



AFRICOM NEWS

Issue No. 6, 2007

from the President...



As this year draws to a close, we may heave a sigh of relief and hope that through the challenges we have encountered, as an International NGO, not the least of them being related to funding, we have been able to learn lessons for our future. The struggle for liberation from colonialism and apartheid in the Republic of South Africa, because of its protracted and complex nature, provided the liberation movement with ample time to distinguish between its real friends and allies and the pretenders. Certainly, through this long year of struggle for survival, AFRICOM has indeed been able to discern who shares the vision, crafted so many years ago by the founding members. We are grateful, encouraged and heartened by this consistent demonstration of support. These were through sharing words of encouragement; debating issues about the way forward; challenging positions taken by the Board and not least, pledging financial support.

We need to acknowledge the incredibly loyal support of the National Museums of Kenya (NMK). To the Council, the Director General and the Management Team of NMK, you not only talk the talk of being an example and support to the whole of Africa, you have painfully walked the talk with us. To the President of the Getty Foundation, Joan Weinstein and her team, we have honed our skills through the dialogue and have been encouraged by the openness and integrity with which you have engaged us over the past year. To the Ford Foundation, to understand the vision of AFRICOM and to wish to play a significant part in rolling it out, gives us hope.

We also need to thank the Secretariat staff who loyally worked in the Nairobi office without any guarantees of payment. You have kept the machines of this incredible organization turning to ensure that it continues to move forward with its serious and noble task.

And to all of you - Members and Friends - we appreciate the support given over the past year and the calls which came to say that, "No, AFRICOM is NOT dead. AFRICOM is its members". As we craft a new vision and direction for the future we look forward to a powerful, engaged and coherent organization which serves the interests of Heritage Resource Management in Africa.

Amongst the articles in this edition you shall find snippets of exciting news from the Continent, honorary awards to leaders in the field, innovative projects from which we can learn and perhaps opportunities to link up to enhance our own work.

We wish to call on you to send in written submissions to the Secretariat articulating your ideas and vision for building a stronger and more effective AFRICOM. The next meeting of the Board is in February 2008 and we would wish to engage with these at this critical meeting.

On behalf of the Board and myself
With Best Wishes

Mrs Deirdre Prins – Solani
President

Africom Board 2006 – 2009

New board members elected

AFRICOM elected new board members during its Second General Assembly and Conference in Cape Town, South Africa in October 2006. Madam Augustine Don Ding was re-elected, the rest of the elected Board members are new.

AFRICOM now has a new President, Vice President and Treasurer. The new Board members are as follows:

President :

Mrs. Deirdre Prins-Solani
Senior Manager,
Robben Island Museum,
South Africa

Vice President and representing Western African Region:

Mr. Nath Mayo Adediran
Director of Museums,
National Commission for Museums and Monuments,
Nigeria

Treasurer:

Mr. Peter Dennis Gero Okwaro
Senior Education Officer,
National Museums of Kenya
Kenya

Regional Representatives:

1. Mrs. Alfreda Ibui
Research Scientist-Palaeontology
National Museums of Kenya
Kenya

2. Mr. Ossama Meguid
Director
Nubia Museum, Aswan,
Egypt

3. Mrs. Augustine Don Ding
Conservateur en Chef,
Musée Barthélemy BOGANDA,
Central Africa Republic

4. Dr. Norbert Kayombo
Director General
National Museum & House of Culture,
Tanzania

5. Mrs. Saloni Deerplasingh
Conservateur,
Museum of Indian Immigration
Mahatma Gandhi Institute,
Mauritius

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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, 2006-2009:

Mrs. Deirdre Prins-solani: president
Mr. Nath Mayo Adediran: Vice president and representing West Africa
Mr. Peter Okwaro: Treasurer
Mr. Ossama Meguid: Representing, North Africa
Mrs. Alfreda K. Ibui: Representing, East Africa
Dr. Norbert Kayombo: representing Southern Africa
Dr (Mrs) Saloni Deerplasingh: Representing Indian Ocean islands

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Activities Highlights

AFRICOM meets in Vienna

AFRICOM sent a delegation to the 22nd General Assembly of ICOM in Vienna, Austria, led by Mr. Nath Mayo Adediran, the Vice President and Representative of the Western African Region. Other members of the delegation included Mr. Peter Dennis Okwaro, the AFRICOM Treasurer and Mr. Ossama Abdel Meguid, a Board member and Representative of the Northern African Region.

Okwaro was the first to arrive at the main venue of the meeting, around noon, on the August 16th and reported, "I arrived in the main registration hall and saw no familiar face. I quickly went through the registration process and headed for the open arcade within the main venue, the University of Vienna, thinking that I would take a rest after the long flight. From afar, I saw two Africans waving their hands at me and I put on a bright face – at least here are people who know me, or with whom we are familiar.

As I get closer, I discover, simultaneously as they do, that we have never met. However, the spirits stay high, we are African brothers and sister(s).....

One said, "I thought you were Karanja from Kenya," the other, "you look like Nath Mayo." Obviously, since I am neither of them, I said, "my name is Peter Okwaro. I am from the National Museums of Kenya in Nairobi."

Recognition suddenly appeared on their faces. "I have heard that name before – associated with AFRICOM? AFRICOM-L? Do you work with AFRICOM?"

"Well, I am the Treasurer of AFRICOM and currently standing in for the Executive Direct....."

"What is happening in AFRICOM?" they interrupted, "we have heard many things, like it is dying eh? What is happening?"

So, I took my time to explain the situation and to reassure them that we have a minor financial hitch which we were addressing.

Anyway, I immediately saw the need for an AFRICOM meeting in Vienna and so about making his happen with the other members of the delegation, immediately we met.



AFRICOM meeting in Vienna 2007

The Meeting

The meeting took place on Wednesday 22nd August 2007. Twenty seven people attended. The Vice President gave information about the situation at AFRICOM as it was then, particularly the financial difficulties being experienced, their causes and the efforts being made to find a solution.

The participants raised many issues. However, the main points of concern revolved around funding and finances; the management of AFRICOM in light of the absence of the newly appointed Executive Director at the secretariat and the question of who had been selected to facilitate the strategic planning process and the number and distribution of participants.

Other issues raised included the commitment of African Heritage Institutions to funding AFRICOM; the possibility of establishing an endowment fund to enhance financial security and the inadequate communication from the secretariat, among others.

The delegation was comprehensively able to meet all the participants' concerns. By the end of the session, the participants were reassured that their fears had been listened to and addressed and pledged to maintain their membership and support for AFRICOM.

They also observed that there is need for improved communication between the secretariat and the membership to avoid future rumours that obviously create anxiety.

Africom Holds Its 2nd General Assembly and Conference In Cape Town, South Africa.

AFRICOM's 2nd General Assembly and Conference took place in Cape Town, South Africa from the 4th to the 7th October 2006 and was held at the prestigious Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC). The General Assembly and Conference, whose theme was 'Intangible Heritage: African Museums and Living Culture', was one of the most successful events on the continent's heritage scene that year. It provided a much needed opportunity for heritage professionals from the continent and beyond to, not only, exchange professional views on heritage issues, but also jointly chart out a new way forward for the organization. Participants brainstormed about structures and systems, policies and leadership amongst

other issues. These deliberations will see AFRICOM more effectively serve its audiences as well as making a greater contribution to conserving the continent's heritage in the future.

Through the generous funding of SIDA, the Getty Grant Program, the Ford Foundation and others such as Prince Claus Fund, CHIN, Africa 2009 and the National Museums of Kenya, AFRICOM was able to offer over 100 bursaries to museum and heritage professionals from 37 countries in Africa. AFRICOM is also very grateful to the numerous local and international partners who contributed in cash and kind towards the success of the Conference and General Assembly.

Those present consisted of AFRICOM members and heritage professionals, as well as representatives from Africa 2009, Ecole Patrimoine Africaine (EPA), International Council of Museums (ICOM), International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), Centre for Heritage Development in Africa (CHDA), South African Museum Association (SAMA), African-Swedish Museum Network (SAMP), West African Museum Programme (WAMP), Robben Island Museum Training Centre and the Nubian Museum Training Centre, amongst others.

Notable personalities who attended the conference included Dr. Mounir Bouchenaki (the Director-General of ICCROM), Ms. Alissandra Cummins, (the President of ICOM), Prof. Adame Ba Konare (the former First Lady of Mali) and her husband, Hon. Alfa Oumar Konare (former President of Mali and current Chair of the African Union).

Three workshops were held during the Conference. These were;

- Workshop I - 'Museums Alive',
- Workshop II - 'Who's in Charge? How do we do it?'
- Workshop III - 'Globalization and Technology: Friends or Foes?'

Recommendations arising out of these workshops included the following:

- Develop appropriate cultural tourism policies for the African continent;
- Define cultural tourism in synergy with relevant stakeholders;
- Create security policies incorporating ideas of digital preservation;
- Create an Intangible Heritage database;
- Plan cultural programmes in the context of globalisation;
- Investigate tourist craft, traditionalcraft and craft revival and issues of "traditional" and "change";
- Explore the idea of a virtual museum for the African continent;
- Review and define roles of African academics regarding intangible heritage: balance, knowledge of ancestors, teaching approaches, research in the area of traditional knowledge and preservation of indigenous knowledge;
- Integrate the participation of local authorities, communities, civilsociety and custodians of intangible heritage;
- Advocate for a specific legal framework for safeguarding intangible heritage on the African continent
- Consider the use of African languages in training schemes;
- Develop a management plan for the preservation of indigenous knowledge;



AFRICOM general assembly 2006 cape town



Dr. Boureimia Diamitani of WAMP presenting at AFRICOM general Assembly 2006

Considering the attendance and recommendations from the workshops held, the General Assembly was a great success for a relatively young organization. The high levels of attendance indicated overwhelming support by major players on the heritage scene both on the continent and beyond. AFRICOM hopes that this support, along with the collaboration and partnerships created thus far, shall continue to prevail into the future.

Africom in 2007: Financial Difficulties Cause Fear and Anxiety

The Second General Assembly and Conference in Cape Town, South Africa was successfully completed. A new Board was inaugurated and by the time participants left Cape Town for their various homes around the world, one could almost 'feel' the air of assurance and optimism surrounding the fact that AFRICOM was alive and healthy and that it was and will be able to continue to meet its mandate and objectives effectively and efficiently.

Towards the end March 2007, this optimism was beginning to fade, especially among the staff at the secretariat who were on the ground and who realized AFRICOM required funds for its operations – funds that were not immediately available.

A few weeks earlier, the Swedish International Development Agency, SIDA, which had been the main funding partner for the organization in previous

years had written explaining that they were not in a position to continue funding. This had arisen as the new Swedish Government's policy towards culture had changed and there was not enough funds allocated to enable continued funding.

Due to the fact that AFRICOM, rather unfortunately, had not been able to diversify its funding base during its years in operation, this meant that there was no 'fallback' plan.

With a new Board and a new Executive Director, AFRICOM had no option but to begin from scratch and identify new potential funding partners. Engaging them in negotiations for the funding of the secretariat operations and projects was no easy task for relatively 'new kids on the block'.....

This has been the situation now for almost one year. We still do not have the funds yet but all is not lost as we have had some very positive responses from the Ford Foundation and the Getty Foundation, who have, in principle, accepted to provide funding to AFRICOM for a three-year period. We hope that we shall soon be financially stable once again.

The National Museums of Kenya has been very helpful, paying for office running costs since March 2007. Of course, we cannot forget that the National Museums of Kenya has, since the beginning seconded two members of its staff to AFRICOM on full salary, apart from also providing office space. I am not sure what would have happened if we had had to pay all these expenses through this difficult period. Their support does not go unrecognized.

AFRICOM Information Centre

The AFRICOM Information Centre was established as a Resource centre for museum professionals throughout the continent and is continuously working towards creating access to information that will impact positively in the development of museums and its professionals in the continent. The Centre has not only strengthened its role in information provision but is remarkably being sought as a reference point for enquiries in relation to activities in which museums are built on. This year the centre has assisted community cultural institutions develop and propagate networking by providing them with links to authorities in their field of scope as well as ensuring that museums in Africa which don't have websites and are institutional members of AFRICOM get WebPages in the AFRICOM website.

Collaborative efforts with institutions like ICCROM, UNESCO, Natural History Museum as well as individual professionals has seen the expansion of the information collection base which has resulted to satisfactory technical query feedbacks. The Centre owes a lot this year to UNESCO –Kenya for the support in website, newsletter as well as publications and especially to Ms. Fumiko Ohinata the Programme Specialist for Culture for her visit to the Centre which definitely brought UNESCO-Kenya closer to the working atmosphere at AFRICOM.

For information and services available at the Centre send email to documentation@africom.museum

UNESCO gives AFRICOM a grant

AFRICOM shall be distributing its 2007 Newsletter before the end of December. This follows the receipt of a US\$ 8000 grant by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) towards effective communication in AFRICOM.

Apart from the Newsletter, the grant shall also go towards payment for AFRICOM's continued access to the internet; payment for the list serve, AFRICOM-L hosting and the hosting of the AFRICOM domain name, the dot museum which enables the continued hosting of the website www.africom.museum

The President, the Board and the entire membership of AFRICOM would like to thank UNESCO for this support and hope for continued cooperation and partnership in the future.

Professional development at AFRICOM

Henry Changwony Cheruiyot was fortunate to receive a scholarship to pursue Masters in Development (Heritage Management) at the Université Senghor, Egypt. The 9 months course began

on the 10 September 2006 - 15 May 2007 culminating in a thesis entitled: Valorisation des Programmes de Stages Professionnels des Musées en Afrique Anglophone: Cas du Programmes Conjoint Entre AFRICOM et Le Musée National du Kenya

Université Senghor has established itself as the largest francophone university in Africa but accepts students who master french from English speaking countries both in Africa and beyond. The university has put in place comprehensive capacity building structures for African professionals by offering Masters in Development courses in health, management, culture and environment for a period of two years. Apart from the course work, assignments, projects and seminars, students are also required to attend a 3 month internship in French speaking country in Africa, Europe or Canada .

During the training I had the opportunity to interact with individuals from various backgrounds and established a strong network of professionals, internationally renowned experts who came to the university to give lectures and talks.

Apart from lectures and presentations, students participated in workshops, seminars and exhibitions which provided a good opportunity to exchange ideas and knowledge on matters that relate to the course.

Students also benefited from scholarship which covered accommodation, stipend, transport and tuition fees.

Information on this university can be accessed from www.usenghor-francophonie.org

Henry presenting thesis at the aUniversity Senghor - Egypt



Finally The Africom Board Meeting Takes Place

Thanks to a sponsorship by the Ford Foundation, the AFRICOM Board members converged for their second Board meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, on 26th November 2007. The first such meeting took place on 7th October 2006, soon after the new Board took office.

AFRICOM had earlier sent a proposal to the Ford Foundation, requesting funding support for secretariat operations. As part of their review of the proposal, the Ford Foundation requested and accepted to fund a meeting with the AFRICOM Board members to enable a joint review and development of a common vision and focus for AFRICOM for the next three years.

The Board meeting took place on the 26th November, leading to the meeting with the two Ford Foundation representatives - Program Officers for Media, Arts and Culture for Western and Eastern Africa Offices, Ms. Margie Reese and Dr. Joyce Nyairo respectively.

All Board members, representing the six regions of AFRICOM on the continent attended the meeting. It was unfortunate, however, that the Executive Director, Al Hadji Mbaye Gueye was not able to attend. He had been advised by his doctor not to travel due to a medical condition that required close observation. He sent apologies.

The meeting was very fruitful with many positive contributions from both the Board members and the Ford Foundation partners. Ford Foundation expressed their commitment to supporting AFRICOM.

AFRICOM thanks the Ford Foundation for its support and collaboration.



Africom board meeting Nairobi , November 2007

International Museum Day 2007



AFRICOM President's Letter on International Museums Day

The AFRICOM President, Deirdre Prins-Solani, sent out a letter to the AFRICOM fraternity to celebrate the International Museums Day 2007.

Focusing her communication on the issue of museums and Universal Heritage, she quoted a Xhosa saying of old, "siphola ngokuthunukwa - we need to scratch a wound to let it heal." She went ahead to do just that; perhaps an attempt to tickle the heritage fraternity on the continent to keep the discussion on this issue alive and high up on the agenda.

The President placed emphasis on discussions about Universal Heritage Museum Partnerships. In light of the challenge made by ICOM President, Alissandra Cummins, to build linkages and meaningful relations between privileged museums, which have extensive collections drawn from countries other than themselves, and museums from which those heritage resources have been taken.

Noting that the limited, but interesting, discussions on this subject on AFRICOM-L had suddenly died out and been replaced by issues of communities and museums, the President wondered whether we have become tired of discussions about repatriation.

"Have we decided that we need to focus on what is in our collections now? Are the concerns of communities within our context far too pressing to devote time and resources to discussions on this topic? Have we become skeptical about partnerships and the nature thereof? Are we afraid of the implications and consequences of further loss and the few gains that have been made for the continent?"

She encouraged members not to be afraid to write about the good, the bad and the ugly and to talk to each other about the partnerships, exchanges and collaborative programs that have worked.

The President wished all members of AFRICOM a wonderful International Museums Day 2007.

Tsodilo hosts International Museum Day

Botswana celebrated this year's International Museum Day at the Tsodilo Hills, with the theme: "Celebrating Tsodilo".

Nakiso Kubanji, Public Relations Officer for the Department of the National Museum, Monuments and Art Gallery, thought the theme quite fitting, considering that Tsodilo is the only World Heritage Site in Botswana, listed in 2001.

"We want Botswana to appreciate Tsodilo as one of the world heritage sites," she said. "The aim is to make the public aware of the fact that Tsodilo is not only a place for locals but for the international community as well. Emphasis must be placed on the need to protect and respect the heritage".

Tsodilo Hills, or mountain of gods, are found in Ngamiland in north-western Botswana. The hills are one of the most historically significant rock art sites in the world.

The San people, who have been living there for over one thousand years, revere the site and believe that the hills are a resting place for the spirits of the deceased.

The hills have over 4,500 images painted at 400 sites. Legend has it, that the area was once home to a family; a father, a mother and their child, hence the names of the cliffs; male, female and child.

The celebrations included theatre performances, traditional music and dance, art exhibitions and site tours.



Tsodilo hills museum

Provincial Museum of Houet, Burkina Faso

The management of the provincial museum of Houet organized on May 18, 2007 an open day to allow the public to discover the museum. This event was part of the International Museum Day celebrated annually.

The open day of the provincial museum of Houet was marked by several activities, ie a tour of the exhibition hall, traditional settlements, workshops of artisans and the sacred sections of the museum. This tour under the direction of the museum curator, Saïdou Sinini, was presided over by the High Commissioner of Houet, Salifou Ouédraogo.

The day was also marked by a public lecture hosted by the Archbishop of Bobo-Dioulasso, Archbishop Anselme T. Sanou on the theme: "The role and place of culture in education and the development of peoples." Opened in March 1990, the Provincial Museum of Houet has not seen such an event since 1992. The High Commissioner of Houet then invited the people of Houet to visit the museum during the day.

He hinted that the province plans to set up projects to seek the support of NGOs to undertake tours of the collection and acquisition of objects to diversify parts of the museum. The director of the museum appealed to antique dealers, economic operators, law enforcement agencies, religious and traditional leaders and everybody else to work for the promotion and enhancement of cultural works.

The provincial museum of Houet's mission is to acquire works, material remains of the



provincial museum of Houet Burkina Faso

culture of man and the environment, to maintain and expose them for the purposes of education and dissemination. It also has the role of awareness and sensitizing the local population to the preservation, conservation and reclamation of their cultural heritage, physical and non-physical. The Provincial Museum is a home for the distribution of regional, national and international cultures and a temple of inspiration and artistic creation.

*Adaman DRABO
Sidwaya*

Egypt marks international museum day:

16 new museums to be set up

The Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) held a ceremony in Cairo to mark the International Museum Day.

During the event, a gallery was opened housing rare archival pictures of the most important archaeological discoveries in Sinai since 1980.

A short documentary was also aired on the renovation and modernization work carried out by the SCA at existing museums and new ones that will be inaugurated soon.

Dr. Zahi Hawwas, the SCA Secretary-General, honored a number of veterans who had played a key role in museums renovation and modernization work.

Hawwas said 16 museums would be set up in the near future across the country, adding that these museums would be provided with up-to-date display equipment.

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Children and their heritage:

During the International Museum's day, the national committee of ICOM in Tunisia organized a day trip to the Museum of Carthage. This activity aimed to explain to a group of children aged 8-12 yrs the value of their heritage and to incite them to visit their museum more regularly.

The day began in the museum gardens with a visit to the living quarters of the punic era, dating back to the second century BC.

The group of children continued their tour with explanations of the collections exhibited. Three objects of the 3rd and 4th centuries BC were chosen from the punic era and were presented to the children. These particular objects were selected because they are still being made and are still being used in the same way in Tunisian households in rural areas..Therefore, they are objects that were used daily and that have survived over two thousand years of history.

After a short pause when the children were able to discover the museum gardens and wander around this particularly amazing site (a UNESCO world heritage site), a workshop on pottery making was organized in the conference room of the museum. Children were allowed to choose one of the three objects that had been presented to them to model – under the guidance and assistance of student helpers.

The children enjoyed the experience so much that they each insisted on making not just one of the objects, but at least two of the ones that they had seen in the museum.

Following a nice picnic break and drinks courtesy of the museum, the children participated in a quizz on proverbs and expressions taken from national oral traditions. This exercise was a big success particularly among those children who recognised the familiar expressions from their daily lives and could then grasp the origins and wisdom of such expressions. Winners were obviously declared, but all the children were rewarded with a replica of an object from the museum as a present.

Thanks to this outing, the children managed to discover part of their tangible ancient heritage, which still survives in the present and to reconsider an aspect of their intangible heritage, the scope and the dimension of which they were not aware.

The outcome of this trip was that the children insisted that this type of activity be organized more frequently and regularly!

Regional News

Southern Africa

Zimbabwe: Culture Fund Gets US\$1 million

The Culture Fund of Zimbabwe, which received about US\$1 million from the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) was launched in April 2007 by Dr. Hope Sadza to develop the culture and arts industry in Zimbabwe.

Dr Sadza called for more funding for the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust. She lauded the creation of an independent board of technocrats and management team for the benefit of the culture sector.

Luxon Zembe, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees added, "Government departments like the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe and the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture among others have agreed that we can work with their networks and structures of cultural officers countrywide, in order to reach potential beneficiaries resident in the various districts of our country."

The Swedish Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Mr. Sten Rylander, reiterated his country's support for the development of the arts through a long-term commitment to the sector's growth and called on other organisations to support the initiative.

Minister of Education, Sport and Culture, Aeneas Chigwedere presented awards to two charitable causes -- Dandoni Kids Club of Chipinge, a traditional dance group made of orphans, (\$60 million) and Nompilo Nkomo (\$40 million), a disabled Bulawayo painter who uses her legs for her craft.

Mpumalanga Mountains may be a future World Heritage Site

Makhonjwa Mountains around Barberton are believed to be the oldest in the world; 3.6 million

years, and have the oldest fossil records. Mpumalanga bids to have it registered as a World Heritage Site. Mpumalanga has already managed to convince the South African World Heritage Committee (SAWHC) of the mountains' global importance owing to their geological value and both the local and the provincial governments as well as the private sector support this initiative.

The Makhonjwa Mountains are now on tentative list of possible world heritage sites in November.

UNESCO's World Heritage Committee took place in New Zealand. There are already 830 sites recognized by UNESCO across the world.

South Africa is home to seven sites: the Cradle of Humankind in the Northwest, Robben Island off the coast of the Cape Town, Mapungubwe in Limpopo, the Cape Floral region in the Western Cape, the Drakensberg Mountains, the St Lucia wetland in KwaZulu-Natal and the meteorite crater at the VredefortDome in the Free State, estimated to be about 2 billion years old.

The declaration of the mountains as a world heritage could lead to the construction of a geological museum to exhibit fossils and other artifacts from the area currently stored at the universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand.

North Africa

Berlin museum rebuffs Egyptian threat

Berlin's Museum of Egyptology rebuffed a threat from Egypt's top antiquities official to block all art loans to Germany unless the "world's most beautiful woman," Queen Nefertiti, goes home to Cairo.

Though one eye is missing, the 3,000-year-old painted limestone bust of the queen is celebrated as one of the finest female representations ever created. It was taken to Germany from Egypt under a 1913 contract. German art lover James Simon bought the bust from Ottoman authorities in 1913 and it is a top tourist attraction in Berlin.

Zahi Hawwas, head of Egypt's antiquities authority, told the parliament in Cairo on Sunday that if Germany refused to lend the bust to Cairo, he would halt further cooperation with German museums and archaeologists.

Anja Kuhr, a spokesman for Culture Cooperation, a German group campaigning for the bust to be lent to Egypt, refuted claims by the museum that the bust is too fragile to be transported, demanding experts report on the state of the art.

Germany's state minister for culture, Bernd Neumann, had said a granting the loan would be irresponsible.

Nefertiti was the wife of the Egyptian Pharaoh Amenhotep IV and Mother-in-law of the Pharaoh Tutankhamun. Her name roughly translates to "the beautiful one is come."

Celebrating the International Children Day at Telecom museum, Morocco

On the occasion celebrating the International Childrens Day, The Morocco Telecom museum organized two days of "Open Doors " to the benefit of the children from Bayti association for domestic reintegration, the school has a social and occupational reintegration programme for children in difficult situation, and those of the Lalla Meryem Centre for the Abandoned Children - Moroccan Child welfare League .

The program for those two days included conducted tours at the Morocco Telecom Museum which included questions - answers sessions plus painting workshops.

The visit by children from the Bayti association was planned for November 20, 2007 while those from Lalla Meryem centre, on November 21, 2007.

The aim of Morocco Telecom Museum in this event was to present the technological and institutional history of telecommunications in Morocco to the young generations and to sensitize them on the role that it plays in the protection of this national heritage.



Children painting at Morocco Telecom Museum

Eastern Africa

The Uganda National Museum revitalization

The notion of a museum is universal to most countries and cultures, which by default, puts it on the 'must see' list for many tourists. This puts added importance on ensuring the Uganda National Museum is a part of any investment plan that intends to polish Kampala's tourism offerings.

The first printing press in Uganda, an Albion, used by the missionary Alexander Mackay, is displayed at the Uganda Museum.

The Uganda National Museum, East Africa's oldest national museum, holds some of the finest ethnographic artefacts in the region and tells a fascinating history of Uganda and the people of East Africa.

The fact that it is nearly a century old, having been opened in 1908, means the museum is a well-established venue for tourists. The museum is among a number of institutions receiving part of the 400 million Ugandan Shillings being spent on revitalizing cultural sites in the country.

The Kenya Police Museum

A conceptual plan for a proposed Kenya Police Museum project will be undertaken by the Kenya Police Service. The idea of the museum rose from concern over the scattered and neglected police related objects of historical value. This unique project will spawn a fully fledged museum to manage the priceless museological relics. The museum will utilize artifacts used in the force since its establishment, dating from 1887 up to the present. This inimitable museum will narrate the history and development of the Kenya Police and in effect the history of the Republic of Kenya. This unprecedented project in the East African region is only comparable to the South African Police Museum in Pretoria and Cape Town.



Celebrating the Kenya police heritage

West Africa

Juffureh Museum registers success

Bakary Jabang, Assistant Custodian of the Juffureh Museum, has said that the museum has registered a significant success in the areas of promotion, preservation and development of arts and culture in the Gambia. The Museum was established in 1998 with the help of the National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC) to promote, preserve and develop arts and culture in the Gambia, Africa and worldwide. International visitors, particularly tourists and researchers, visit the museum.

The museum houses documents, items and other relevant information on African traditional and cultural heritage, relating to the Atlantic slave trade and includes both pictures and biographies of many prominent freedom fighters.

The 25th Anniversary Celebration of the West African Museums Programme

The West African Museums Programme (WAMP) has just completed its 25th anniversary celebrations which took place in Dakar, Senegal between the 5-10 November, 2007. The main highlight of the celebrations was the holding of a colloquium on the theme: Cultural Heritage, Community-Based Development and Regional Integration; with a special forum on the Economics of Culture, supported by the Observatory of Cultural Policies in Africa.

Having existed for quarter of a century in the service of museums and cultural heritage development in West Africa, WAMP brought together its partners, beneficiaries, sponsors and institutions working on the preservation and promotion of the African heritage, to reflect on its achievements and constraints with a view to adapting its mandate and charting a new direction for the future. The overall objective was mainly to evaluate WAMP activities over the years and to provide a forum for reflection around the use of cultural heritage as a tool for community development, poverty alleviation and regional integration.

More than 50 participants, mainly from West Africa (Senegal, Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Conakry, Togo, Benin, Ghana), and Morocco, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France attended the celebrations and deliberations.

The opening ceremony was presided over by Dr Hamady Bocoum, Director of Cultural Heritage, Senegal, who deputized for the Minister of Culture. Speakers at the ceremony included among others, - Dr Nii Quarcoopome, Chairman of the Board of Directors of WAMP, Dr Claude Ardouin, former Executive Director of WAMP and head of the Africa section of the Department of Africa and Oceania and the Americas of the British Museum, who delivered the keynote address, Dr Akwasi Aidoo, Executive Director of Trust Africa, Dakar, Senegal, who responded to the keynote address, and Dr Boureima T. Diamitani, the Executive Director of WAMP.

Professional News

Themba Wakashe appointed as the new Director- General for the Department of Arts and Culture

The Minister of Arts & Culture of the Republic of South Africa, Dr. Z. Pallo Jordan appointed Mr. Thembinkosi Philemon Wakashe the new Director General of the Department of Arts and Culture. Mr. Wakashe has been, since 2001, the Deputy Director-General.

Mr. Wakashe becomes the second Director-General since the Department became independent and autonomous in 2004. Born on 29 November 1960, he has a BA (Drama) from Wits University and an MA in performance studies from the New York University in U.S.A. Wakashe worked as the National Co-Coordinator for Arts & Culture South Africa, an umbrella body for formulating policies for the new society. Later, he was appointed as Chief Director for Arts, Culture and Heritage in the Department where he was responsible for relations with bodies like UNESCO, SADC, EU and former OAU. He was part of the team that developed the Arts, Culture and Heritage White Paper, which provided the framework for the democratization of the arts sector in South Africa. He is also credited with driving the development of the Country's film industry.

As Chairperson of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee for the year 2005, he led the body in its 29th Session in Durban, South Africa, during which the Africa Heritage Fund was set up to assist countries on the continent to maintain World Heritage Sites. Wakashe's lifelong passion for the arts and his conviction that arts and culture are instrumental to national unity and economic self-reliance are what made him a natural choice for the position of Director-General.

While announcing his elevation to the Director General's position, the Minister said, "It is only fitting that we appoint him the leader of this Department at a time when it has come into its own and plays a central role in nation-building efforts and use arts and culture as an instrument for creating jobs and economic self-reliance among our artists. We look forward to working with him."

Dr. Zahi Hawass Awarded the Grade of Officer in the Order of Arts and Letters of the Republic of France

On Sunday July 8th, during an elegant ceremony at the Giza residence of Ambassador Philippe Coste, Dr. Zahi Hawass was presented with a medal and ribbon which signifies his induction into the Order of Arts and Letters of the Republic of France. The Order was created in 1957 to recognize persons distinguished by their contributions to arts and letters in France and in the world. Celebrities, noted scholars, and other VIP's from Egypt and abroad joined in celebrating the occasion with Dr. Hawass and at the reception which followed the ceremony.

Born in Damietta, Egypt on May 28, 1947, Zahi Hawass is presently the Undersecretary of the State for the Giza Monuments. Hawass studied in both Egypt and the United States, receiving his Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1967 and his Diploma in 1980 in Alexandria, Egypt. He has a Masters Degree in Egyptology from the University of Pennsylvania and he earned a PhD in 1987.

Zahi is a Member of the Board of the Cairo Museum, the German Archaeological Institute, the High Council of Culture (History and Archaeology), the Committee for the Restoration of the Sphinx and several others.

Former AFRICOM Intern, Linda Sinon promoted.

Linda Sinon, a military officer from Seychelles and Assistant Curator at the Seychelles People's Defense Forces Museum was recently among six Second Lieutenants promoted to the rank of Full Lieutenant by The Commander in Chief (C-in-C) of the Seychelles People's Defense Forces (SPDF), President James Michel.

At a colourful ceremony that included a military parade at the Seychelles Defense Academy at Il-di-Swet (South East Island) and attended by the Commander-in-Chief himself on Saturday (indicate date), a total of 13 officers of different ranks were promoted, each to one rank higher.

Linda was one of two museum professionals who undertook a two-month internship at AFRICOM between 7th January and 6th March 2006, under the auspices of AFRICOM's

Museum Professionals Internship Programme. The other intern during this period was Joel Ipara Motema from the Institute of the National Museum of Congo in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

AFRICOM takes this opportunity to congratulate Linda on this achievement and to wish her well in her new role and her increased responsibilities.

Former AFRICOM Director honoured by EPA

On February 12, 2007 in Porto-Novo, Bénin, Mrs. Lorna Abungu, the immediate former Executive Director of AFRICOM, received a distinction from EPA for her involvement in the service of African museums.

Lorna was the founding Executive Director of AFRICOM and managed its operations from the year 2000 until 2006. She is currently a consultant with Okello Abungu Heritage Consultants.

The Ifé award given to Alain Godonou and George Abungu

Mr. Alain Godonou, Director of the School of African Heritage, was honoured on July 14th, 2007 in Brazzaville, Congo, with the Ifé award for museological innovation, on the initiative of the General Commission of the Pan-African Festival of Music (FESPAM).

FESPAM is a cultural exchange event, which brings together professionals from the world of music, sciences, arts etc. This is a bi-annual event held in Brazzaville, around a theme linked to one of these areas. It is organised by the Government of the Republic of Congo, under the patronage of the African Union, in partnership with organisations such as UNESCO, CICIBA, CIM, AFRICOM.

As the Ifé award honours public or private institutions and researchers who contribute by their achievements and commitment to the development of African museology, FESPAM also presented the same award to Mr George Abungu, the former Director General of the National Museums of Kenya and representative of his country, Kenya, at the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO.

AFRICOM and its professionals, through FESPAM, offer their congratulations to the two award winners. We all stand together.

Museum Highlights

How can museums work towards developing audience? A look at Mus'Art

By Peter Musa, Director of the Musa Heritage Gallery, (Mus'Art) Cameroon

Audience development remains a prime task for museums globally. In the context of African museums, this task becomes even more complicated and difficult due to many reasons that center on either (a) a general lack of interest in museums by the public, or (b) Inadequate or no resources or personnel for public relations and audience development work in the museums.

After 10 years, Mus'Art is developing a new vision that seeks to engage the people of Kumbo to become more involved in their activities. It also calls for a new Mus'Art image and an approach that intends to be very open and flexible; a space where creativity is promoted through exciting and stimulating programmes. Though it is an arts and crafts museum, this drive does not intend to restrict Mus'Art to its core area of operation but rather introduce new activities that go to complement the work of the museum as an arts and cultural institution. This will help in attracting new audiences and in building stronger bonds with existing ones.

New Nairobi National Museum – (The Complete) Season One – Preview*

The concepts and basic storylines are ready for the twelve exhibitions of the New Nairobi National Museum. The complete exhibition series will culminate in a grand centenary celebration in 2009.

Interpretation of the storylines, selection of media, text writing and exhibition design is done for four impressive galleries:

Human Origins in the Hall of Kenya; a rentable corporate affairs gallery in the original 1930s museum which highlights the national heritage, is a spectacular show illustrating the evolutionary path of mankind spanning over 17 million years, with special topics as fossils, survival skills and their relation with human beings. This gallery has a high security section in which our audience will have the chance to see original and unique early hominid skulls.

Mammalian Radiation is, basically, the new mammal gallery, discussing - amongst other topics - locomotion, feeding and defense mechanisms and displaying the diversity of Kenya's wildlife.

Cycle of Life, taking visitors through the rich material culture associated with the different phases of life - childhood, youth, adulthood, ancestry - in the diversity of Kenya's communities.

African Rock Art exhibition, a contemporary Kenyan art exhibition, in the Discovery Gallery with hands-on activities to enhance the learning process and probably one or two temporary exhibitions.

Hans Goosens

National Gallery of Zimbabwe Jubilee Year Exhibition - December 2007

The year 2007 marks the 50th anniversary of the opening of The National Gallery in Harare. This modernist building was opened with an extraordinary exhibition that brought a collection of highly prized European art works for the first time to an audience in Southern Africa. To mark the 50th year of its existence, The National Gallery of Zimbabwe will mount an equally, momentous show.

The show will run from December 2007 to February 2008 and will carry with it a vibrant and extensive series of workshops, seminars and events centered around themes of connections, networks and new cross-continental collaborations. These collaborations will be encouraged to explore the fusion of contemporary and cultural practices toward developing extraordinary and necessary works that begin to represent artists from the continent in new and dynamic ways for this continent and beyond.

The Transvaal Museum opened its doors to the public*

The Transvaal Museum opened its doors to the public to view the reconstructed remains of the "Mrs Ples" skull discovered 60 years ago. In celebration of its 60th anniversary, the Transvaal Museum released the reconstructed images of the virtual "brain" of "Mrs Ples". The images were obtained from computed tomography (CT) scans of the fossil, studied at the Little Company of Mary Hospital in Pretoria with the support of Labuscagne and Partners. "Mrs Ples" is the nickname of a fossil skull which is believed by many scientists to represent a distant relative of humankind. The cranium was discovered at Sterkfontein near Johannesburg at the Cradle of Humankind on 18 April 1947 by Dr Robert Broom of the Transvaal Museum, with his assistant, John Robinson. The exhibition runs for three months, from 9 November 2007 until 31 January 2008. A star attraction of the exhibition will be "Mrs Ples", together with virtual images of the reconstructed "brain".

Zimbabwe national gallery



Museum in the Spotlight

Museum in Change: The Nairobi National Museum (NNM)

With only two years to go before celebrating its centenary, the National Museum of Kenya (NMK) has entered a new era. The Museum is going through radical reforms that are set to make it a more dynamic and exciting destination.

These radical changes include legal reforms, staff restructuring, physical, infrastructural development and the creation of new exhibitions and public programmes. Perhaps the most visible change is the extensive modernization and expansion of the NMK's flagship, the Nairobi National Museum (NNM).

NNM closed its doors to the public in October 2005 and has since witnessed major construction of new facilities and the revitalization of its existing ones. The outcome is impressive; the Nairobi Museum has become a magnificent piece of architecture. Both its exterior and interior spaces put it in the league of other world class museums.

An overall master plan was prepared five years ago which included general site improvements, the renovation of the old museum buildings, the design of a new administration block and the re-planning of the main museum building, notably increasing its size to provide additional gallery space and visitors' facilities.

A key component was the design of the new Visitor's Centre, incorporating much needed facilities including a new ticketing office as well as cafés and shops. The design for the new Visitor's Centre and West Gallery, set astride the old approach road, makes a strong arrival statement. Vehicles will be kept away from the front of the existing Museum building and visitors' vehicles will be separated from the Museum and staff vehicles through the creation of separate entrances to the NNM.

To create a new experience at the Nairobi Museum, the Museum's project teams, consisting of curators, exhibition developers, designers and fabricators, have been working on both out-door exhibitions and interior displays. The focus of the outdoor exhibition development is to create greater harmony between the Museum entrances, gardens, open spaces, non-gallery spaces and the Visitors Centre. This will provide a visual manifestation of the mission and vision of the NMK. The thematic content of the artwork, the materials used in the fabrication of outdoor sculptures, the landscaping and the Botanic Gardens champion the three pillars of Kenya's national heritage namely; nature, culture and history. Right from one's entry at the gate, there is now a new, refreshing, visitor experience.

The new main pedestrian entrance is designed in proportion to the original Coryndon (Museum) building. Its façade is now a 21st century statement made up of Kenyan clay claddings and strong colours. The visitor, passing through a classically proportioned portico, arrives in a piazza in front of the old museum. This acts as the access to the Visitor's Centre, flanked on one side by shops and a café, which creates a lively transition area between the formal approach to the Museum and the Visitors Centre. The new Visitors Centre is linked to the original building by a two-storey high glass structure.

The design and alterations to the interior of the Museum allow visitors to progress from gallery to gallery, now thirteen in total, rather than the old arrangement which consisted in a never ending series of cul-de-sacs.

The old Mammal Hall has been re-roofed and converted into a gallery to house visiting exhibitions. The old Coryndon Hall (the original Museum) has been cleared of the dioramas, which are being re-constructed into a new format within the old Bird gallery. The cleared Coryndon Hall will accommodate some of the Museums most prized exhibits and give extra space as a corporate entertainment area.

Externally, the new approach to the museum has a more formal ambience. Traffic is now separated from pedestrians with extensive terracing and planting.



New look Nairobi Museum

The structural facelift of the NNM better reflects the heritage of Kenya and is designed to stimulate both appreciation and learning. The galleries focus on nature, culture and history. Five 'mixed' galleries capture the new, diverse and interactive personality of the Museum. Under the 'Nature' pillar, five exhibitions have been planned; Human Origins, Mammalian Radiation, Ecology of Kenya, Natural Diversity and Geology. Under the 'Culture' pillar, the exhibitions include The Cycle of Life, Cultural Dynamism and Creativity. The 'History' pillar has two exhibitions; Kenya Before 1850 and the History of Kenya.

The 'Museum in Change' project has been funded by the European Union to a tune of Kshs 800m .

Heritage In Peril

Out of Africa: The stolen prince

Ethiopia is demanding the remains of Prince Alemayehu Tewodros, the son of the Ethiopian Emperor Tewodros II, who has a claimed bloodline stretching back to King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. He was captured in April 1868 by the British Army when they conquered the ancient fort of Magdala. Alemayehu was transported to England to be educated as a gentleman and along with him went so many looted treasures, including religious artifacts which included 350 manuscripts, all of which took (reportedly) 15 elephants and 200 mules to carry from Magdala to the nearest seaport. Ethiopian President, Wolde-Giorgis Girma, has formally written to the Queen of England asking for the remains of Prince Alemayehu to be exhumed and returned to Ethiopia for burial.



Stolen Ethiopian prince Alemayu

Thousands of heritage objects stolen in South Africa

Over 14,000 objects, artifacts and art works have been stolen from South African museums, galleries and heritage institutions in the last four years according to the Democratic Alliance party during the National Assembly as part of a debate on the arts and culture budget vote. The last Auditor-General's report had found a new batch of problems generated in terms of assets misplaced, not recorded, incorrectly recorded or just plain missing. The list of missing key artworks which now runs to worth millions includes:

*An oil painting by Gerard Sekoto, titled *The Gardener*. It was stolen from an unnamed university in Eastern Cape in 1999;

*Another Sekoto masterpiece, *Hotela Bantu* was stolen the same year from the same university collection;

*Pierneef's *Near Golden Gate*, ripped from a wall at the SABC in Johannesburg in 2005. The 1955 commission is believed to be the artist's biggest work and has an estimated value of R5-million;

*An animal totem by Henriette Ngako and a Moses Seleko sculpture, *The Gumboot Dance*, both stolen in Pretoria 2005.

Artifact thieves ravage Nok culture

The historical sites of the Nok culture have been reduced to a shadow of the past as looters have invaded the fields. This was disclosed by two German archeologists from the Frankfurt University, Prof. Peter Breunig and Dr. Nicole Rupp, who have been working on the Nok sites. The sites require urgent attention as a considerable amount of damage has been done to the trenches that once housed the Nok artefacts. It was also noted that the situation at the sites was complicated as some of the custodians said they sold artifacts to feed their families.

The Director General of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Dr Joseph Eboreime, said the government had adopted a community-based approach to preserve artifacts through a bottom - up approach that involves working hand in hand with communities on how to preserve their values and the importance of keeping their historical identities. According to Eboreime this approach is three-pronged as it also involves developing the customary laws of the people and ensuring administrative contacts.

Artifacts Return To Egypt!

Egypt has succeeded to repatriate two food alabaster boxes in the shape of ducks which had been excavated by Dr. Dieter Arnold in 1979 from the pyramid complex of Amenemhat III at Dahshur. Dr. Zahi Hawass, Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) explained that the boxes were returned to Egypt with the help of Dr. Arnold, who is now a senior curator at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. He was able to identify them from an auction in New York as the same boxes he had excavated back in 1979.



Repatriated Egyptian food alabaster box

THANK YOU! – MERCI!

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