.M) at the Museum of the Man.

Among the collections copied and returned to Burkina Faso included ritual songs that related to cosmogony (initiation, secret language and mythical accounts). The sounds verified during the mission at Laboratory of Ethnomusicologie ranged from worship of the masks songs to organization of funerals, praise of chiefs and celebrations.

Rigorous task

The old sound documents recorded in 1931 (date of the colonial exposure in Paris) were deposited at the

Laboratory of Ethnomusicology in 1932. It is from here that Mr. Bruno Favel, Chief of Mission and Mrs. Rosalia Martinez, Director of C.R.E.M led the rigorous task of copying to ultimate repatriation of the songs.

The mission financed by the Businesses European and International of Management of Architecture and Inheritance (DAPA) also benefited from technical support accorded by Mrs. France Quemarec.

Falling in the category of "Black Africa Discography", the songs were indexed on 73 cards relating to the sound documents collected in various cultural surfaces of Burkina Faso. Among them are are; Lobi, Gurunsi, Moaga, Darkened, San, Dioula, Peul, Sénoufo, Gurmanché, Bwa, Peul and Sore. These documents were collected by eminent ethnologists, ethnomusicologists such as Guy the Moal, Hugo Zemp, Charles Duvelle and recently Sandrine Loncke.

Inherited Responsibility

Nigerian museums, like in most other African countries, survive through the efforts of public servants who understand their toil depends on inheritance of accountability, writes Margie Reese.

Over 200,000 children visited the National Museum in Lagos, Nigeria in 2007. What they saw is a massive structure, hundreds of objects that represent the past and heard stories about kings and customs that sparked their curiosity.

The view of the museum by children is different from the view that we see as adults. At first glance, we see a series of buildings in great need of maintenance, with a host of infrastructure needs that have gone unattended by the government.

Museums in Nigeria, like in most other African countries have survived through the efforts of staff, mostly civil servants, who have understood their work to be an inherited responsibility.

Flagship museum

The National Museum in Lagos is referred to as the flagship museum in Nigeria. It holds over 45,000 objects in its stores and galleries.

Stabilizing, guarding and protecting that collection calls for a careful and replicable planning process that balances "museum standards" and the tangible cultural expression of Nigerian societies.

Perhaps the same colonial forces that ravaged the African continent are reflected in every aspect of operations of Lagos museum. These range from the architectural design to acquisition practices which attempted to separate people from the things that mattered to them most – their inheritance of tradition.

Reposition the museum

Embarking on a process to reposition the museum as a valuable asset in development requires bringing together a variety of voices and expertise to create a new model for

museum development on the continent.

Such a planning process is underway in Lagos and was launched in October 2008, with a convening of renowned museum professionals from across the continent.

They insisted that the four cornerstones for a successful museum planning process should consider a facility to properly provide storage, conservation and restoration of the collection; staff development initiatives; developing cultural literacy in public programming and an acquisition strategy that would allow for strong exhibitions programming.

That planning process continues and will require continued support of AFRICOM, its membership, academic partners and scholars and, of course will focus on the curiosities of the 200,000 plus students who will have inherited a legacy of strength, creativity and pride.

Responding to requests for assistance from the leadership of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments a full Master Planning process will commence early 2009. A web-site is under construction that will inform the field of ongoing progress, survey museum professionals and museum user groups, and appeal for support from a variety of partners.

AFRICOM members are queued to benefit from the documentation of the planning. The process will learn from other museums that have undergone recent expansion and will allow public monitoring of a process designed to respond to the inherited responsibility for preserving the brilliant heritage and powerful traditions of African people.

The writer is a Program Officer; Media, Arts and Culture at the Ford Foundation in West Africa.

Dodo world showcased

The opening of the first exhibition on 'The World of the Dodo' in the Natural History Museum at Port Louis, Mauritius happened on 14th March, 2008. This new exhibition, focusing on icon of extinction, featured recently discovered bones of the Dodo, film material from current excavations and an archive of images regarding the bird and its related history.



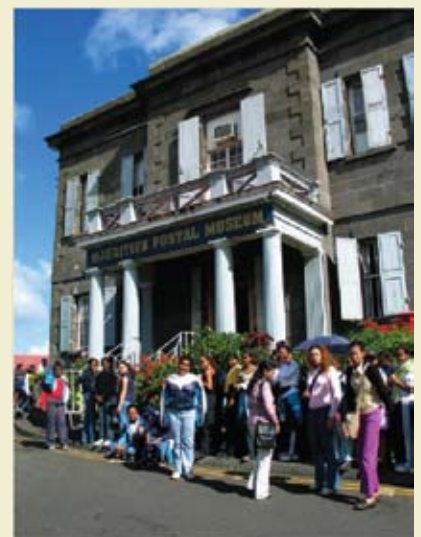
The Dodo

"KUDUO" showcases in Ghana

An Exhibition entitled "KUDUO" – The Akan Art of Brass Casting opened on 17th April 2008 at the Institute of African Studies Museum at the University of Ghana, Legon. The exhibition is a collection of Akan brass works, which were donated by the late Chancellor of the University of Ghana, Nana Weneko Ampem II. It is accompanied by a catalogue and DVDs.

Mauritius Postal Museum opened

The Mauritius Postal Museum recently displayed a variety of postage stamps and postal equipment used during the colonial period. The old 18th century building, listed as a national heritage has been converted into a museum.



Mauritius Postal Museum in Port Louis, the Capital of Mauritius

Transition plan on course

By Peter Okwaro

The AFRICOM transition plan, aimed to make the organization Africa's premier heritage centre, is near its completion.

The process initiated soon after the 2nd General Assembly and Conference of AFRICOM in October 2006 in Cape Town, South Africa has prioritized needs to enhance the organization's vibrancy and effective service delivery to its membership as it tackles heritage issues across the continent.

Top on the card on the transition plan include; consolidation of institutional frameworks, strengthening of the Human Resource team at the secretariat and establishment of a broader and long-term funding partnership base as well as raising funds to service the organization's operations.

The consolidation of institutional frameworks is primarily focusing on the development cum review of strategic direction, policies and working procedures for the organization. For efficient and effective implementation of these institutional frameworks, personnel at the AFRICOM secretariat shall be empowered with knowledge and skills.

Taking a lead in the transition plan is the Board of AFRICOM, elected during the 2nd General Assembly and Conference.

Fundraising

It was a baptism by fire when the newly constituted Board took office considering that Sida, AFRICOM's main funding partner, had just discontinued their funding partnership due to a policy change of the new Government in Sweden.

Having just spent a huge amount of money on the 2nd General Assembly and Conference, AFRICOM was in a difficult financial situation. It was critical for the new Board to identify and negotiate funding with new partners.

Soliciting funding from new avenues was not an easy task as it took a lot of effort and time. However, owing to the Board's commitment, their sweat in sourcing for revenue support paid off towards the end of 2007 when the Getty Foundation stepped in as a funding partner. In early 2008, more funding was secured from the Ford Foundation. AFRICOM appreciates and thanks the two partners following their timely partnership and continued support.

Consolidation of Institutional Frameworks

In an effort to develop the institutional frameworks for AFRICOM, the organization contracted the services of BELCOMM Ltd, a Zambian Management Consultancy firm, in 2007.

An initial meeting for this process had taken place in November 2007, which brought together the Board and representatives of the Ford Foundation (Western and Eastern Africa Regions). This was followed by another transition planning cum Board meeting in March 2008 in Cape Town. In attendance were the Board members, a consultant from BELCOMM and representatives from EPA, Observatory for Cultural Policy for Africa (OCPA), National Museums of Kenya (NMK) and West Africa Museum Programme (WAMP).

This was a deliberate effort to ensure AFRICOM thinks and works together with stakeholders on the continent in developing a way forward that would complement each other's role in heritage management and development.

Stakeholder meetings

As part of their information/data collection towards the transition plans, the consultants visited the AFRICOM Secretariat in June 2008. Meetings were held with stakeholders, including with the top management of the NMK and a group of selected staff of the NMK, collecting information that could help them understand the weak and strong points of AFRICOM.

The work in progress also witnessed AFRICOM's President and the Acting Executive Director Mr. Peter Okwaro visit Lusaka in August 2008, to monitor the consultant's progress and to help with fine-tuning the details of the available drafts.

The Institutional Framework for AFRICOM, in draft form, includes; Human Resources Policy, Strategic Plan 2009-2013, Membership policy, Finance policy, Communications policy, Fundraising and Marketing policy. Equally in draft stages are General Grants policy, Regional Funding and Grants policy, Internship and Exchange policy, General Assembly guidelines, Board Guidelines and Roles.

Significant compilation has also been done on Advocacy strategy, Monitoring and Evaluation tools & guidelines, Performance management and appraisal tools as well as aspects that touch on the Growth and Development strategy of AFRICOM.

Strengthening Secretariat management capacity

The Board is working on the issue of strengthening the operational capacity at the Secretariat. Addressing this issue, the Board, sometime in 2007, advertised five major administrative positions. The advertised posts included those of the Executive Director, Programmes Manager, Sustainability/Fundraising Officer, Membership Officer plus Library and Information Assistant. Already, the board has short-listed candidates for these positions and interviews are planned for mid December 2008. It is hoped that the selected candidates should be in office for orientation and team building workshops, to be conducted by BELCOMM, by end of December.

Up-grading of technology

Since AFRICOM considers networking and communication an important pillar of its operations, the secretariat has been up-grading its equipment necessary for this function.

Already in place is a new high capacity server, a centrally controlled anti-virus system and maintenance of all personal computers among other things. With this, the secretariat's ability to network and keep in touch with the membership has highly improved.

All these have been done alongside the ordinary operations of the secretariat, including the posting of thematic and informative articles on the discussion list AFRICOM-L and on the website, www.africom.museum; publishing of the annual newsletter – AFRICOM News and staff capacity building.

The Transition Planning is meant to create a firm foundation for AFRICOM and the Board believes that, with these structures and systems in place, the organization shall be in a position to effectively realize its mandate and objectives.



AFRICOM transition planning meeting - Cape Town, March 2007

Heritage professionals visit AFRICOM

The AFRICOM Secretariat proved its position of the cultural and heritage map of Africa when participants of a heritage workshop held in Kenya paid it a visit.

Among the dignitaries who led the delegation visiting the Secretariat included Alain Godonou, Raymond Agbo, Charity Salasini, Norbert Nhutsve, Robert Bangiola, and Lorna Abungu.

The delegation which visited the Secretariat, participated in the EPA-MSD: Regional Technical Workshop, held in Nairobi on 21st - 26th September, 2008. Tanzania, Ghana, Kenya, Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa were among the several countries represented at the week-long workshop themed: "Innovative Museum Marketing".

Seemingly, taking a queue from the workshop's theme, Mr. Peter Okwaro, AFRICOM's Acting Executive Director took the opportunity to 'market' AFRICOM and appealed for support of the African Heritage professionals and institutions.



EPA Participants pay a courtesy call at AFRICOM's Secretariat

Netherlands hosts museum experts

By Lydia Kitungulu

The Royal Tropical Institute of Netherlands in cooperation with CulturCooperation, a German NGO, recently organised a two-day meeting to explore the role of museums as they increasingly come under public scrutiny in Africa, Europe, Asia and Latin America.

The meeting, focusing on ethnographic museums, attracted over eighty participants and ten expert speakers whose ethnographic collections are often housed in National Museums.

It was evident that young and upcoming museum professionals who participated at the forum made critical reflections on their work experiences.

Insightful presentations

Among the insightful presentations that culminated in stimulating discussions were made by Adriano Muñoz (Bolivia), Paula Dos Santos (Brazil), Victoria Phiri (Zambia), Deniz Ünsal (Turkey), Novia Sagita (Indonesia), Larissa Förster (Germany), Phillip Segadika (Botswana), Aghan Otero (Kenya), Sophie Mew (France) and Daan van Dartel (Netherlands).

It emerged from the presenters that the very institutions they represented had a broader scope than just ethnography. These types of museums have a similar founding history that relates to the colonial past and the challenge to find ways to get beyond the institutional format to finding new relevance in the society: In Europe these include responding to changing populations and expectations, taking a position in debates around illicit trade, repatriation of collections and the ethics of (re-) presentation. In Africa, Asia and Latin America, the debate seems to revolve around the role that museums play in national development.

Contribute to solutions

Museums are challenged to contribute to the solution of problems ranging from conflict resolution to poverty reduction. In both cases, an important issue is community involvement and reaching target groups.

The question is, even if we have our policies in order, does anybody care? Do museums attract audiences? What role do museums play in public debate?

In order to share the knowledge with all museums and heritage professionals worldwide, the forum participants are working on a detailed publication titled: The Future of Ethnographic Museums.

The major highlights in that publication will include an elaborate account of the individual presentations made at the Expert Meeting and Symposium.

For more information about the publication, readers may contact Lydia Kitungulu of the National Museums of Kenya on likitungulu@museums.co.ke or Paul Voogt of the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, p.voogt@kit.nl

Participants of the Expert Meeting held in Amsterdam in May 2008



Back after training

Francis Awinda, the Information Officer at AFRICOM is finally back to the Secretariat Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya after successfully completing his nine months Post - Graduate Diploma in Museum and Heritage Studies at the University of Western Cape, University of Cape Town and Robben Island Museum.

During his studies, which centred on heritage management, he interacted with various museum professionals and institutions in Africa. His research paper focused on digitization of African heritage specifically using web technology.

The study, says Awinda, was a great experience. "It enhanced my understanding of the contestations as well as transformations that heritage in Africa is facing and the role of heritage professionals in opening up discourses that will eventually lead to development of heritage as a product whose value cannot be ignored in promoting democracy in Africa," said Awinda.

Awinda believes that his study under the tutelage of renowned history professors like Leslie Witz, Ciraj Rasool and Premesh Lalu as well as other museum

professionals has equipped him with the capacity needed to understand the information needs of museum professionals and institutions which will be of great benefit to AFRICOM and the entire African heritage fraternity.



With from left Nicolene Rosseau, Premesh Lalu and Leslie Witz

African internship in China

The Government of the People's Republic of China recently gave full sponsorship to AFRICOM to enable 10 African heritage professionals to visit China for 20 days on a heritage exchange internship programme.

The sponsorship offered through China's Ministry of Culture enabled selected professionals to visit museums and heritage sites of Shanxi, Hunan, Jilin and Guang-Dong and the cities of Beijing and Shanghai in the Far East country.

Development of the internship programme also included a two-day cultural symposium dubbed "2008 African Cultural Focus" started in June 2008 following visitation to the AFRICOM Secretariat by Mr. Tang Changan the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, the cultural attaché in Nairobi.

Mr. Changan held discussions with Mr. Peter Okwaro, AFRICOM's acting executive director, on possible collaboration especially in cultural exchange programmes between China and Africa.

The "2008 African Cultural Focus" which took place in Shenzhen City brought together participants and

officials from 30 African countries, including artists and cultural practitioners.

The selected African heritage professionals who proceeded to China included Mr. Imran Abdallah, from the Harari State Heritage Conservation Office, Ethiopia, Mr. Ech-cherki Dahmali, curator of the Telecommunication Museum of Morocco, in Rabat and Mr. Martin Owino Tindi, Assistant Research Scientist with the National Museums of Kenya.

Others are Ms. Terry Nyambe, Assistant keeper of Ichthyology at the Livingstone Museum, Zambia, Ms. Antoinette Marcelle Ewolo of the department of Anthropology, University of Yaounde I Cameroon, Mr. William Mwita Sebastian, a Documentation Officer with the Antiquities Division, Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania.

Mr. Samwel Ratovoarizo, a Conservation Technician with the Institute de Civilization/Musee d'Art et d' Archeologie de l'Universite d'Antananarivo, Madagascar. Mr. Komi Nkegbe Foga Tublu, Head of Division of Museums, sites and Monuments of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Togo, also travelled to the Far East country.



Joel completes course

Joel Ipara Motema, a former intern at AFRICOM recently completed Diplome d'Etudes Approfondie (DEA) in Anthropologie in University of Yaounde I in Cameroun.

He says that the internship he had in AFRICOM motivated him to pursue further studies in museum related discipline.



Jacob's new role

Mr. Jacob Muhando, an AFRICOM member, is the new programme specialist for the African World heritage Fund (AWHF). Jacob formerly worked as a Research scientist with the Kenya Resource Centre for Indigenous Knowledge (KENRIK) which is a unit in the National Museums of Kenya.

Stationed in South Africa, Jacob's new role will be to lead and manage the design, development and implementation of the programmes and activities of AWHF.

Jacob's tasks also entail co-ordinating the implementation of programmes and activities of the organization as well as assisting in the development of project proposals from State Parties. The job also includes monitoring and making follow-ups on the project's Funds and assisting in the Fundraising efforts of the Fund.



EPA initiates development programme

An initiative geared to improve relations between museums and schools in sub-Saharan Africa was recently mooted by the School for African Heritage (EPA – Ecole du Patrimoine Africain).

The programme, stemming from a study carried out between 1998 and 2004, seeks to reinforce the role of museums as centres of learning and entertainment notes Mr. Alain Godonou, Director; EPA.

Having received funding from FSP (Priority Solidarity Funds) of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to run the programme until 2010, the initiative says Mr. Godonou, will largely focus on promoting the African Heritage.

With active participation from both Anglophone and Francophone Africa for the first time, the new EPA initiative, targeting sub-Saharan Africa, hosted a technical week-long workshop in Kenya from 21st to 26th September, 2008.

With the focus on improving management capacities of museums, EPA's initiative, stresses Mr. Godonou, will enhance the institutional and professional capacities in the region's heritage sector.

Programme implementation

The initiative promoted as Museums in the Service of Development (MSD) held a series of technical meetings aimed at formulating modalities of implementation of the programme that will inform, train and provide opportunities to exchange ideas. Similar meetings were earlier hosted in Burkina Faso in April 2007 and Gabon in June 2007.

Under the theme: Improved Marketing of the Museum: Development of Innovative Products, objectives of the workshop in Nairobi included; raising awareness among museum professionals from English speaking Africa about the aims and activities of the MSD programme.

The delegates shared their experiences ranging from improved customer care to use of guides and the development of publicity and promotional materials to effective usage of merchandise, publications and websites among others.

Rich programme

While in Kenya, the delegates were treated to a rich programme that included the technical workshop in Nairobi, field excursions that climaxed with interactions with local people at Mfangano Island (Lake Victoria), thus gaining first hand experience of the challenges and opportunities for museum professionals.

The itinerary gave the delegates the opportunity to visit the Ultra Modern Nairobi National Museum in the heart of Kenya's capital as well as the Abasuba Community Peace Museum, in a remote island in Lake Victoria - thus enriching the participants' appreciation of the different realities of public programming in Africa. The Abasuba Community Peace Museum is the most elaborate community museum in Kenya.



Arrival at Mfangano by workshop participants

Community elder explaining the significance of the head-gear to visitors and participants

Third General Assembly underway

By Henry Cheruiyot

Burkina Faso is queued to host the third AFRICOM triennial General Assembly and Conference for the first time in West Africa.

Slated for around November and December 2009, the specific dates, theme and scientific committee will be announced by the AFRICOM Secretariat in due course.

The AFRICOM General Assembly and Conference brings together representatives from member states across Africa. The previous General Assemblies and Conferences were held in Nairobi, Kenya and Cape Town, South Africa in 2003 and 2006 respectively.

To decide where the General Assembly would be held, the Secretariat initiates a bidding process among the AFRICOM member states. "The call to host the Third AFRICOM General Assembly was circulated widely in our various communication organs that included the website and direct mailing," said Mr. Peter Okwaro, the AFRICOM Acting Executive Director.

Expression of interest

The Secretariat had within three months of calling for hosts received applications from interested countries, says Mr. Okwaro. Most applicants expressed their interest, willingness and commitment to mobilise resources to organise and manage both the General Assembly and Conference. Raising local resources to host the event was a major yardstick in determining the successful bidder.

The Government of Burkina Faso, through the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Communication emerged the most successful contender to host the General Assembly and Conference. Through the ministry, the government is poised to raise resources locally to meet the demands of the event.

It is evident that the success of Burkina Faso in holding the triennial event was a result of the country's sustained good reputation, its distinguished relation with the international communities, and its capabilities and infrastructure.

The Burkina Faso Government's gesture to support the respective ministry to take a lead in hosting the forthcoming General Assembly and Conference contributed to its successful bid. The commitment to sponsor the event through the Prime Minister's Office displayed both a gesture of goodwill and awesome financial support.

Other key ministries to actively participate in the progressive planning of this event include the Ministry of Security, Ministry of Culture, Tourism, Communication and Health. By virtue of being the host, the City Council of Ouagadougou will also play an instrumental role in the preparation of this event.

Successful bid

Other factors attributed to Burkina Faso's successful bid include the availability of a seamless structure of entry and facilitation of travel requirements. The

process will make it easier in effectively managing entry and customs formalities for participants through the Burkina Faso specialized services in the Foreign and Regional Cooperation ministries, which will care for the participants.

Availability of adequate working space for delegates along with readily available logistical support from experts contributed to Burkina Faso hosting the event. The city of Ouagadougou also has a large fully air-conditioned international conference centre known as the Centre International de Conférences Ouaga 2000, with a sitting capacity of 600.

Adding value in the assessment of Burkina Faso were also aspects that touched on health and security. The government officials guaranteed availability of an efficient health and security set-up for the conference through the ministries of Health and Security. Both ministries will work alongside the Ministry of Culture to ensure the event's success. In addition the City Council of Ouagadougou will reinforce the security of the participants by availing the City Council police.

Variety of entertainment

Comfortable accommodation of delegates equally spiced up the choice of the West African country to host the event. Burkina Faso has also a variety of entertainment and cultural tourism sites that will give participants a chance to explore the country's heritage map and its impact in the wider African heritage agenda.

Burkina Faso is a Key West African member state whose representation in the International Council of African Museums (ICOM) is exemplified by its heritage institutions which includes; the Musée National du Burkina Faso, Musée Provincial du Houet, Musée Provincial du Poni and Music Museum of Ouagadougou.

The country boasts of its museum professionals whose input in the development of both Burkina Faso's and Africa's heritage in general has continued to be highly commended especially in the development of the film industry in Africa through FESPACO (The Pan-African Film and TV Festival of Ouagadougou), the largest annual film festival in the continent.

"We thank all the heritage institutions that showed interest by presenting bids to host this commemorative AFRICOM session and for responding positively to our call," Mr. Okwaro thanked the bidders. We look forward to working together in making the 3rd General Assembly and Conference a success and a forum that will advance heritage development in Africa, he added.

Hosting such an important continental event contributes in revealing the civilized aspect of a country, advancing the country's heritage development as well as its commitment in playing an effective role to uphold the African heritage.



Burkina Faso - statue



University of Ouagadougou



Matyrs' Memorial - Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso



The Great Mosque of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

AFRICOM at migrant labour conference

By Francis Awinda

AFRICOM was among the key participants at the Heritage of Migrant Labour Conference held on 9th to 13th September, 2008 at the Workers Library Museum in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Given the centrality of migrant labour for the heritage of the working class in Southern Africa, the conference, organized by the International Association of Labour History Institutions (IALHI) and coordinated by Ms Anne Katrin Bicher, the project manager of Khanya College, chose to focus on "The Heritage of Migrant Labour in South and southern Africa" at the annual forum.

The Heritage of Migrant Labour acknowledges the enormous significance of migrant labour for economic, social and political evolution of the southern African region. The South African migrant labour system, created along principles of racial segregation, control, and exploitation of Africans, was the core of the apartheid economy for more than a hundred years.

Until today, the heritage of the migrant labour system as the dominant pattern of workers' employment of the 20th century, has left a lasting impact on contemporary South and southern African society, said Mr. Ntongela Masilela, who delivered the keynote address. The speech largely focused on the social and cultural impact of the migrant labour system on modern South Africa.

Women, says Ms Bicher played a major role of keeping the rural homestead going, which was necessary for the families to survive. At the same time, they were also migrants in their own rights. Without male and female migrant workers from the Southern African region, the world's largest supplier of gold and Africa's industrial powerhouse would have been a minor economic player.

Labour supplying nations

Beyond South Africa's borders, labour migration impacted on all Southern African Development Countries (SADC) countries, influencing South Africa's economic, political and cultural relations.

The conference participants who included representatives from various museum institutions, among them; Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, Robben Island Museum, District Six Museum, IZIKO Museums and Folk Museum of Indian Migrant Labour in Mauritius learnt that workers from southern Africa, who worked in the main industrial cities like Johannesburg, were merely seen as labourers with no citizenship rights.

Delegates learnt that, from the outset, all sectors worked hand in hand with the coercive legislation of a racially segregated state. Influx control, pass laws, single-sex compounds, the colour bar, anti-unionism and low wage policies fed into a tight system of control and exploitation. Impoverishment, social and family

disintegration, calamitous health problems, racial oppression and segregation were endemic to the migrant labour system.

Other presentations that elicited worthwhile debates included those of Lunga Smile of Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum who walked the delegates through the history of migrant labour in relation to xenophobic attacks in South Africa. Bonnita Bennet presented a paper on the District Six museum and the forced removals, while Saloni Deerpalsingh, the curator of Folk Museum of Indian Migrant Labour in Mauritius who is also AFRICOM's board member presented a paper on the indentured labour immigrant heritage in Mauritius.

In South Africa, conditions of the workers only began to improve in the 1980s when the labour movement became more powerful in improving working conditions and, as a result the migrant labour system began to fracture.



With from left CEO of IZIKO Museums Jatti Bredekamp and Lunga Smile curator of Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum

Aluka digitizes Africa's heritage

Aluka an international collaborative initiative founded in 1995 by the Andrew Mellon Foundation charity sets pace to globally showcase Africa's diverse cultures and natural heritage through the use of Information and Communications Technology, writes Dr. Siro Masinde.

The digital revolution is catching up with just about everything in our lives. The realms of natural and cultural heritage, which tend to dwell so much on the past, today has Information Communications Technology (ICT) to help museums and archives share knowledge about the historical mementos preserved for posterity.

While a number of digitization programmes are afoot in Africa, Aluka Initiative (www.aluka.org) of JSTOR (www.jstor.org) is among those that stand-out. The fairly advanced technological platform is capable of handling multimedia functions that include sound and Geographical Information System (GIS) among other technologies that demonstrate the seemingly limitless possibilities of how ICT can be employed to make heritage much more meaningful in the digital age.

Aluka is an international collaborative initiative that is building an online digital library of scholarly resources from and about Africa. Aluka is a part of the JSTOR group, which is a not-for-profit organization that was founded in 1995 by the Andrew Mellon Foundation charity.

It is fast becoming clear to heritage custodians and patrons that they must embrace digital innovation, to preserve and disseminate facts about the African heritage despite the many questions posed around digitization that pertain to technology, organization and intellectual property rights.

The advantage of ICT spreads to other heritage preservation entities that help in the gathering, documenting and storing of detailed accounts. As such, the understanding of past happenings is

enhanced while exploiting the present optimally and preparing for the future in better ways.

Through digitization, materials are catalogued and preserved electronically, are made more accessible to the world and are better appreciated by humanity.

Aluka is a Zulu word that means to weave. It reflects Aluka's mission to connect resources and scholars. The initiative works with heritage institutions such as archives, museums and universities as well as individuals in and outside Africa to catalogue and digitize primary source materials from and about Africa. The task, although only at its early stages, has proven monumental because its results already form an enormous resource database.

Virtual experience

Materials that have been hitherto confined and forgotten in the vaults of archives and museums are finally seeing the light of day through ICT. Digitization of sites and monuments through laser technology produces GIS data and three dimension (3D) models that add to the virtual experience of exploring far off places.

In Aluka, one can virtually explore famous heritage sites such as Timbuktu in Mali, Lamu town in Kenya and the Rock Hewn Churches of Lalibela in Ethiopia among other unique historical sites.

Cultural Heritage Sites and Landscapes, Struggles for Freedom in Southern Africa and African Plants are among the three initial content areas developed in Aluka. The themes are interdisciplinary and address fields such as Anthropology, Archaeology, Botany, Cultural Studies, Geography, History, African Studies, Political Science and Sociology.

The Cultural Heritage Sites and Landscapes area has in-depth visual, contextual, and spatial documentation of Africa's cultural heritage. There are high resolution

aerial photos, ancient manuscripts, antiquarian maps, rare books, GIS data, 3D models, rock art and more.

Among the memorable sites to behold include Asante Temples (Ghana), Axum (Ethiopia), Great Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe), and Lamu (Kenya).

Aluka is working with partners in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana, Angola and South Africa on this theme. The database comprises nationalist publications, colonial government reports, local newspaper articles, oral histories, speeches, critical books and underground literature among others.

Species of plants constitute the scientific collection of data and information about Africa's flora. Much of the database comprises high resolution images of specimens, photographs, paintings, taxonomic reference sources and expedition diaries.

Aluka and JSTOR digital resource materials are offered freely to not-for-profit institutions in Africa. To initiate links connect to <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/participate/new/agreements/africanLicense.jsp>

At this site, one is required to fill out a Network Verification Form, which is found at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showNetworkVerification>. Another requirement is signing of a JSTOR License Agreement in duplicate. Signing of the JSTOR License Agreement allows one to access the massive JSTOR journal archive and the primary source materials in Aluka for free. It is agreement can be downloaded from http://www.jstor.org/templates/jsp/_jstor/templates/info/participate/new/agreements/pdf/africa_license.pdf

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New web site launched

www.africanrockart.org

An in-depth series of research – including surveys and statistics analysis – to determine the impact and efficacy of Trust for African Rock Art (TARA)'s web site was carried out between 2007 and 2008 by Lorna Abungu, the Creative Director of Okello Abungu Heritage Consultants.

The user needs analysis, done through print and online surveys that involved TARA's stakeholders throughout the entire process, was noted to be useful. Gagan Dadalya (of Wildebeest Productions, a Nairobi-based company) worked with Mrs. Abungu to develop an entirely new look site that continues to be appreciated as more attractive and user-friendly.

The new site provides rock art enthusiasts with

important information about TARA, its activities and its resources – as well as information about African rock art and related activities around the world. You can now download TARA publications, report new sites or vandalism and find information about African rock art sites on UNESCO's World Heritage List or the World Monuments Watch.

Several sections are still under development, including the Online Gallery and Gift shop, which will be available in the coming months.



Heritage in Peril

Africans demand their cultural objects

The crave to repatriate cultural objects “looted” from various African countries continues to rage on with most heritage professionals in Africa and abroad emphatic that objects currently showcased out of the continent have national importance to countries of their origin. The on-going on-line discussion on our AFRICOM – L attests to this.

As the long-term and seemingly very controversial issue gains momentum, the question on the professionals', museologists', curators and researchers' lips is why do Europeans, even intellectuals, have difficulty in contemplating the restitution of the allegedly stolen African cultural objects?

Views from the heritage professionals point to the fact that although African countries are still at developmental stage, their status does not rule out the repatriation of their artefacts.

According to Ras Mpho, a museum anthropologist in Africa, the objects being demanded back to African countries have aspects of national importance. “Perhaps one needs to start asking whether an audit for African museums is necessary to determine the readiness of those that can deal with resituated artefacts,” he says.

Although Mpho concedes that African artefacts and many other objects are well preserved, researched, documented and digitized by European museums, he disagrees with the theory that services rendered by European heritage institutions could be used to assist African countries to develop.

He charges that developed countries have failed to recognise African countries as equal global economic partners. Mpho is further emphatic that the challenge for African museums is to convince their governments and private sectors to have the process of having the cultural objects back to their original places as an internally initiated project.

Dr. Oscar Embola, stresses that museum objects are now more useful because they are a source of inspiration and research. As businesses are developing from knowledge, he says; “The Developed world is thriving on a knowledge economy, (and) so is the knowledge from museum objects is also important.”

As the majority of visitors continue to visit the museums, and pay, most museums are today using revenue generated from the visitation as a source of funding. Dr. Embola says that there is need for Africans, to reorganize their thoughts and change the way they look at museums, since they can contribute to national development.

He sees the formulation of partnerships among museums in Africa and the development of

programmes that would allow them to have access to the objects abroad as the way forward. “The Tasmanians have succeeded in getting objects out of the British Museums, why not those from Africa,” wonders Dr. Embola.

Carol Kaufman sees purchasing African artefacts back from Europe to national collections (as has happened in South Africa) as a possible solution.

Vehemently opposed to Carol's approach is Mr. William Mwita of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism in Tanzania who opines that negotiations with European Museums (countries) on how African heritage institutions can benefit from the treasures are more ideal.

In view that European Museums have over the years incurred some expenses to maintain the African artefacts, he suggests a win-win process, whereby the museums based abroad can pay royalties to the aggrieved African countries.

Lamenting that some of the European museums have become houses of stolen treasures, Maria Masuku says that it is a pity that some European countries like the UK did not sign for repatriation of cultural objects to their countries of origin because they know that they may face economic crisis.

Ms Masuku notes that while in Europe she was tasked with setting up an exhibition on Africa. “I had no alternative because it was part of the class-work,” she says expressing her disappointment over some lies highlighted about Africa's people by Africans themselves in order to get handouts.

Sam Makuva, a Zimbabwean student at the University College of Dublin, Ireland says that European objects are not found in many African museums and where these objects are found they either glorify or celebrate colonial victories over the African people. While visiting Paris Museum, he says he saw thousands of African objects on display at the museum's entrance fee of 9 Euros.

Mukuva's estimate is that on a visitation of 500,000 in European based museums rake 4,500 000 Euros. He says that African museums hardly raise US 1000 per day.

Sharing his experiences about illegally acquired artefacts, John Baya Mitsanze working with the National Museums of Kenya regional museum of Narok in Kenya says the sale of the objects at thousands of dollars in the global market are the source of much pain, discomfort and calamities in many African countries. “There are fears that even museum professionals indulge in such and, of course many countries in Africa do not have legal bans in this type of trade,” he says.

For legal bans to be effective, there is need to develop museum based policies that will define specific objects that are non transferable, argues Mitsanze. Such objects could either be classified as either sacred (to a specific community/ies), of national importance, or of inherent value to a family or kingdom.

Mitsanze also stresses the need for awareness to the communities concerned so that they can know where to present their cases.

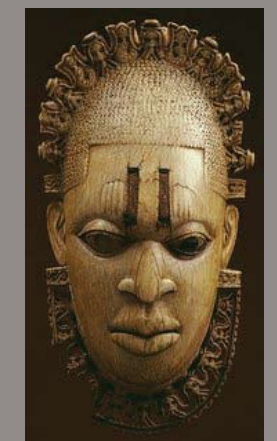
When will they be returned from these museums?



Commemorative head of a Queen-mother Benin, Nigeria, Field Museum, Chicago, USA



Oba Akenzua I, Benin, Nigeria, Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin, Germany



Ivory hip-mask, Queen-mother Idia, Benin, Nigeria now in British Museum, London, United Kingdom

Eyebrows rise

By Robert O'Connor

The recent opening of an Art Institute in Chicago (AIC) exhibiting "Benin-Kings and Rituals: Court Arts from Nigeria" thrust Chicago into an international debate over the rightful ownership of African art held in western museums.

The Art Institute does not own any of the 220 objects on display as part of the exhibit, but does own 20 objects from Benin that a spokesman says it would consider returning to Nigeria if asked to do so.

The controversy has hovered in the background of the exhibit since its 8th July, 2008 opening and attended by several dignitaries from Nigeria and the Kingdom of Benin, including Princess Theresa Erediauwa, daughter of the Oba - or king - of Benin, now part of Nigeria.

Although the objects exhibited are on loan from the Oba and Nigeria's Commission for Museums and Monuments, the subject has cast light on AIC director, James Cuno, in his book "Who Owns Antiquity?"

The controversy has not been confined to the Art Institute. Chicago's Field Museum owns 400 objects from Benin, most of which were taken in the 'punitive

expedition,' a brutal 1897 attack by the British in which the ancient city was burned and allegedly looted of its artwork.

Restitution advocates

Most of the Field Museum's collection was donated by ethnologist A.W.F. Fuller and his wife in 1961, according to the museum. Restitution advocates say the brutality of the expedition and the destruction of Benin is enough to question the legality of Western museums holding the objects.

Greg Borzo, the media manager for scientific affairs at the Field Museum and the Art Institute, said that if the Nigerian government or the Oba of Benin asked for the return of the antiquities, they would take the request seriously.

Restitution advocates like the British-based Africa Reparations Movement (ARM), argue that such museums glorify plunder and celebrate imperialism's legacy of exploitation. "The Benin artworks belong to a living culture that has deep historical and social value which goes far beyond the aesthetic and monetary value they hold in exile," the organization says on its website.

Punitive expedition

ARM draws parallels between its efforts to return to Nigeria objects taken during the punitive expedition and efforts by Greece and Egypt to have their antiquities returned.

Joel Okafor, a professor at Chicago's Roosevelt University and a fellow of the St. Clair Drake Center for African and African-American Studies at Roosevelt, said the exhibit shows what he termed as an; "ugly and lasting aftertaste of the impact of colonial rule and its enduring cultural legacies."

Okafor says the debate over the return of African antiquities to their native countries has produced limited results, but he is optimistic. "The world is finally demanding that human beings own up to the excesses of the past," he said citing Italy's decision in 2005 to return an Ethiopian obelisk taken by the colonial government of Mussolini in 1937 and a recent apology issued by the U.S. Congress to the victims of slavery.

Stolen rhino horns could be deadly

By Francis Awinda

Two 19th century rhino horns stolen from a South African museum could be deadly if sold as a popular aphrodisiac because they are drenched in poison, a museum official says.

Jatti Bredekamp, chief executive of Iziko Museums, says the "priceless" horns were snatched from a display at the historic mammal gallery in Cape Town recently, according to story filed by Reuters.

"Unknowingly, the thieves have exposed themselves to more than the danger of arrest and prosecution," Bredekamp said in a statement.

"Before the mid-twentieth century, taxidermy mounts were prepared by being soaked in arsenic and preserved from insect infestation through regular applications of DDT, both highly toxic poisons that retain their toxicity over time," he said.

Bredekamp said the horns were deliberately targeted in a carefully planned robbery, and might be destined for Asia, where ground rhino horns are a prized aphrodisiac. "This could have unforeseen consequences," he said.

Rhino populations have fallen dramatically over the last few decades as poaching decimated the animals across Africa.





visite des élèves non-voyants de l'institut Mohammed VI des non-voyants, Temara
Blind pupils from Institut Mohammed VI, Musée de la Maroc Telecom, Morocco



Les garçons se préparent pour
circoncision dancent avec les
batons (Induku)



Une visite Guidée au Musée de la musique
Guided visit in Musée de la Musique, Burkina Faso



Des filles en train de s'apprendre à jouer au xylophone -
Musée de la musique - Burkina Faso
Girls learning to play the xylophone - Musée de la musique
- Burkina Faso



Une visite à Morro da Cruz par Simao Souindoula
Visit to Morro da Cruz by Simao Souindoula, National Museum of Slavery, Angola



Nuhntan, Masqueradeur d'Oku, - Mus'Art Gallery -
Cameroun



Boys ready for initiation dance
with sticks (Induku)



Vitrine murale possédant des collections culturelles chez les Banda en Centrafrique
Mural window displaying worship collections of the Banda - National Museum (Boganda Museum) Central Africa



Des élèves étudiant des objets de la musique
Children studying musical instruments, Musée de la
Musique, Burkina Faso



Un élève en train de designer une image d'instrument musicale - Musée de la Musique - Burkina Faso
Pupil drawing an image of a musical instrument - Musée de la Musique - Burkina



Nuhntan, Masquerader of Oku - Mus'Art Gallery -
Cameroon



Visite Guidée d'un groupe d'élèves venus de Nigeria
Guided visit for pupils from Nigeria- Musée National de Togo, Togo

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