

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

April 2008

Dear Colleagues

We trust that all is well in health and spirit and that this quarter of the year finds you well and active in museums and heritage!

I wish to begin by thanking Nath Mayo for acting on my behalf during the brief period of my confinement. During this time, he has been able to engage the services of the Strategic Planning/Transition Planning consultants. I also wish to thank the acting Executive Director, Peter Okwaro and the team at the Secretariat for maintaining the positive momentum of work over the last year. We are sad to announce that the Board of AFRICOM has received and accepted the resignation of Mbaye Gueye as Executive Director. We wish him well as he ventures into a new career path and direction. The post shall be advertised shortly.

That said, the silence on the part of the Board is by no means indicative of inactivity. We are excited that the Getty and Ford Foundations have supported two excellent transition planning Board meetings. One took place in Nairobi in November of last year and one in Cape Town in March of this year. These meetings have facilitated critical decision making, the sharing of ideas of stakeholders on the continent, refining the vision, mission and goals for the current Board. The appointment of BELCOM, Zambia as consulting agents has already begun to bear fruit in this regard. We want to make absolutely sure that the objectives we set for ourselves against the funding we have accumulated and are applying for are Realistic and Achievable. We would wish to hand over to the new Board in 2009, a vibrant and active AFRICOM. This communication serves to provide you with feedback on some of these matters.

What have we set out to do?

A/ Consolidate and stabilize the organization through;

1. Reviewing the Constitution for members comments prior to the General Assembly of 2009
2. Reviewing and Revising all existing policies and developing ones which have been identified as critical for the good governance of AFRICOM
3. Restructure the Secretariat in keeping with a growing and developing International Non-Governmental structure
4. Develop an attractive, dynamic transition/strategic plan which would lead the organization into a new era and which would attract funding
5. Plan and raise funds for the 2009 General Assembly

B/ Promote Professional development on the continent and an active membership program

1. Upgrade the ICT infrastructure and secretariat staff to manage the membership program more effectively and efficiently
2. Plan and implement three regional programs for 2008 and 2009 each

What has been achieved so far?

- Two reviews of the Constitution have been conducted by the previous Board and the Secretariat under its leadership. The current Board is in the process of consolidating the recommendations made and integrating it with its own review for submission to members for discussion
- Policies which currently exist have been reviewed and a list has been generated of new ones to be drawn up. The brief for the Consultants includes the finalization of all policies with the Acting Executive Director by June 2008
- The Board, with assistance from the Consultants and on advice from the two grant makers has reviewed the current structure of the Secretariat and has found that it does not effectively support the needs of AFRICOM. To this end the structure has been revised with three senior positions in place; the Executive Director, the Program Manager and the Sustainability Officer. The position of Sustainability Officer which is new is aimed at ensuring that all potential income generating activities and publications are identified, costed and marketed, as well as ensuring that dedicated time is given to effective grant writing and reporting. The position of Program Manager which existed in the structure before has been refined to add seniority and competencies for the management of regional programs
- The Vision, Mission, Objectives and Values have been reviewed by the Board with assistance from the Consultants. These will be posted on the list shortly for comment. The final transition plan is due at the end of June 2008

B/ Through a careful reading of the outcomes of the General Assemblies of 2003 and 2006, as well as consultations with various stakeholders key programmatic activities have been identified as focus areas for 2008 and 2009. These are;

- The identification of Illicit Traffick and Threats to African heritage as the program theme for the Southern African regional activities in 2008
- Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage as the program theme for the East Indian Ocean Island and North Africa in 2008
- Plans for the East African, Central African and West African regions for implementation in 2009 are under construction
- The Board has established a subcommittee under the leadership of Dr Kayambo (representative Southern African region) to provide AFRICOM with protocols and procedures for addressing concerns pertaining to Threats to African Heritage and Illicit Traffick
- A Heads of institutions meeting is planned for 2008 to announce two new prestigious AFRICOM awards
- An audit of AFRICOM ICT infrastructure has been requested by the Board. An upgrade shall be conducted after the needs have been established and should facilitate better communication and membership services

The above is just a glimpse of the work being undertaken currently and we are happy to have this to report to you our valued members. We shall continue to update you as progress is made and to solicit your inputs. Please liaise closely with your regional representatives, they wish to hear from you!

Kind Regards

Deirdre Prins-Solani
PRESIDENT