



# COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS NEWSLETTER

## Commonwealth Museums: Culture, Economy, Climate Change and Youth

May 25 to 27, 2011

*Organized by the Commonwealth Association of Museums,  
Hosted by the National Heritage Board, Singapore at the  
Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM)*

### THEMES

#### Part 1: Museums, Culture, and Sustainable Development

Part I will address the need for museums to play a lead role in promoting culture as means of social and economic development, using Putting Culture First and the Commonwealth Statement on Culture and Development as discussion documents. This conference will expand on the productive discussions of Putting Culture First at the GCAM4 meeting (October 2009) in Stanger, South Africa. As in Africa, the rich diversity of cultures in South-East Asian and South Pacific nations is faced with challenges from globalization, migration and urbanization. Part 1 will highlight these issues and explore ways in which museums can not only help preserve cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, but also promote traditional and contemporary culture as resources for sustainable development.

#### Part 2: World Watch Two: Conserving Cultures in the Face of Climate Change

Part 2 will focus directly on the need for museums as cultural organisations to use the links between culture and development to play a role in addressing both general issues of climate change and its specific impact on cultural continuity. As a follow up to World Watch One in Guyana and with added impetus from the CHOGM communiqué of November 2009, World Watch Two will examine the growing global impact of climate change on the human (i.e.,

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### CALL FOR PAPERS:

Read about the Call for Papers also on [CAM's Website](#)

Speakers are invited to submit proposals for papers, case studies, and/or full panels on topics ranging from:

- ways in which museums can not only help preserve cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, but also promote traditional and contemporary culture as resources for sustainable development, to
- what role museums—science museums, natural history museums and natural heritage sites, as well as cultural museums—can play to help deal with issues arising from climate change, and
- how to engage children in this debate

Proposals are invited from all disciplines. The proposal package should include a summary of 150-200 words and a two-page CV. Proposals should be received by 15 February 2011.

Proposals will be reviewed by the

threats to cultural heritage and property, migration pressures and economic issues) and the natural environment, including potentially extensive land submersion, particularly South Asia and the South Pacific. This session is intended to build on the theme of culture and development, with an emphasis on the ramifications of climate change on the protection of land, livelihoods, cultural diversity and property, tangible and intangible. This session will feature case studies chosen to encourage an action-oriented series of discussions that will lead to a suggested common action plan for museums.

### **Part 3: Connecting with Children and Youth**

Part 3 will continue CAM's longstanding commitment to focus on children and youth. The month of May begins the "Children's Season" for museums in Singapore. This provides a unique opportunity to explore the role museums have in assuring the survival of cultural memory and articulating a hopeful vision of a future for young people in our communities. Given the themes of part 1 & 2 of this conference, here is an opportunity to explore how museum programming can creatively engage youth in the fundamentals of both global and local environmental awareness, but also the issues surrounding the need to sustain a sense of community identity and reinforce fundamental values of tolerance, respect and understanding of cultural diversity in the face of urbanization, migration, and economic disruption. There are lessons from history but also from other nations and cultures today. This session is intended to share case studies of successful museum-based initiatives which may also form a backdrop to visits and tours of Singapore's excellent museums and their programs for children and youth.

### **Location and Rationale:**

To be held in Singapore as a continuation of CAM's efforts to hold programs in all regions of the Commonwealth. Singapore is a transportation hub more easily accessed by countries in South-East Asian and the South Pacific. Singapore has exemplary museums featuring wide cultural diversity.

In addition to museum visits, the two main sessions and their emphasis on museums effectively engaging in civil society, the conference will provide an opportunity for CAM to discuss its updated Distance Learning Program in Museum Studies, both the print and online versions, and its

International Steering Committee. If accepted, individual presenters will be invited to prepare a presentation limited to 20 minutes to allow time for discussion, an important feature of CAM programmes; presenters may be grouped by topic and invited to present within a panel.

Powerpoint or multi-media presentations are acceptable (for presentation only), however, it is expected that a full 2500 word written paper will be submitted in electronic form and available for delegates at the workshop and for publication on the CAM website or in other CAM documents. The Steering Committee may make a selection of papers as necessary. Please submit in MSWord; any bibliographical or other notes should be included at the end of the paper.

Conference Organizer and Conference Committee Chair  
Catherine C. Cole

Further inquiries and proposals should be addressed to:  
[CatherineC.Cole@telus.net](mailto:CatherineC.Cole@telus.net) and Lois Irvine, Secretary General, CAM:  
[irvinel@fcl.com](mailto:irvinel@fcl.com) or,  
[irvinel@platinum.ca](mailto:irvinel@platinum.ca)



Cultural Property Project. The Singapore conference will also host CAM's triennial general meeting including elections.

Conference program builds on Canberra conference of 2006 organized by the Australian National University to which CAM contributed, World Watch One, Guyana, 2008 and the 4th GCAM conference, South Africa, 2009.

#### **Accommodation:**

A reasonably priced hotel will be selected for participants. Some meals will be provided and registration fees will be applied to conference expenses and visits to Singapore museums will be included. Transportation will also be provided as necessary.

Further details will be available later.

#### **Registration:**

Conference fee will be in the range of \$125-175 US. Preliminary registration is requested by February 15, 2011.

Funding Assistance may be available for participants from Commonwealth developing countries. Criteria will take into account geographical and gender representation, professional competence and museum experience, and available matching funds. Particular consideration will be given to those who meet the above criteria and whose papers are selected for presentation.

The selection of those who receive funding will be determined by the Steering Committee, based on a CV with a written statement of interest also to be submitted by February 15, 2011.

**CALL FOR PAPERS - See the sidebar to your right!**

## **CAM Meeting at ICOM Shanghai**

A formal session of CAM members was held at the Triennial Meeting of of the International Council of Museum in Shanghai, China, on November 10, 2010. Attendees included CAM vicepresident, Mike Gondwe (Malawi), Achal Pandya (India), Catherine Antomarchi (Italy), Patrick O'Reilly (Canada), Catherine Cole (Canada), John MacAvity

Asian Civilizations Museum, Singapore

### **DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM UPDATE**

CAM had hoped to retain the current fee structure for the Distance Learning Program until the on-line version was in place. Visit the [CAM Distance Learning Page](#) for details.

The response to the program has been favourable as we gradually spread the information to different areas of the world and we currently have at least 10 or more new students beginning shortly. The combination of ever increasing postal charges and the current low value of the British pound which diminishes our funding by at least 20-25% on average and as much as 35% from some years has meant that we must do a serious review immediately of the fee structure. We hope to obtain some scholarships for students from developing countries that will enable us to enroll them without too much of an increase and we are also exploring options that may reduce the cost for us without raising it too much for participants.

There will be a new structure as of January 1, 2011. However, those who have already signed up will be able to participate at the current level. We do hope that those students who are able to do so will assist us by considering optional ways of material delivery and reproduction.

More information will be available soon.



(Canada), Allison Thompson (Barbados), Alison Callender (Barbados), Oneka Small (Barbados), Stuart Murray (Canada), Amareswar Galla (Australia/India), Terry Nyambi (Kenya), Oneka Small (Barbados), Nigel Sadler (U.K.), David Hayes (Virgin Islands), Andrew Simpson (Australia), Gael de Guichen (Italy).

After a general introduction CAM president, Martin Segger, reviewed recent developments and activities of CAM including the very successful Mumbai conference in May, 2010, launch of the CAM On-Line Journal and Archive and also the e-Bulletin, the international student internship program, and an overview of CAM conferences and workshops over the past five years. He encouraged all members to sign onto the [CAM On-Line Discussion Forum](#) and also the [CAM List-serve](#).

He also described two major projects now underway at the secretariat: a major revision of the CAM distance course, Introduction to Museum Studies, and a joint initiative with the Commonwealth Lawyers Association regarding the application of cultural preservation law in Commonwealth countries, particular emerging nations and small island states. Several forthcoming events were announced, the next CAM Triennial to be held in Singapore, May 25-27, 2011; a Nigeria workshop planned for 2011, and the next 2014 Triennial to be hosted in Glasgow with the theme: "The Open Museum: Tangible /Intangible Heritage". A general discussion followed. Several institutional introductions were made including the educational role of the ICCROM, and the new Human Rights Museum soon open in Winnipeg, Canada. Oneka Small circulated a document, Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on its Ninth Session, which proposed a travelling exhibition titled Family Rituals & Rites of Passage. Ms. Small also drew attention to the United Nations designation of 2011 as the International Year for people of African Descent (UN Resolution A/Res/64/169.)

## The Role Played by Museums in the Protection of People with Albinism in Tanzania

*This is a condensed version of a paper submitted to the Commonwealth Association of Museums On-Line International Journal and Archive by Lucina D. Shayo,*



CAM Vice President, Mike Gondwe (Malawi), ICOM Singapore

### IN MEMORIAM DR. NORBERT A. KAYOMBO

Those CAM members who attended the Tri-annual conference in Mumbai this year will remember the presence of Dr. Kayombo, who was the Director General of the National Museum of Tanzania. He passed away on Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2010.

This sudden death has affected the institution greatly for a number of reasons. Dr. Kayombo's death will greatly affect the various development plans he had put in place, as outlined by the National Museum's strategic plan. One of those was to extend the museum to rural areas by establishing a number of small museum structures in various villages around the country.

He was very supportive to CAM and had always seen it important to CAM members in Tanzania to participate to different activities organised through CAM. When he came back from Mumbai after attending the CAM Conference he took an agenda to the Management of the National Museum of Tanzania that the National Museum joins CAM as an institutional member, a move that was agreed.

Dr. Kayombo had not personally participated in CAM events previously but was interested in the workshop on "Rethinking Museums" held in Mumbai in June 2010. He presented a paper there and was a significant part of the international participation for the event. In the process he submitted his CV to

*Education Officer, Museum and House of Culture, Dares Salaam, Tanzania. For the full text go to [the Journal website](#)*

In 1996, while working at the Village Museum Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, I became aware of the widespread discrimination that disabled children experience in our country, and this had led to recent work with disabled and albino children. At that time, I organised children's programmes that enabled them to visit the museum and do different activities. There were different role-playing activities that I conducted. The Village Museum has different traditional house architectural styles from all over the country. I would conduct an annual, three-day programme based on these various house styles. Children would play various gender roles in the families of different communities.

I first started with the albino children. Many people in Tanzania, and across Africa for that matter, believe albinos have magical powers. The reason is that albinism in Tanzania is seen as a curse. The albino people are called "Zeruzeru," meaning off and on. It is believed that any mother with an albino child got it because of sleeping with a devil spirit. It is also believed that because of albinos are the offspring of the devil, they never die but just disappear. Therefore, whoever had an albino child would make every effort to hide the child so the family would not be cursed by society. Others are killed at the initial stages of their lives.

Albinism is a result of a genetic condition that impairs normal skin pigmentation and strikes about 1 in 3,000 people in Tanzania. There is a lack of pigmentation in the hair, skin and eyes of those affected. In almost all cases a significant visual impairment is also involved, with most persons with albinism being legally blind.

My first programme for these children was in 1997, which was called Festival For Children Living with Disadvantage. Phase one was for the public. I used radio and television. I explained what albinism is and how parents should treat them—giving them the same rights as other children. Then I explained to the teachers that they should give them the front desks so that they see the teachers and boards clearly, because most of them are visually impaired. This phase was a great success because there was one donor who saw the programme on television and sympathized with the children. He donated pairs of reading glasses and

CAM and we draw a few facts to let you know a little more about this unassuming and successful member.

Dr. Kayombo held several management positions in the National Museum of Tanzania and became Director General in 1999. He received his education at the University of Dar es Salaam (BSc. and MSc.) and his doctorate at Humboldt University in Germany. He undertook further museum training in the USA, Japan and Germany. During his career he published 13 documents and presented papers at over 23 conferences and workshops. He was the recipient of 5 grants or scholarships and was assigned to a number of special projects. Active in a number of professional associations including ICOM and AFRICOM, he will be greatly missed by his colleagues.

CAM extends heartfelt sympathy to his wife and four children and to his staff members. We in CAM will miss the opportunity to get to know him better and to benefit from his long experience and leadership.

Contributed by Lucina Shayo, Tanzania



Underprivileged children (albino and crippled, with their parents) in one of the programmes at the Museum in Dares Salaam

sunglasses to two hundred children through the Albino Association of Tanzania.

The second phase was an exhibition that showed their talents. They had a lot of hand crafts that they did while at school and inside the museum. The exhibition was officially inaugurated by government officials and was given media coverage. We then developed more programmes for awareness about albinism.

### **Persons with albinism in Tanzania face several major challenges:**

#### **1. The horror of a rapidly growing industry in the sale of albino body parts**

This unimaginable evil is driven by the belief (in some areas of the country) that the body parts of people with albinism possess magical powers capable of bringing riches if used in potions produced by local witchdoctors. During the last year, official reports indicate that 43 people with albinism have been brutally murdered and their body parts hacked off and sold to witchdoctors. However, leaders in the albinism community believe the number of deaths to be between 60 and 70.

Reports also indicate that albino body parts are being exported outside of Tanzania. In one instance, a Tanzanian trader was caught travelling to the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the head of an albino baby in his possession. He told police that a businessman there was going to pay him for the head by its weight. There are many more reported cases of brutal albino killings.

#### **2. Lack of low vision aids**

There is a lack of glasses, magnifiers, specialized computer equipment and other protective gear for albino people. This results in extreme difficulty in completing educational programmes, leading to chronic unemployment.

#### **3. Epidemic rates of fatal skin cancer**

A lack of protective sunscreens, wide-brimmed hats and proper clothing results in epidemic rates of death due to preventable skin cancer. The lack of melanin in the skin creates high risk for skin cancer. The average life expectancy for persons with albinism in Tanzania is 30 years, with only 2% living beyond 40 years. In western countries persons with albinism have the same life expectancy as the general population.

#### **4. Widespread social discrimination fueled by powerful myths**

There is a long-standing and widespread lack of public awareness of albinism. Powerful myths surround albinism in Africa. Some of these are:

- People with albinism are evil or are a curse from God and will bring bad luck on the household.
- People with albinism never die—they simply vanish.
- People with albinism are born to black women who have slept with white men.
- Albinism is believed to be a contagious disease, and as a result many employers avoid hiring persons with albinism due to fears that their customers and staff will "catch" the condition, or that food would be contaminated if touched by a person with albinism.
- Body parts of people with albino are powerful charms that can help the bearers rich or fortune.
- Albino hunters kill their victims and use their blood and body parts for potions. Witchdoctors tell their clients that the body parts will bring them luck in love, life and business.

#### **More Effort Done by the Museum**

Since we started our work on this issue about a decade ago, the situation is becoming worse.

Since the museum is dealing with tangible and intangible heritage, we feel we have an important role to play in addressing this issue, through education and advocacy. Albino killings in our country are contrary to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which decrees that everybody has the right to live.

The threats that the people with albinism are experiencing in Tanzania are contrary to those human rights organs mentioned above. This is the reason why the museums as a platform of the community must address this issue to create public awareness in order that the international and national declarations on human rights be implemented. Therefore:

- The museum intends to do more research to explore more reasons for these fateful actions. The pace is slow because we do not yet have funds. We are looking for partners with whom we can partner.
- We are working together with the Tanzania Albino Society.
- We continue to organise the special programmes.
- We use the museum as a platform for human rights

advocacy.

- We are organising more public awareness programmes.
- We have a special TV (TBC 1) programme for children that runs on Saturdays called “Watoto wa Makumbusho,” meaning, “Children of the Museum,” in which children talk about heritage, what is heritage, positive and negative heritage. Here, children are taught what albinism is and how we can reduce the rate positively by non-albinos getting married to albinos. They are taught that the killing must stop.

## Conclusion

Museums are powerful tools that can be used to expedite development in every society because they are cultural institutions. Culture is such a strong phenomenon in the society as it includes beliefs, norms, values and religion. It is impetus for museums to address any burning issues in the society. This is what drove the museum in Tanzania to speak out loudly for the albinos since 1997. The reason that triggered this matter has changed, from albino children been hidden to the killings, but it is our hope that with enough educational awareness about albinism, even the killings will stop. With this presentation, the author calls more fighters to jump in this boat so that more research and exhibitions can be done at the museum to create more awareness to the public.

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