

# **AFRICOM 1<sup>st</sup> General Assembly and Conference “Museums in Africa: Challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”**

**September 29 to October 1, 2003, Nairobi, Kenya**

## **Narrative Report**

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## **1. Acknowledgements**

The Board, staff and membership of AFRICOM would like to extend a sincere thanks to those organisations, institutions and businesses that contributed to making its 1st General Assembly and Conference possible.

### **Main Funding Partners**

Sida, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency  
Getty Grant Program of the J. Paul Getty Trust (USA)  
The Ford Foundation (East Africa)  
Africalia (Belgium)

### **Other sponsors**

Republic of France/French Cultural and Cooperation Centre, Nairobi  
Kenya Airways  
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Coca-Cola/Nairobi Bottlers Ltd.  
Lord Cultural Resources

### **Technical Support**

ICOM (International Council of Museums)  
National Museums of Kenya

## **2. Introduction and Summary**

Since AFRICOM's establishment following the Constituent Assembly in Lusaka, Zambia in 1999, the young organization has focused on solidifying its institutional, administrative and human resource capacities. The AFRICOM Secretariat currently consists of only three full time staff. However, the organization of the General Assembly and Conference made it possible to recruit several short-term project staff which was a major step in building experience for an institution which will naturally grow.

Building the professional network in Africa has been the main aim of AFRICOM and the Secretariat works daily on the growing database of individuals and bodies concerned with museums and cultural heritage in Africa. It currently contains over 3,000 entries from over 80 countries. AFRICOM maintains strong links with partner institutions and programmes in Africa and abroad. It is significant that, in addition to AFRICOM members and heritage professionals, there were representatives at the conference from Africa 2009, EPA (Ecole du Patrimoine Africain), ICOM (International Council of Museums), PMDA (Programme for Museum Development in Africa), SAMA (South African Museum Association), Samp (African-Swedish Museum Network), and WAMP (West African Museum Programme), Robben Island Museum Training Centre, and Nubian Museum Training Centre, among others.

Over the course of three days, 148 museum and heritage professionals from 48 countries shared ideas and information as well as hopes and aspirations.

The results of the workshop presentations, discussions, group work and results will provide the basis for AFRICOM to formulate the organisation's Triennial Programme of Activities 2004-2006. The General Assembly was also an occasion to fortify its structure, renew its leadership and motivate its membership.

### **3. Participants**

There were 148 participants from 48 countries including:

- AFRICOM members and other African museum professionals
- ICOM international committee members and Secretariat staff
- Representatives from the Kenyan Government, African Union (NEPAD) and other international organisations
- Professionals and scholars from outside Africa

Through the generous funding of Sida, the Getty Grant Program, and the Ford Foundation, AFRICOM was able to offer 121 bursaries to museum and heritage professionals from 45 countries. Additional funding from the Italian Cultural Centre in Nairobi, and the governments of Mexico and the Netherlands made it possible for professionals from those countries to contribute to the proceedings.

### **4. General Assembly and Conference Programme**

#### **I. Welcome, Opening, Keynotes and Closing**

##### **Welcome Addresses**

Ms Lorna Abungu, AFRICOM Executive Director

Dr Idle Farah, Director General, National Museums of Kenya (NMK)

Dr Manus Brinkman, Secretary General, ICOM

Ms Elisabet Olofsson, Representing ICOM President, Jacques Perot

Prof Shaje'a Tshiluilu, AFRICOM President

##### **Official Opening Address**

***Hon. Najib Balala, MP***

***Minister for Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services, Kenya***

Summary: To be relevant, museums must continue working towards becoming social institutions and generators of heritage. These institutions must involve the public in developing their heritage and market it as a product. They must address issues relevant to their communities. Museums are among the institutions that must become more active in the development of cultural tourism. Cultural considerations must be taken to avoid impractical and unsustainable interventions in areas such as health and food security. Museums can effectively communicate these considerations.

## **Opening Keynote Addresses**

### ***Ms Baleka Mbete, Deputy Speaker, South African National Assembly***

Summary: Ms Mbete challenged the body of museum professionals to continue working towards changing museums from cold, grey buildings to institutions with which most Africans could identify. She cited NEPAD's references to culture and to the Heritage Resources Act and underlined the need for culture as a constructive tool towards nation building. The Deputy Speaker feels that museums, with their organised voices, their well-considered position and their ability to mobilise, have an important role to play in civil society.

### ***Dr George Abungu, Chairman, Governing Council, Kenya Cultural Centre, and President of the International Standing Conference on the Traffic in Illicit Antiquities***

Summary: Dr Abungu spoke of Africa's endowment and great diversity of heritage from sites and monuments to languages and landscapes. He highlighted AFRICOM's role in linking and bringing professionals together and suggested that the institution avoid competition and too much bureaucracy. He recalled the dangers of illicit traffic but also touched on problems such as neglect, greed and ignorance. He raised a series of issues which museums could and should deal with such as traditional and cultural knowledge, ownership, culture and communities and family systems. The challenges are numerous and African museums must work towards relevance and positive social impact. They must be forums of exchange and debate. He concluded by saying that it is time to get serious and time to invest in heritage.

### ***Judge Raymond Ranjeva, Vice President of the International Court of Justice, the Hague***

Summary: Judge Ranjeva's speech looked at AFRICOM as an organisation in a world-wide and African perspective, from the point of view of an NGO committed to museums in Africa and to cultural and natural heritage in the continent. The speech drew a perspective on the major factors and on the salient aspects of the international regulations and conventions related to culture and heritage in the current international environment.

### ***Mr Peter Ondeng, Chief Executive Officer, NEPAD Kenya Secretariat (NEPAD - New Partnership for Africa's Development) (on behalf of Prof. Wiseman Nkuhlu)***

Summary: Mr Ondeng focused on giving some perspectives on what NEPAD is and what role it might play in relationship to heritage and museums. Quoting from the NEPAD policy document, 'Culture is an integral part of development efforts on the continent. Consequently, it is essential to protect and effectively utilise indigenous knowledge that represents a major dimension of the continent's culture, and to share this knowledge for the benefit of humankind.' In closing he stated NEPAD's resolve to recapture the glory of the past, regain the identity and self-confidence of Africa's peoples and to put the continent back on the path of political stability, economic prosperity and sustainable development.

## **Closing Keynote Address**

***Mr Emmanuel Arinze, Director General, National Commission for Arts & Culture, Nigeria***

Summary: Following a review of the events and encounters which have led up to the creation of AFRICOM and the ground work to move the organisation forward which has been put in place since its creation, Mr Arinze spoke of the critical issues facing museums in Africa today. These include the destruction of heritage during times of war and conflict, the role museums might play in promoting a culture of peace, dialogue and reconciliation, insuring museums accommodate many and divergent voices, professional development in museums, heritage legislature and intellectual property rights. He also highlighted the recommendations which resulted from the conference workshops.

## **II. Workshops**

Three workshops were organized during the Conference. The main theme was: 'Museums in Africa: Challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'. The workshops during the Conference examined a few of the more pressing issues of the day.

### **Workshop 1: Museums and the public(s): New information and communication technologies (ICTs)**

**Chair: Deirdre Prins (South Africa)**

**Scientific Committee/Timekeeper: Stella Doway (Seychelles)**

**Rapporteur: Chélia Annabi (Tunisia)**

There were 15 presentations which considered the present situation with regard to the growing diffusion and influence of information and communication technologies and examined both the benefits as well as the possible risks and negative impacts.

### **Recommendations for AFRICOM:**

#### **Governance**

- lobby and advocacy in the AU/NEPAD to harmonise legislation governing the management of heritage
- develop guidelines for the standardisation of legislation
- follow-up on the museum autonomy study

#### **Resource Provision**

- conduct a survey on the needs of museums
- mobilise resources
- promote museum activities which support community involvement and development

#### **ICT**

- provide a template/base for museums in which they can interface
- explore the acquisition of services of a web site provider to do the above
- promote the publication of a museum journal

- advance the Directory of Museum Professionals in Africa and make it available on the Internet
- develop an African Heritage Charter

### **Museum Products**

- development of museum products while addressing issues such as intellectual property rights, copyright and ownership and the impact on tangible and intangible heritage
- support the current international interventions for safeguarding of intangible heritage while ensuring representation of African interests
- create frameworks for the management of intangible heritage, including standards and definitions
- collect information of current projects (database) and make accessible
- collect information about legislation and make accessible
- lobby, through AU/NEPAD leaders, for the provision of appropriate legislation and management tools
- lobby for the allocation of benefits of informant communities through projects
- identify existing knowledge databases regarding cultural forms.
- find ways to protect intangible heritage through effective intellectual property legislation
- make the public aware of copyright issues
- raise awareness in communities on the value of their intangible heritage and encourage them to patent it
- ensure that a benefit-sharing mechanism ensues between museums and communities
- co-operate with national governments, UNESCO and NGO's to become a catalyst for the reparation of African artefacts

### **Training**

- develop Pan-African recruitment, training and retention strategies
- define training standards for museum professionals in Africa
- strengthen the network of professionals through travelling exhibitions, exchange of resources
- lobby AU/NEPAD for funding to support the training of museum and heritage professionals
- assist providers in defining criteria for bursary allocations

## **Workshop 2 – Museums and the Prevention of Conflicts in Africa**

**Chair: Noëlle Zaoule Vive (DRC)**

**Scientific Committee/Timekeeper: El Hadj Mbaye Gueye (Senegal)**

**Rapporteur: Vincent Katanekwa (Zambia)**

Many museums are re-examining their mandates and relevance to their various publics. Both public and private museums must look at ways to address issues of the day and the prevention of conflicts is high on the agenda. Nine presentations considered how museums can or do facilitate the exchange of ideas and how museum collections can be used as a resource to encourage and promote peace.

### **Issues from the presentations**

1. There is need to develop a broader concept of peace. The meaning should not only be limited to lack of war or conflict.
2. Museums are not prepared to deal with issues of peace, advocacy, conflict management or disaster management.
3. There is lack of capacity in museum professionals to handle conflict management issues.
4. The prevalence of permanent conflicts in Africa makes the subject of museums as peace makers very relevant to the Africa of today.
5. There has been no systematic study or approach to assess the status of cultural heritage in areas of conflict.

### **Solutions**

1. Given the vast cultural resources held in their collections museums should try to use them in conflict resolution – conflict at various levels:- family, clan, political party, ethnic, national etc.
2. Development of capacities of museum professionals in conflict resolution, disaster management and preparedness and raising awareness among the military personnel and militias on the importance of the preservation of cultural heritage.
3. Build or develop a framework to define the museum role and strategy in conflict resolution.
4. Come up with a clear mandate for museums regarding conflict resolution.

### **Recommendations**

1. Considering that museums in Africa hold vast collections of cultural heritage materials, they should:
  - A. develop strategies to help focus their missions to encompass their role as advocates of peace, conflict resolution and dialogue at various levels:- family, clan, political party, ethnic, national, etc.
  - B. use their collections and exhibitions to tell the peace story especially in post-war situations and conflict-prone areas.
  - C. involve communities in all their programmes which promote of peace culture, tolerance and dialogue.
2. Considering that the quest for peace is a concern for all, AFRICOM should constitute a working group to develop:
  - A. A programme for capacity building for museum professionals in conflict resolution, nurturing the culture of peace and protection of minority rights. This programme should include:
    - I. Community involvement
    - II. Fundraising
    - III. Partnership and linkages with other NGOs involved in these issues
  - B. A project on the inventory of traditional methods of conflict resolution to be used as resources in conflict resolution.
  - C. A travelling exhibition on the effects of war to circulate across the African continent.
3. Considering that AFRICOM is a Pan-African institution, that AFRICOM
  - A. Lobby the African Union and its leaders to recognize the role cultural institutions, including traditional authorities, can play in conflict resolution and the promotion of peace.

- B. Play an advocacy role on issues of culture in all African regional organizations.
- C. Form partnerships with other NGOs to foster better recognition of cultural organizations.

### **Workshop 3: Administration, Management and Financing of Museums**

**Chair: Dr George Abungu (Kenya)**

**Scientific Committee/Timekeeper: Baba Keita (Mali)**

**Rapporteur: Gérard Tognimassou (Benin)**

One of the main issues which AFRICOM has been dealing with is museum autonomy which is strongly linked to issues of administration, management and financing. The 14 papers presented during this workshop looked at available tools to promote museums locally, nationally and internationally.

#### Common key issues

- The lack/weakness of the legal frameworks on the public and private museums operations
- The lack/weakness of museum policies, including visions, missions and objectives
- The non-existence/non-application of strategic plans which creates difficulties at administrative, financial and management levels

#### Recommendations

- Networking but changing the focus to community and development and raising awareness (with the support of heritage directors and AU Chairman A. O. Konaré)
- Redefine the concept of the museum
- Museums should become community platforms of discussion
- Encourage museums to review and enlarge their roles
- Consider current world trends and events in conceiving and designing its programme
- Study the issues of museum autonomy and capacity strengthening
- Encourage partnership and co-operation (including south-south)
- Support innovative museums programmes
- Support training at all levels (from directors to cleaners)
- Production of documentation for museum guides
- Find alternative formulas to mobilize local resources
- Create a working group to evaluate, follow-up, analyse and document innovative public, private and community museum projects.

In order to reinforce museum capacities, training programmes focusing on the management of resources, partners, communication, documentation and collections are strongly recommended.

These actions can only be effective if both Pan-African and regional institutions are involved in the training of museum professionals.

### III. Donor Meeting

#### AFRICOM Donor Meeting

AFRICOM has received financial and technical support from a number of sources in the four years since its inception in 1999. As an NGO whose regular income is limited to the modest fees paid by its members, AFRICOM will continue, for the foreseeable future, to depend upon outside contributions and sponsorship to undertake its programme of activities as well as to cover its annual running costs. Attracting the necessary support depends most of all upon having a good programme. But it is also dependent upon building partner relations with agencies and organizations who share AFRICOM's aims and objectives. The donor meeting was aimed at building and strengthening these relationships. It was an occasion to discuss expectations of existing and potential partnerships and to examine current opportunities. It was also a modest opportunity to express thanks to AFRICOM's current partners.

Following presentations about AFRICOM, its activities, its finances and an overview of the General Assembly and Conference, the four guests were invited to speak about the current interests and priorities of the agencies which they represent (Norway, Belgium, UN-Habitat and the National Museums of Kenya).

Overall, the meeting provided a positive footnote to the conference with upbeat, encouraging feedback from the participants. They were encouraged by AFRICOM's spirit of cooperation and the use of the General Assembly and Conference as a forum for so many other African museum and heritage bodies that might otherwise be considered as competition.

AFRICOM was urged to continue to provide information to partners and to continuously look for good examples and best practices. The idea of partnership was stressed – that the exchange of funds is only part of the equation. Both parties must look for shared interests and shared missions. Support may come in terms of technical cooperation or support and not in strictly financial terms.

The AFRICOM Secretariat and Board must now follow-up to the encounter by continuing the process of building and strengthening its partner relationships.

#### Participants and Guests:

- AFRICOM Board Members (1999-2003)
  - Prof Shaje'a Tshiluila (President)
  - Dr Jean-Aimé Rakotoarisoa (Treasurer)
  - Dr Kassaye Begashaw (Rep. East Africa)
  - Mr Ali Amahan (Rep. North Africa)
  - Prof Pascal Makambila (Rep. Central Africa)
  - Mr Ali Gou (Rep. Indian Ocean Islands)
  - Ms Elisabet Olofsson (Rep. International Council of Museums)
- Mrs Lorna Abungu, AFRICOM Executive Director
- H.E. Ambassador Kjell Dalen, Embassy of Norway to Kenya
- Mrs Roxanne de Bildering, 1<sup>st</sup> Secretary, Embassy of Belgium to Kenya

- Mr S. Ananthakrishna, Chief, Partners and Youth Section, UN-Habitat
- Dr Idle Farah, Director General, National Museums of Kenya
- Mr Terry Little, Moderator

#### **IV. Special Presentations**

AFRICOM strives to provide networking opportunities for heritage professionals and for institutions in Africa whose missions complement those of AFRICOM. With this in mind, one evening during which there were plenary presentations made by a number of partner institutions to highlight their programmes and activities and recognizing the importance of ICTs, AFRICOM also invited speakers on various software/tools developed for African heritage collections. Presenters:

- Mubiana Luhila, Programme Coordinator, PMDA (Programme for Museum Development in Africa), Kenya: “PMDA’s role in building capacity, enhancing links & improving heritage management in Anglophone Africa”
- Boureima Diamitani, Executive Director, WAMP (West African Museum Programme), Senegal: “WAMP’s programme to assist community museums”
- Dierdré Prins, Manager, Education Department, Robben Island Museum, South Africa: “Robben Island’s role in building capacity, enhancing links & Improving heritage management in Africa”
- Mahamane Saley Tim, Technical Counsellor, Ministry of Sports and Culture, Niger: “The Niger Training Centre: Objectives and direction”
- Ossama Abdel Meguid, Director, Nubian Museum, Egypt: “Recent Initiatives at the Nubian Training Centre: Funding, progress and anticipated achievements”
- Chédli Annabi, Curator, National Museum of Carthage, Tunisia: “Standardization of Inventories *Kit* “
- Faouzi el Mufti, Tunisia: “Presentation of the bi-lingual software ‘Virgile’, based on the AFRICOM Handbook of Standards”
- Floris Guntenaar and Mr Cees List, Netherlands: “Object and collection registration software, developed by MuseumDepot in cooperation with the Netherlands Institute of Cultural Heritage”

#### **V. General Assembly**

The main aim of the General Assembly was to present AFRICOM’s activities since the creation of the Secretariat in Nairobi in 2000 to the activities which have been undertaken to date. The presentations were made by:

Shaje'a Tshiluila, AFRICOM President  
Lorna Abungu, AFRICOM Executive Director  
Jean-Aimé Rakotoarisoa, AFRICOM Treasurer

The 2001-2002 Financial Summary and Summary of Activities are available from the AFRICOM Secretariat.

## **VI. Cultural and Social Activities**

An Opening Cocktail was hosted by the French Cultural and Cooperation Centre at the Maison Française, Nairobi. The cocktail was also the occasion of the official opening of the exhibit, '20 Million years before Mankind' by the Community Museums of Kenya. The event was presided by H.E. Pierre Jacquemot, Ambassador of France to Kenya, and Jean-Pierre Volia, Cultural Attaché of the French Embassy.

The Closing Dinner took place on the grounds at Karen Blixen Museum.

Mr John Juma, Deputy Secretary, Ministry for Home Affairs & National Heritage greeted the participants in the name of the Minister, Hon, Moody Awori, recently appointed Vice President of the republic of Kenya.

The Mistress of Ceremonies was Lisa Marie Mwani, Miss Tourism Kenya/Africa and musical and dance entertainment was provided by both contemporary and traditional Kenyan musicians: Nameless, Kenge Kenge, the National Museums of Kenya Choir, and Big Matata.

## **5. Conclusions and Results**

The AFRICOM 1<sup>st</sup> General Assembly and Conference provided a rare and special occasion for African museum and heritage professionals to exchange ideas and experiences and to build personal and institutional networks.

It provided the basis for reviewing the institution's achievements and challenges during the past three years as well as for articulating AFRICOM's Programme of Activities for 2004 to 2006.

All of the work behind conceiving and implementing the event provided an important opportunity for the young AFRICOM Secretariat to gain valuable experience. The evaluations and follow-up correspondence from the meetings provide useful suggestions as well as motivating and encouraging feedback to those providing services to AFRICOM members and partners.

## **6. AFRICOM Secretariat Staff and Conference Secretariat Staff**

### **AFRICOM Secretariat Staff**

\* Lorna ABUNGU – Executive Director  
\* Henry CHERUIYOT – Administrative Assistant  
\* Sylvester OTIENO – Auxiliary Staff / Messenger  
Eunice MUTHOKA – Project Assistant  
Peter KYALO – Project Assistant (has since proceeded for further studies)  
John ODHIAMBO – Membership Services  
Frances AWINDA – Volunteer Librarian  
Lucy NJERI – Volunteer

*\* denotes full-time staff*

### **Conference Secretariat Staff**

\* Elizabeth Ouma  
Alphas Namodi  
\* Peter Okwaro  
Monica Kinyanjui  
Judy Ogana  
Victor Gitonga  
Odero Aghan  
Kaye Makuku-McIlwaine  
Agnes Arame  
\* Lydia Kitungulu  
\* Dennis Milewa  
\* Lawrence Monda  
Joseph Lubang'a

*\* denotes National Museums of Kenya staff*

### **Assisting with elections from ICOM Secretariat, Paris**

Eloisa Zell  
Jennifer Thévenot

## **7. AFRICOM Board 2003 – 2006**

### **1. Mr Emmanuel ARINZE President**

Executive Director  
National Council for Arts and Culture  
Nigeria

### **2. Mrs Elizabeth OUMA Treasurer**

Coordinator, NMK-VVOB Interactive Public Programmes  
National Museums of Kenya  
Kenya

### **3. Dr Boureima T. DIAMITANI Representative for West Africa**

Executive Director  
West African Museums Programme (WAMP)  
Sénégal

**4. Mme Chédli ANNABI**  
**Representative for North Africa**

Curator  
Musée de Carthage  
Tunisia

**5. Mrs Stella Marise DOWAY**  
**Representative for the Indian Ocean Islands**

Senior Curator  
Seychelles Peoples Defence Forces Museum  
Seychelles

**6. Mme Augustine DON-DING**  
**Representative for Central Africa**

Conservateur en Chef  
Musée Barthélémy Boganda  
Central African Republic

**7. Mr Ahmed Zekaria ABUBAKER**  
**Representative for East Africa**

Head of Museum, Institute of Ethiopian Studies  
Addis Ababa University  
Ethiopia

**8. Mr Mike Migritone GONDWE**  
**Representative for Southern Africa**

Museum Educator/Coordinator  
Chichiri Museum  
Malawi

**DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AFRICOM BOARD**

**Indian Ocean Islands**

Dr Jean-Aimé RAKOTOARISOA  
Directeur, Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie  
Madagascar

**Southern Africa**

Mrs Violah MUYAMBO  
Collections Manager, Natural History  
Museum  
Zimbabwe

**North Africa**

Mme Sakina RHARIB  
Administrateur du Patrimoine  
Musée de Marakech  
Morocco

**Central Africa**

Mme Mapendo Josephine CISHALA  
Conservatrice  
Musées Universitaires de Kinshasa  
République Démocratique du Congo  
(RDC)