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## **REPORT OF THE IFLA AFRICA SECTION – IFLA, CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA. 13 - 21, AUGUST 2015.**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Africa Section held a successful satellite meeting at the University of South Africa (UNISA) Parow Campus. The Section held very well attended Standing Committee Meetings on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> 2015, chaired by the outgoing Chair, Dr Victoria Okojie and the 19<sup>th</sup> of August 2015, chaired by the new Chair, Dr. Rosemary Shafack. On the 18<sup>th</sup> August 2015, the Section held its first ever Africa Caucus Meeting which was chaired by the Division V Chair, Dr Victoria Okojie. Between one hundred and one hundred and fifty participants attended and came from all over the Continent, with some from the Diaspora. Development partners as well as stakeholders in the LIS sector in Africa turned up. Several other Interest Groups such as ATINA with links to Africa Section, also held meetings during the Cape Town IFLA Congress.

### **2. SATELLITE MEETING REPORT**

The Chair welcomed all who had sacrificed to attend the satellite conference. She extended special welcome to the keynote speaker, Dr. Buhle Mbambo-Thata who despite her charged schedule accepted to do the key note for this meeting. She equally thanked the paper presenters for their sacrifices. She looked forward to fruitful discussions on issues from all ramifications on the African continent relating to the development agenda (The UN SDGs 2030).

#### **2.1 KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

The Key Note address by Dr. Buhle Mbambo-Thata on the Theme: **The Post 2015 Development Agenda: An Overview and Implications for the LIS Sector** set the tone for the two day meeting. She focused on MDGs and SDGs which are built on the United Nations (UN) declaration for Human Rights. She zeroed in on African Libraries and MDGs, IFLA Pre-conference of 2007 by the African Section, Africa Section series of training workshops for all regions in Africa and the outcomes as seen in the Health information corners, Youth information services, Small business information and the Evaluation of Impact. Her presentation discussed SDGs 1-17 and highlighted what opportunities were available such as linking with AU Agenda 2063, IAP, national

government agendas, role of associations, library education and how as librarians we could initiate action and advocate for access to information.

## 2.2 SATELLITE MEETING - PRESENTATIONS

- **Irene Onyancha** of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa presented on challenges of achieving the Post 2015 SDGs in Africa. In her paper titled, '**Challenges of Achieving the Post – 2015 SDGs in African Societies**', she focused on the following issues: IFLA's message to the United Nations member states, role of libraries in the development agenda and the Lyon Declaration. She analyzed the benefits of access to information and also looked at the challenges such as the right of access to information, developing access to information legislation, supporting open information environments, access to ICT infrastructure and Public libraries as the information service providers. In conclusion, she emphasized the need for public enlightenment and awareness, sensitization and training of public institutions and officials, records keeping and information management, funding, ICT skills as a way of reducing challenges.
- **Dr. Fadehan** of the University of Lagos, Nigeria She presented a paper on, "**Academic Women's Perception of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Achievement and the Role of Librarians in Africa: The Case of Cosmopolitan Lagos, Nigeria.**" The outline of the paper cut across objectives, research questions, hypothesis, methodology, data analysis, summary findings, way forward and a conclusion. Her presentation focused on the relevance of libraries to the success and survival of every area of human endeavour. The Library has been proved by her study as a veritable tool and the most venerable institution of all ages, promoting human and societal development. This was a success story of women's involvement in the actualization of the MDGs using the library mechanism.
- **UNISA Mobile Library**  
Delegates at the Satellite Meeting were given the rare opportunity to tour the famous UNISA Mobile Library that caters for their distant learners in the Western Cape.
- **Webinar on Navigating the United Nations Library Research Tools and Resources: Exploring the use of web 2.0 Technologies to enhance information access: Dag Hammaskjold Library in New York, USA.**

One of the highlights of the Satellite meeting was the webinar on the above. This was scheduled as one of the satellite sessions and it proved to be an exciting experience with a lot to learn.

## **2. AFRICA CAUCUS MEETING REPORT**

The Africa Caucus Meeting was held for the first time on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2015. It was chaired by Victoria Okojie. In her opening remarks, she welcomed all who were present to the first Africa Caucus and promised that this would be a regular meeting in future.

She introduced Africa Section members and thanked outgoing members for their service to the Section. She also introduced the two members on the Governing Board, Ellen Namhila, Namibia and Victoria Okojie, Nigeria -who was also the Head of Division V. The Chair encouraged more Africa members to join other Sections and emphasized the need to represent Africa well whenever they were elected to any committees. African Library and Information Associations (AfLIA) was introduced to the gathering and the Executive Director- Dr Helena Asamoah- Hassan was given an opportunity to brief the meeting. In her address, she highlighted the importance of AfLIA to the African continent. She invited all to participate in this continental Association. She gave a brief outline of the structure of AfLIA and announced the Members that were elected at the Accra Meeting to head the five sections – Academic and Research Section, Public Libraries, National Libraries, Library Associations and Library Schools and Institutions. The Chair then continued with the meeting issues and highlighted the importance of identifying and understanding partners working on the continent of Africa and what they were doing. She indicated that Africa Caucus would like to identify and work with these development partners with the hope of providing guidance.

## **6. SECTION MEETINGS REPORT (SCI & SCII)**

### **6.1 Obituary**

The Section observed a minute of silence for Felix Obugu, the late University Librarian of Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg, South Africa, who passed on in June 2015.

### **6.2 Open Forum**

Africa Section had an Open Forum which was held in collaboration with the Parliamentary and Law Libraries Sections under the theme “**Access to Legal Information and Legislative Data in Africa: The Role of Libraries and Librarians**”. Six papers were presented and these generated a lively discussion.

### **6.3 Strategic Plan**

The Strategic Plan was circulated to members and the Chairperson appealed to members to forward comments and contribute towards the compilation of the 2016 Action Plan. Submissions were to be forwarded to the Secretary by mid-October in preparation for the discussion at the Mid Term Meeting to be held in February 2016 in Botswana.

### **6.4 Mid- Term Meeting in Botswana 2016**

The Chairperson announced that the Mid-Term Meeting for 2016 would be held in Gaborone, Botswana. Dates- 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> February 2016. Ms Bongiwe Magocha was the Contact person in Botswana.

### **6.5 Guinea Bissau at WCLI 2015**

The outgoing Africa Chair sponsored the President of the Library Association of Guinea Bissau to the 2015 WLIC in Cape Town. This was an effort to strengthen the association by enabling them to come to IFLA and network for the benefit of their association.

### **6.6 IFLA Advocacy Meeting in Namibia**

Namibia hosted a successful IFLA Advocacy Meeting in July 2015. Dr Buhle Mbambo-Thata was the facilitator. It brought the IFLA Secretary-General and other IFLA officers and high officials from Africa like the Wife of the Vice President of Ghana, who is a librarian.

### **6.7 Mentorship Program.**

The SC meeting was briefed on the mentorship program. At the Kenya meeting, it had been suggested that strong and weak National Associations in Africa develop partnerships that would provide for experience sharing in order to move the LIS profession forward. Partnership could be on a North – South basis, for example, Kenya and Sweden as well on a South-South basis. The Section encouraged south - south twinning. Suggestions included South Africa -Swaziland, Kenya -Rwanda, Nigeria- Gambia and Ghana-Sierra Leone. It was reported that Professor Angus of Mt Kenya University was already partnering with Rwanda, South Africa was already mentoring Swaziland, which is now a member of LIASA, and finally that Ghana and Sierra Leone were already working together.

### **6.8 Africa Section Progress**

The outgoing Chair, Dr Okojie gave a summary of some of the successes of her two terms as Chair.

1. Building Strong Libraries Programme in some parts of Africa for example in Cameroon and Botswana.
2. Africa Section Support to attend IFLA WLIC- Guinea Bissau Library Association National President was supported and assisted to come to Cape Town to attend IFLA Congress in 2015.
3. The following networks came to being during her tenure. AfLIA, African Public Libraries Network, IFLA Advocacy Program (In Namibia), International Professional Leaders Program, Honored Dr Helena Asamoah Hassan, Ellen Tise, the Committee of Elders of SC, opened a Bank Account in South Africa.

## **6.9 SPARC, AFRICA CHAPTER**

**Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC)**, AFRICA Chapter was launched in Cape Town on August 16, 2015. It was reported that there was need to elect leadership to lead this standalone Project. It was created with the hope that it would engage the rest of Africa.

## **6.10 LIS Education Group**

Professor Ismail Abdullahi raised the challenges that were facing Library educators and he gave a short history of the LIS Education group plus its special relationship with the Africa Section. However, the Section felt the discussions could continue outside the meeting to advise on how best to proceed - whether to bring it back as a SIG under Africa Section or ask Division V to lobby the new President- elect for assistance. Other suggestions were that it could consider joining AfLIA.

## **6.11: IFLA President Sinikka Sipilä's Theme**

The IFLA president attended the second Africa SC meeting and appreciated all the support this section had given during her tenure. She was particularly grateful for the symposium that was organized on her theme that remains very memorable. The outcome of the symposium organized in Namibia on President Sipilä's theme, "**Strong Libraries Strong Societies**", was a book, copies of which were distributed at the Cape Town WLIC 2015.

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