



AFRICOM NEWS

Issue No. 4, 2005

from the Interim President...

Tribute to Emmanuel Nnakenyi Arinze



Emmanuel Arinze has left us; on 10 February 2005 he passed away prematurely. He still had so much to offer to the museum and cultural communities in Africa. He has certainly left us but he will always be with us, as we shall keep in our memories his gentleness, his amiability and his experience, his knowledge of people and how to approach them. I did not know Emmanuel Arinze for long, but I saw straight away that he was a moderated, courteous, and knowledgeable man who, in rare moments when we had the opportunity to meet, could moderate the euphoria of some and bring those present to an understanding - something he was always able to do. He always had the right words to calm even tempestuous discussions, and to reconcile even the most obstinate.



I certainly did not know him well, but I remember our last evening at the Abungu home, where at one point during the evening he went to sit alone. Those of us who were there that evening did not understand at the time, but today we understand the sentiments of the moment that were a sign of things to come. We were in Nairobi for the meeting of the Board of Directors, which he chaired with good judgment and firmness. Even when everyone was not in agreement, the tone of the meeting was never heated and voices were never raised. I believe that his presence enabled us to readjust our views and abandon any hope of needless arguments.

Everyone knows his passion for African heritage, and he was part of every association that had links with the protection and promotion of heritage and, essentially, Africa. A big part of his life was dedicated to the development of museums in Africa and to the promotion of African heritage that he wanted everyone everywhere to know about.



He has left us when he was chairing our young organisation, AFRICOM, to which he had a particular attachment. He has left us when this young organisation needed his advice the most. In memory of this gracious man, we must continue to excel for the greater good of the organisation, and to tighten the reigns and to join our efforts to guarantee its lasting sustainability, which all African museums need.

AFRICOM Board members, from left:
Elizabeth Ouma, Augustine Don-Ding, Mike Gondwe,
Chédli Annabi, Boureima Diamitani, Stella Dway,
Emmanuel Arinze.
Seated: Lorna Abungu

Chédli Annabi, Interim President

AFRICOM 2nd GENERAL ASSEMBLY

in partnership with the South African Museum Association, SAMA



AFRICOM



Join AFRICOM and SAMA members
at AFRICOM's 2nd General Assembly & Conference
in Cape Town, South Africa, from 4-6 October 2006!

This event hopes to bring together over 200 participants, including:

- a) AFRICOM and SAMA members;
- b) Members of ICOM, its regional organisations and its committees;
- c) Museum and heritage professionals from around the world;
- d) Representatives of cultural and heritage organisations: UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM, ALECSO, ISESCO....;
- e) Representatives from the African Union and the South African Government;
- f) Funding and technical partners.

The General Assembly will be responsible:

- to elect members to the new Board of Directors 2006-2009;
- to elaborate a strategic plan and activities of AFRICOM for the next three years;
- to evaluate the activities of the organisation

The International Conference:

The chosen theme for the 2nd International Conference will focus on "Intangible Heritage".

The meeting will bring together museum and heritage professionals from Africa and beyond to discuss the management, promotion and protection of this living heritage and the potential threats, as well as its value as an asset for the African continent.

In consideration of Cape Town's rich cultural heritage, and the hundreds of museums in South Africa, this event promises to have both stimulating academic content and exchanges as well as fascinating cultural events and experiences.

AFRICOM and SAMA are jointly fundraising for the organisation of the General Assembly and international Conference. An announcement will be made soon inviting AFRICOM members to apply for bursaries to enable their participation.

For more information about the General Assembly and international Conference, please contact the AFRICOM Secretariat
<secretariat@africom.museum>

**WATCH THE AFRICOM WEB SITE FOR MORE INFORMATION,
AND FOR CANDIDACY AND VOTING PROCEDURES**

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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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.

AFRICOM Board of Directors, 2003-2006:

Mr Emanuel Arinze, President, 2003-2005

Ms Chédia Annabi, Interim President, 2005-2006

Ms Elizabeth Ouma: Treasurer

Mr Mike Gondwe: Representing Southern Africa

Dr Boureima Diamitani: Representing West Africa

Ms Sakina Rharib: Representing North Africa

Ms Augustine Don-Ding: Representing Central Africa

Mr Ahmed Zekaria: Representing East Africa

Ms Stella Doway: Representing the Indian Ocean Islands

Mr Per Rekdal: Representing the ICOM Executive Council

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INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The backbone of AFRICOM is the Secretariat. In order to effectively carry out its mandate as a membership-based network of museums and museum professionals, there are a number of important Institutional Activities that take place throughout the year. The Secretariat also continues to offer advice and respond to requests for information, contacts and technical assistance.

Information and Network Building

a) Database of African Professionals and Heritage Institutions

This is an ongoing programme to update references and contacts. AFRICOM members are encouraged to stay in contact with Membership Services to help us keep your contacts up to date. This database is not only used to maintain the online version of the Directory of Museum Professionals in Africa, but also as a resource for identifying resource people in their different competencies for possible consultancies, technical and other advice. The MuseumDepot Foundation of the Netherlands has been instrumental in developing and providing database software free of charge as well as intensive training for Secretariat staff.

b) New web site launched!

AFRICOM has reconstructed and re-launched its new and improved web site. Gagan Dadalya of Wildebeest Productions, a Nairobi-based company, has worked painstakingly for months to create a site with an entirely new look (right) that is not only more attractive and user-friendly, but one that provides AFRICOM members and all users with important information about the organisation and its resources. The site is also an online databank of African museum and heritage information. AFRICOM relies on its members to help us improve the site by sending in any updates and other information. Visit the site today! www.africom.museum



c) Introducing AFRICOM-L!

AFRICOM has established an e-mail distribution and discussion list to keep its network informed of its activities and to promote dialogue and exchange among members. AFRICOM-L is a moderated e-mail discussion list dedicated exclusively to AFRICOM and related subjects. This is YOUR list – please use it!

“I can’t thank you enough for connecting me with AFRICOM-L! It was such a goldmine of information for my essay on “how museums can help teachers get the most out of their museum visits” – I had so many responses from museum directors and educators in African museums, that I actually had “too much” research information to use and in the end had to cut out so many examples that I had wanted to use!”

– Karalyn Monteil, UNESCO Division of Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies student, University of Leicester

d) AFRICOM Information Centre: Building the Collection and Increasing Access

The collection has steadily increased since 2002 to now contain over 1,448 entries. The continuous collaboration of museum professionals and institutions with AFRICOM has been a big boost for the Centre’s collection, and the ongoing Internship Programme has also ensured a steady supply of audio visual material, especially photographs. ICCROM’s Technical Assistance Services (TAS) has donated publications on conservation, and our inter-library book exchange has also greatly contributed to collection development.

One of the major achievements in collection development was the kind donation of back issues of UNESCO’s *Museum International* by the Editor, Isabelle Vinson, to both the AFRICOM Information Centre and to our partner organisations PMDA, EPA and National Museum of Sudan (Khartoum). Other important

donations include *Sudan Ancient Treasures*, from Mr Hassan Idress Ahmed, Director General of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (Sudan); and *Hannibal ad portas* from Chédliya Annabi of the National Museums of Carthage (and Interim President of AFRICOM).

e) Membership: 600 and growing!

Management of our membership campaign continues, with an aim to double the number of members from 512 in 2004 to over a thousand in 2006. AFRICOM Membership Services is aiming for membership in all African countries, while it also focuses on management of fees and identification of benefits. AFRICOM would like to encourage the joining of more Institutional Members, and for African Museums to offer free entry to valid card-holding AFRICOM members.

Institution Building

In addition to planning and holding Annual Board Meetings in 2005 and 2006, the Secretariat is now in the process of planning for the 2nd AFRICOM General Assembly in 2006. Meanwhile, development and improvement of AFRICOM infrastructures, frameworks, policies, and human resource development continue on a regular basis.



□ Countries in Africa with AFRICOM members

Sida undertakes mid-term review

Sida (Sweden) has given support to the AFRICOM programme (under ICOM) since 1993, mainly to the coordination and administration of the programme, with the objective to strengthen the autonomy process of the organisation. Between 2001 and 2003 AFRICOM as an autonomous organisation received a three year grant from Sida for its operational costs and capacity building, followed by a second grant for the period 2004-2006.

As part of the funding agreement, Sida initiated a mid-term review of AFRICOM by two external consultants: Kajsa Pehrsson (Sweden) and Ivan Murambiwa (Zimbabwe). The purpose of the review, held between 6th and 20th September 2005, was to appraise the relevancy, effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation since its inception, while focusing more specifically on the period 2003-2005. The evaluation hopes to identify obstacles and challenges, as well as solutions and suggestions on the way forward for AFRICOM. The review should then serve as a base to ensure improvements and sustainability of the organisation in terms of structure and operations, and its future potential as an international NGO.



From left: Lorna Abungu, Ivan Murambiwa, Kajsa Pehrsson

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

AFRICOM has fundraised or is currently fundraising for a number of Programme Activities to be carried out at various levels (local, regional and continental) between 2005 and 2006. The various activities have been grouped according to Priority Areas:

Priority 1: Intangible Heritage

- a) Continental Conference focusing on Intangible Heritage (in tandem with the General Assembly)
- b) Africa's Fabric of Life: A Survey of Intangible Heritage Resources

Priority 2: Professional Development in African Museums

- a) Professional Excellence Programme (PEP)
 - (i) AFRICOM Bursary Scheme
 - (ii) AFRICOM Publications Series
 - (iii) AFRICOM Internship Programme
- b) "Document It!" Collections Inventory Kit for African Museums

Priority 3: Networking of Institutions and Professionals

- a) "Museums of Africa Connect" - Internet Connectivity Programme
- b) AfricaDotMuseum "Africa.Museum: Smooth Guide to Connecting Your Heritage to the Net (and the World)"

A series of Regional Initiatives, Themed Campaigns and Partnerships are also envisaged for the coming years. These activities are being developed in response to regional interests and opportunities or to requests from technical partners. They provide opportunities to increase and strengthen AFRICOM's network and visibility and reflect one or more of AFRICOM's priority areas.



*Floris Guntenaar
and John Odhiambo*

Museum-D Training Session

In February AFRICOM hosted Mr. Cees List & Mr. Floris Guntenaar from Museum Depot Foundation of the Netherlands who conducted a training session on the use of MuseumD-System, a digital object and collection management software. The MuseumD-System also supports archiving audio and video recordings of story telling, music and dance.

The 4-day training session, that ran from the 7th to 10th February, brought together participants from AFRICOM and from several departments within the National Museum of Kenya. Each participant got an opportunity to work with the software and to make suggestions on changes that they felt would make it suitable for their needs.

MuseumDepot then undertook the responsibility to incorporate the recommendations into the software and produce 4 generic versions of Museum-D, which will be sent to the participants.

Museums in Africa: Challenges for the 21st century

AFRICOM is pleased to announce that the long-awaited Proceedings of the 2003 AFRICOM Conference and General Assembly are now available in English and French. Participants at the Conference, as well as all AFRICOM members and our financial partners, will receive a free copy. Please contact the Secretariat if you would like to obtain additional copies or if you did not receive yours. You can also download a copy in PDF format at:

<http://www.africom.museum/whats-on/wo3.html>



MUSEUM PROFESSIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

Since September 2004, AFRICOM, in partnership with the National Museums of Kenya (NMK), has been running a Museum Professional Internship Programme. This two-year programme, generously funded by Sida, is based at the AFRICOM Secretariat in Nairobi. AFRICOM offers scholarships to cover travel, accommodations, insurance/medical coverage and an allowance for living expenses and some funds for project/research.

The AFRICOM Internship Programme in 2004 and 2005 has brought together selected curatorial and exhibits staff from African museums to Nairobi for seven 8-week programmes. They are 3 remaining sessions set to take place in 2006. These will bring to 20 the total number of interns attending the Programme in Nairobi.

The Programme

Within the framework of its priorities for Professional Development and Networking, the programme gives the visiting interns exposure to activities within the restructuring programme at the NMK and more specifically the VVOB-NMK Interactive Public Programmes Project. The Project is also one of the core players in the restructuring programme, which aims to develop a range of new exhibitions in the new museum. Up to now, hands-on training and professional networking opportunities for African museum professionals have been extremely limited.



Interns spend approximately 80% of their time working on specific projects at the NMK, related to the development and design of galleries or the preparation and implementation of exhibitions: financial planning, human resource planning and management, and actual implementation/exhibit design. The interns also spend part of their internships (approximately 20%)

working in the AFRICOM headquarters gaining exposure and contributing to the development of this pan-African museum organisation.

Applications from all African museums have been welcome, and cater for African museum professionals with a minimum of two years experience and maximum 40 years old. Selection criteria include level of experience and studies and also defined NMK project priorities. AFRICOM also makes every effort to ensure geographic and gender balances.



While the NMK is unable to adequately cater to interns who do not speak at least a modest amount of English, AFRICOM has selected interns who speak English as a second foreign language. Each



of them participated successfully in the programme, and found the exposure to English language particularly beneficial. It had been proposed that AFRICOM develop a similar programme with a museum in French-speaking Africa to cater for a larger number of Francophone professionals in an effort to give an equal fair coverage/opportunity to the whole of Africa.

Advantages

1. The small group atmosphere enables the supervisor to identify and address the specific developmental needs of each intern.
2. The period of 8 weeks gives ample time for the various activities the interns need to participate in, including field trips.
3. The practical/hands-on experience is an added benefit to the host institution as this is experience that can be fully utilised on the ground back home.
4. The interns gain experience in exhibition development and design but at the same time provide the NMK with an actual contribution based on their previous experience and talents in their field of expertise.

Results

Excellent results have been achieved by the Interns both while on the programme, and when back in their home countries upon return. Many have implemented their knowledge in their museums, and others have been accepted for further training based on their enhanced competencies. The Internship programme has given the interns valuable experience in all facets of project design and implementation, including exhibition design and installation, and both human and financial resource management. It also afforded them the opportunity to work with diverse teams of museum staff in various fields of expertise at Nairobi, Kisumu and Fort Jesus Museums. Full reports by the Interns are available in the AFRICOM Documentation Centre and will soon be available on our web site.



Interns for the 2004-2005 sessions

Mmamosinki Kgang, Botswana • Gerald Coleman, Ghana • Pumeza Mandela, South Africa • Aaron Maluwa, Malawi • Peter Musa, Cameroon • Isaac Kanguya, Zambia • Dionisio Mula, Educator, Mozambique • Mohammed Azaza, Tunisia • Sunday Adaka, Nigeria • Yoseph Mobae Berhe, Eritrea • Beryl Marie-Nella Ondiek, Seychelles • Aminata Sall, Senegal • Samuel Ratovoarizo, Madagascar • Lucie Boyaka, Central African Republic



Full details on the interns and their home institutions can be found online at: www.africom.museum/today/interns.html



WHAT THEY SAY...

Gerald Coleman:

"I must say the exposure came at the right time to equip me well for the task ahead of me. I have never had such an experience ever since I joined Ghana. Now I know what to do, when to do it and how to do it."

Mohamed Azaza:

"I think that internship programme for museum professional's staff is very relevant and important and I hope that it will (should) continue to exist because it's an occasion for museum staff to improve their professional skills."

Isaac Kanguya:

"Our institution scooped three awards [at the Zambia International Trade Fair]... I used the skills I learnt while there on that internship on exhibitions and public programs. The internship really worked for the betterment of my institution. Everyone here is happy and excited at this achievement... keep up the good work, the fruits of the internships are now being realised.."

Peter Musa:

"The team spirit that reigns within AFRICOM has been such a living inspiration for me. I very much enjoyed my time out with all of you and what I learnt shall be reflected in my work back at the Musa Heritage Gallery."

Pumeza Mandela:

"The programme was an eye opener to me. I can say Kenya is a shining example to other countries in supporting dynamic engagement between African museums and their communities"

Aaron Maluwa:

"The internship programme is one of the many important products AFRICOM has embarked on to improve communication, and sharing the professional skills by professionals from different museums in the region. Museum professionals also feel the ownership of AFRICOM hence they can in turn contribute positively towards its development in many ways."

French Student on 4-month Attachment

Valérie Alpañes, was born in 1983 in Vénissieux, France. She has been involved in many cultural events and activities in different associations in France. She has a degree in Cultural Management and was pursuing a Master in the same field at the Aix-Marseille III University, France, during the time of her attachment. In 2003, she participated in a 2-month internship programme at the Fine Arts Museum of Lyon, France and spent another 3 months at the Royal Museum of Central Africa in Tervuren, Belgium. In both instances, she took part in the activities of the Educational Department. Valérie joined AFRICOM for 4 months as an intern which has been a valuable experience for her in gaining some know-how in the field of museum and cultural management, which have helped her thesis about the social problems facing African ethnographic museums. In September 2005, she began an M.A in Museology at the Montreal University, Canada.



NMK: Good ground for professional museum development

By Peter Musa*

The National Museums of Kenya (NMK) consists of over thirteen departments and over three million objects covering the natural sciences and the arts. Over the years the NMK has been at the forefront of professional museum activity in sub-saharan Africa and commands respect across the entire continent as well as globally. At the NMK, the national museum is not a concept, it is a reality as evidenced by the numerous exhibits by the Nairobi Museum and NMK's regional museums spread across this East African nation.



Working with the NMK means working with a wide network of museum professionals, scientists and

artists. It means working with the young, students, researchers, scholars and with the Kenyan public and tourists alike. At the NMK, the museum world offers daily challenges and many new horizons for training and professional development. When you work at the NMK you get the opportunity to learn, acquire on-the-spot knowledge and the joy of sharing with colleagues both junior and senior. The enthusiasm of the staff and numerous volunteers, both old and young, as they tackle each new day is amazing.

To the NMK, Kenya's national heritage includes both the natural and cultural. Is your national museum a combination of the natural and cultural patrimony of your country? Do you know that a rare fish (the Coelacanth) thought to be extinct but surprisingly caught along the Kenyan coast has brought national pride to Kenya? Does your national museum run public programmes? Do you organise regular training sessions for your national museum staff? Is your national museum a true blueprint of the natural and cultural landscape of your country? Does your national museum promote audience development, sustainability and growth?

Thanks to AFRICOM, between 2004 and 2006, museum personnel in Africa have been benefiting from its internship programme. The experience shall last a lifetime!

**The writer was an AFRICOM intern January to March 2005 and worked with the NMK - Interactive Public Programs Project (IPPP). Peter is the Director of the Musa Heritage Gallery (Mus'Art) in Cameroon.*



www.musartgallery.info.ms

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY 2005

“Museums Bridging Cultures”

We are very grateful for all the contributions sent in by our colleagues throughout the continent on their activities to mark International Museum Day. Photos: courtesy of the authors.

Nairobi Museum, Kenya

- by Henry Cheruiyot

The ICOM-Kenya National Committee, AFRICOM and the Culture and Heritage Clubs of Kenya teamed up to organise various activities at the Nairobi Museum: Screening of video documentaries focussing on cultures of peace and reconciliation in Kenya; Traditional Music and Dance; Children’s activities; a Clean-up exercise at Jeevanjee Gardens; and Interpretation of ethnographic materials.

Drostdy Museum, South Africa

- by Ronel Vosloo

The Drostdy Museum undertook activities with the sub-theme “From wheat-ear to bread”, which included a project for learners on the story of wheat to bread and involved processes using traditional methods. There was also a Xhosa traditional fashion parade with songs and dances at the museum to promote cultural contacts. For more information, see: www.drostdymuseum.com

Village Museum, Tanzania

- by Green Nyirenda

The Village Museum, situated just outside Dar es Salaam, is an open-air museum. This year’s International Museum Day activities involved the youth. Children were invited to grow indigenous crops around the traditional houses and plant local herbs in the botanical garden. The museum has established a biological department and it will be an important time of the year to enlighten the school children through an interactive programme on the existing links between the Natural and cultural heritage.

Natural History, Art and Geology Museums, Mozambique

- by Lucilia C. Chuquela

These three museums are located within the city of Maputo. The Museu de História Natural displays many of the animal species of Mozambique; the Art museum, in a densely populated district of Bairro, opened its doors in 1989; and the Geology museum belongs to the geological survey of Mozambique. The museums were open to the public free of charge to mark International Museum Day. The Natural History museum held talks based on museums bridging culture; the Art Museum had an exhibition by the artist Ana Feleicidade whose theme was “Point of convergence”; while the Geology Museum had a workshop on geology patrimony and conservation.



Mauritius Museums Council, Mauritius

– by Mrs. H. Cader

From the 12th of May, the Council celebrated International Museum Day with two exhibitions and an Inter-College quiz competition. The first exhibition “People of Mauritius” was aimed at educating the general public and visitors as to the origins of Mauritian and the processes of settlement of the immigrant ancestors. The second exhibition, “Unique Birds of Mauritius”, also coincided with International Day for Biological Diversity and was held at the Natural History Museum, Port Louis. The quiz competition involved three secondary schools: each school submitted a team of Form II students aged 12-13 who competed in several rounds, answering questions about the museum, Mauritian history and general knowledge. The winning school was presented with a shield.

War Museum Umuahia, Nigeria

– by Umebe Onyejekwe



The museum's programmes for International Museum Day highlighted the similarities inherent in the various ethnic customs and how these can be used to achieve mutual understanding of each group's culture. Students from various schools and universities performed songs and dances that

document the traditions of the Yoruba, Igbo, Ibibio, Edo and Hausa.

Albany Museum, South Africa

– by Ras Mpho Jeffrey Molapisi

The Albany Museum, the second oldest museum in the country, held a cultural event which brought together speakers from different sectors of the society, diverse cultural performances, gospel choirs, local amaXhosa traditional diviners and craft displays on board. The Albany Museum was established in September 1855 and the year 2005 marked its 150 years of existence.

This clearly indicated how serious the museum is in cherishing and promoting diverse cultures of South Africa. In doing so, it continues to succeed in harmoniously bridging cultural boundaries of the South African people. For more information, see:

www.ru.ac.za/affiliates/am/



Calabar Museum, Nigeria

– by Sunday Adaka

The Calabar museum is part of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments of Nigeria and activities on this important day mainly involved talks and workshops. Among the notable speakers were Mrs. Duke Onari, patron, Calabar museum society; Mayo Adediran, Curator, Calabar museum; HRH Ebutom Ekpo Eyo, President, Calabar museum; and the keynote speaker, Ambassador Professor Okon E. Uya.



Seychelles National Museums

– by Beryl Ondiek

The National Museums of Seychelles in collaboration with International friendship league of Seychelles and other museums in the Seychelles embarked on vigorous consultation with foreign countries representatives either working or living in Seychelles to participate in the cultural exchange show and exhibition. The countries approached included India, Nigeria, Kenya, Sri Lanka, China and Madagascar. The exhibition and inter-cultural show depicted multi-cultural elements of the countries, and served to mark the 20th International Museum Day. The Director of museums, Mr Alain Lucas flanked by a number of Museum staff officially opened the show, which included Giriama dances from Kenya, a Sri Lankan love play and Nigerian fashion

show. Among the dignitaries at the occasion were Ministers, Principal Secretaries from different ministries, members of the Diplomatic corps, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Museum staff, friends of the museums, the General Public and the press.

Morocco Telecommunications Museum, Morocco

– by Ech cherki Dahmali

The “Maroc Telecom” Museum initiated week-long “Open-Door” programmes to coincide with both International Museum Day and International Telecommunications Day.

The theme for the programmes was “The role of museums in the social integration of handicapped peoples”. During the week, many institutions took advantage of guided tours, question-and-answer sessions, and benefited from the dissemination of documentation on telecommunications, post cards, fliers and posters from the museum. Special visits were made by youth from the Hadaf Association in Rabat; members of the Association of young IT and Telecommunications Researchers of Rabat; and schoolchildren from the Al Yaqada school group. There were also visits by physically handicapped children from the Moroccan Association for Better Life in Kénitra, and by students of the Institute Mohamed VI for the blind in Témara.



Promoting the Intangible Heritage of South Sudan

Kwoto Cultural Centre is a non-profit organisation, established in Omdurman, Sudan in 1994 to highlight the cultures of Southern Sudan through the power of performing arts (music, singing, drama and dance) as a contribution to the process of nation building. Kwoto also emphasises that culture is one of the main components for national development.



Kwoto celebrated its 11th Anniversary from 12th to 14th September, and dedicated the event to the soul of the Dr. John Garang de Mabior. Dr Garang was the SPLA/SPLM leader, former

First Vice President of Republic of Sudan and the President of the Southern Sudan Government, who died tragically in helicopter crash on 30th July.



This year's celebrations were attended by over 1,500 inhabitants of Khartoum, and highlights included the emotional performance "Lier Piou", which in the Dinka language means "cooling the heart". During the first civil war in the 1950s, a certain type of music developed that reflected romance, struggle and social life in southern Sudan of that period. Kwoto is restoring this invaluable intangible heritage by inventorying the musical scores, profiling the artists, and digitising the music onto CDs. In order to encourage creativity and keep alive the memory of pioneer musicians of Southern Sudan, the Centre plans to establish an award for young musicians from Southern Sudan.

Axum Obelisk returns home

The Axum obelisk is regarded as a national treasure by Ethiopians and thousands turned out to celebrate the return of this 24-metre tall architectural marvel which dates to the 3rd century and weighs 160 tonnes. Axum was the capital of a powerful, pre-Christian Empire that stretched into parts of the Arabian Peninsula. The obelisk is thought to be a grave marker or stele belonging to a king from the Axumite Empire; legend has it that Axum was also the final resting palace of the Ark of the Covenant.

Massive obelisks are among the few tangible remains of the past glory of Axum, an area lying in the shadow of the Adwa Mountains where Emperor Menelik II defeated the Italians in 1896: the greatest modern victory of an African army over a European force. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia has said the monument is a "symbol of identity" for the Ethiopian people.

Italian troops took the Obelisk to Rome in 1937, where it was erected by Mussolini near the Circus Maximus in Rome as a symbol of his conquest. After the war, Rome promised to return property plundered from Ethiopia, but did not, arguing that it could not be properly cared for. Ethiopia has long since campaigned for its return and, despite a 1947 UN agreement for its return, an agreement was only reached two years ago. The Axum obelisk was returned on the 25th of April 2005. The obelisk's final resting place shall be the original site on the edge of Axum where it will be re-erected alongside six other ancient obelisks.

Nairobi Museum Closes its Doors

In an effort to make it a state of the art facility, Nairobi Museum in October this year closed its doors to the public for 18 months. The EU-funded restructuring programme was scheduled to kick off in 2002, but legislative delays have forced the management to work overtime to beat the expiry of the financial agreement in June 2007. The restructuring, according to the EU vision, will serve as an example for other museums in the continent, which are keen to transform themselves into "New Age Museums" in terms of state of the art exhibition and visitor experience.

House of Wonders Reopens

The 'House of Wonders' museum in Stone Town, Zanzibar, was reopened on 2 July 2005. The opening was the conclusion of an international cooperative project for the protection and maintenance of cultural heritage with the Royal Tropical Institute of the Netherlands (KIT). Rather than using human and

other resources from Europe, the project facilitated the work already done by the museum staff. Training courses were provided PMDA, together with museum experts from Botswana, Kenya and Zambia. The new exhibitions reflect the island's rich culture and history. The museum is fully bilingual (Swahili and English), and has special educational programmes for the children of Zanzibar. See: <http://www.powerofculture.nl/uk/current/2005/july/houseofwonders.html>

Goodbye PMDA... Welcome CHDA!

The Programme for Museum Development in Africa, PMDA, has served for years as a Heritage Training Centre for English speaking Africa. However, in order to reflect its growing mandate within the museum world and the heritage sector, PMDA has officially changed its name and will now be officially known as the Centre for Heritage Development in Africa (CHDA). CHDA's offices remain in the historic Old Law Court building at the edge of Mombasa's Old Town in Kenya.

Zambia scoops awards

Isaac Kanguya, who participated in AFRICOM's Internship programme reports that the National Heritage Commission, Livingstone scooped three awards at this year's Zambia International Trade Fair, namely: 2nd Prize Best Overall Exhibition, 1st Prize Best Exhibit Tourism Sector, and 1st Prize Best Exhibit-Government Ministry/Department. Isaac says that he used the exhibitions and public programmes skills he learnt while in Kenya, especially those related to interactive exhibitions, which are not common in Zambia. Congratulations, NHC!

UNESCO's DigiArts Africa launched!

At a DigiArts meeting at the Ars Electronica Festival in Linz, Austria in September, discussions focused on pilot projects to support and develop creative practices in Africa through the use of information and communication technologies. At the Festival, the Africa Infopack was launched; it is a tool to find people to join the network of DigiArts Africa and to contribute, participate and gain from the network. Recognising that African artists and other creative practitioners have specific needs in order to grasp the opportunities that information and communication technologies offer in creative practices, the DigiArts Africa network is an appropriate channel to mainstream digital creative practises, reinforce the capacities of a variety of actors in Africa and ultimately nurture the development of creative industries through cross-sectorial and inter-regional cooperation. See:

DigiArts Africa: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/digiarts/Africa>

DigiArts: <http://portal.unesco.org/digiarts>

CHDA Conference

CHDA (formerly PMDA) hosted the conference: "African Museums and Cultural Institutions in the 21st Century: Development, management and partnerships". The conference is jointly organised and run by CHDA, the British Council and the British Museum, and took place in Mombasa, Kenya, from 5 to 10 December 2005. The conference brought together museum professionals in English Speaking sub-Saharan Africa, as well as from Angola, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique and Seychelles.

Museums and the Web 2006

Join hundreds of colleagues at the only annual conference exploring the on-line presentation of cultural and heritage content across institutions and around the world: the 10th annual Museums and the Web in Albuquerque, New Mexico, from 22-25 March 2005. 'Museums and the Web' addresses the social, cultural, design, technological, economic, and organizational issues of culture and heritage on-line. MW2006 features plenary sessions, parallel sessions, museum project demonstrations, commercial exhibits, mini-workshops, professional fora, a usability lab, a design 'Crit Room,' and the Best of the Web awards. See:

www.archimuse.com/mw2006/index.html

MPR Annual Conference 2006

ICOM-MPR's Annual Conference 2006: "Diverse Cultures, Diverse Communications" will be held from 7th to 9th August in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting will look into issues such as: making rich and diverse resources accessible to individuals, institutions and communities; and the role of the Marketing & Public Relations fraternity in museums and other cultural organisation in ensuring this happens. The meeting will also discuss the roles that the different stake holders in the heritage sector can play in marketing the activities of museums. See:

www.mpr.icom.museum

New SAMA Council elected at 69th National Conference

The South African Museum Association (SAMA) is the national association for all who work in and contribute to South Africa's museums, galleries and other heritage institutions. SAMA's 69th National Conference and AGM were held from 24-26 May in Bloemfontein. The theme was: "Medianyewe ya Kgotla" : Bridging the boundaries: Integrating collections, curators, communities. At the AGM, elections were held for Council Members for the period 2005-2007. Deirdre Prins-Solani was elected SAMA President, while Beverley Thomas was elected Vice President. Also on the Council is Khanyile Jezi, Immediate former SAMA president. Several members of the SAMA Council are individual AFRICOM members, and SAMA itself is an institutional member of AFRICOM.

See: www.samaweb.org.za/conf.htm



(left to right) Beverley Thomas, Khanyile Jezi and Deirdre Prins-Solani

Cool Links...

www.africaremix.org.uk

An ambitious exhibition that brings together over 200 works of art by 84 African artists, addressing contemporary issues of post-colonial reality on the continent.

www.archaeologica.org

A web source running daily archaeological news and information

www.powerofculture.nl

An initiative by the Cultural Collaboration, Education and Research Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands,

www.samaweb.org.za

The official site of the South African Museums Association.

www.afromet.org

AFROMET - The Association for the Return of The Maqdala (or Magdala) Ethiopian Treasures - is an international organisation dedicated to retrieving priceless treasures looted during the British invasion of Ethiopia in 1867-8.

www.museumjobs.com

International Recruitment for jobs in Museums & Galleries

www.globalmuseum.org

An international museum web magazine

www.culturalheritage.net

A search engine about the conservation of cultural heritage, restoration and maintenance of the architecture, preservation of the urban landscape

www.eculturalresources.com

Comprehensive source of news, jobs, announcements, consultant listings, and resources for the cultural resource industry.

<http://list.africom.museum/mailman/listinfo/africom-l>

Join over 700 museum professionals on AFRICOM's new discussion list! The list accepts messages related to AFRICOM, its activities, and related issues.

For detailed information on ICOM Committee and other meetings, visit:

<http://icom.museum/calendar.html>

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