

В ОДНОМУ ЧОВНІ IN THE SAME BOAT В ОДНОЙ ЛОДКЕ

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AFRICA DAY SPECIAL ISSUE



I O M



Welcome to the seventeenth issue of the monthly electronic bulletin "In the same boat", a publication on issues of dialog between cultures and peoples covering interesting topics, debates and discussion on combating racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia, ranging from state policies in this area to activities of international organizations, non-governmental sector and grassroots initiatives. It started as a result of a project of the East European Development Institute, with support from the Embassy of Norway in Ukraine. Now it is supported by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) project "Promoting Cultural Dialogue in Lviv and Zakarpattia Regions of Ukraine", funded by the Government of Canada as represented by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (Canada Fund). Opinions in this publication are that of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion or position of the IOM, CIDA or Canada Fund or other organizations contracted for implementing this project. Apart from that, mentioning of trademarks or commercial goods and services in this product does not mean their approval or recommendation to use them.

Editorial

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SPECIAL FOCUS

MAY 25: «Towards A United, Peaceful & Prosperous Africa»

On 25 May 2009, the African Union joined the rest of the African community within the continent and abroad, to celebrate the 45th Africa Day. The Day is observed with respect to the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), by its founding fathers on 25 May 1963. On this day, leaders of 30 of the 32 independent African states signed a founding charter in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In 1991, the OAU established the African Economic Community (AEC), and in 2002 the OAU established its own successor, the African Union (AU or UA). Africa Day is observed as a way to express solidarity & freedom, & to highlight the dynamic cultural & social makeup of the various countries that compose the African continent. It is a day to reflect on the progress that has been made and to plan for the future. This year, the Africa Day is celebrated under the theme: "Towards A United, Peaceful and Prosperous Africa", in which the element of a peaceful Africa is reflected, in line with the first strategic pillar of the African Union Commission dubbed "Peace and Security", which is one of the four pillars of the AUC Strategic Plan, 2009-2012. As the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), Mr. Jean Ping, once recalled, the continent is heading towards a more advanced democracy which is sometimes difficult to achieve; hence, there exist many examples of success stories like in the case of Ghana where the elections were conducted peacefully. This, the Chairperson said, is proof that Africa is not only about war and conflicts. The architecture of peace therefore clearly depicts that peace can be consolidated when there is unity and prosperity. Activities marking the Africa Day celebration on May 25, at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia included a bazaar of African objects and cultural identity, a cocktail made up of a variety of the different African meals, which was served to the public. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), Mr. Jean Ping visited Geneva, within the framework of the 46th anniversary of the Africa Day, during which he presided at the festivities organized for the occasion, by the African Union Permanent Representation in Geneva. While in Geneva, he also launched the First Forum on African Dialogue, under the theme: "Africa's Development: Whose Responsibility?"



(Staff writer)

AFRICA DAY EVENTS IN UKRAINE

Greetings on the occasion of the Africa day

African Center, together with the Diversity Initiative, a network that unites more than 50 organizations, had several meetings with various communities from all over Ukraine to discuss the Africa Day celebrations. The motto this year was – Diversity Interaction, as mentioned by Charles Asante-Yeboah, President of the African Center. Chief of mission of IOM, Mr. Jeffrey Labovitz, who co-chairs the Diversity Initiative, also attached a lot of importance to these celebrations. He said, “The celebration of Africa Day holds a special place for me in the list of annual events we all take part in. The richness of cultures from the African continent makes each year’s event a refreshing experience and a source of new cross cultural friendships.” Among the events planned by the African Center in Ukraine was community meeting on May 25 the Africa Day, a football match, and a street-based show in the center of Kyiv on the weekend following, during May 30-31.



Jeffrey Labovitz, IOM Chief of Mission

(Staff writer)

Football championship on the occasion of the Africa day

It is impossible to think of the African continent without the lovely game football, especially in the context of the FIFA-2010 to be hosted by South Africa. Within the framework of the Africa day celebrations, a football championship was held in Kyiv on May 30, 2009 at the Nivki sports complex. The organizing committee was led by Issa Sadio Diallo and Sesay Muhammed, Thomas and Robe Ashenafi. Five teams that played were “Ukraine-Turkmenistan”, “Guinea-Konakri”, “Nigeria”, “Morocco-Algeria” and “Congo-Angola”. The referees were George Usman (Angola), Vasyl (Ukraine), Mark Ikenga (Nigeria), while the linesmen were Didier (Congo), Evhen (Ukraine) and Usman (Guinea). The team Nigeria was the champion winning 12 points and scoring 7 goals in total, and the second place was won by Guinea-Konakri with 9 points and 9 goals. Ukraine won 6 points and 1 goal. The Africa cup was awarded on May 31 by the Nigerian Ambassador to the champion and the second place winner. All teams were awarded certificates of appreciation. It was a modest but good beginning, to be followed up next year in a major scale when the FIFA 2010 will be knocking at everybody’s doors.

(Staff writer)

Africa Day on Khreshchatik

On May 31, 2009, during the celebrations of the Kyiv day, Khreshchatik, one of the corners of the main street of Kyiv turned into a platform of vibrant energy and rhythm from Africa. All African communities together with people from other continents culminated their weeklong Africa Day celebrations. Among those who attended the event were the Ambassadors of Nigeria and South Africa to Ukraine, representatives of the Embassies of Libya and the USA in Ukraine, International Organization for Migration, EEDI and the Diversity Initiative. Speaking at the occasion, the Ambassador of Nigeria Mr. Ibrahim Pada Kasaj highlighted that the history of Africa day since 1963 and stressed on the need to celebrate this occasion for the whole of humanity. The South African Ambassador Andries Venter expressed his happiness that he felt that he was in Africa and felt homesick. He added that next year the event will be organized in a bigger scale and also recalled the FIFA-2010 in this context. US Embassy representative Mr. Mark Wood greeted everyone on the occasion and said



Nigerian Ambassador H.E. Ibrahim Pada Kasaj



Dances on Khreshchatik in Kyiv, May 31, 2009

that this is a good opportunity for Ukrainians to know about Africa, its people, history and culture. Eloquent Sesay Muhammed from Sierra Leone and Albert Kitcher from Ghana conducted the show. Together, they gathered some hundred people in no time. A quiz contest on Africa was



South African Ambassador H.E. Andries Venter

conducted by the EEDI members Alla Moldovan and Irina Volokh. All participants received small gifts as prizes. Drumbeats by an ensemble from Guinea and songs by Jean Pierre and the ensemble UNO (United Nations of Odessa) lit up the clouded sky so much that a short spell of rain could not spoil but just refreshed everybody's mood.

(Staff writer)

THE WORLD OF MUSIC

Music, Migrants, Football: Africa Day in Johannesburg

Music is always a big part of Africa Day festivities, and this year was no exception. But serious issues like xenophobia rubbed shoulders with entertainment at this year's Africa Day festivities in South Africa. Workshops and exhibitions explored complex questions and concerns, while music, dance, poetry and arts and crafts added a lighter note. The first free Africa Day Concert was held in Mary Fitzgerald Square in Newtown on May 24, 2009 with Ishmael Lo, Ghorwane, Dobet Gnahore, Chiwoniso, Mapumba, Mahotella Queens, Australia's White Cockatoo, Zonke and Grammy Award winners Ladysmith Black Mambazo. It was broadcast live to over 50 African countries. The weekend-long celebrations hosted by the City of Johannesburg included "Harambe Afrika Celebrates!", a craft exhibition featuring crafters from Botswana, Swaziland, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa. Crafts workshops, took place with a focus on understanding issues around xenophobia and developing practical textile design skills based on African craft traditions. The City's Migrants' Helpdesk held discussions on xenophobia, the rights and status of migrants entering South Africa either as refugees or asylum seekers, the type of documents they need and the relevance of the Migrants' Helpdesk, set up to help these people. After the Africa Day concert, Mary Fitzgerald Square will be transformed into a public viewing site for the FIFA Confederations Cup, which kicks off in Johannesburg on 14 June. The football Festival of Champions ends – again in Joburg – on 28 June. For that fortnight, soccer lovers can watch the matches on big screens and enjoy performances by local and international artists, all for free. Mary Fitzgerald Square is the only official Confederations Cup public viewing site.



(Staff Writer)

IN RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE

Africa Vision Awards 2009

On May 21, 2009, in New York, Friends of Africa International (FAI), a non-profit organization, together with representatives of the United Nations, country missions to the UN, NGOs, and members of the academia and corporate sector presented the Africa Vision Awards in celebration of Africa Day to those who have demonstrated outstanding vision and rendered exceptional service. A keynote address "The Meaning of Africa Day from the Age of Nkrumah to the Dawn of Barack Obama" on this occasion was delivered by the renowned Africa Scholar, Prof. Ali. Mazrui (Albert Schweitzer Professor in the Humanities / Director of the Institute of Global Cultural Studies Binghamton University, State University of New York). Recipients of the Africa Vision award are: Ms. Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi, Executive Director, African Women Development Fund, Accra, Ghana; Dr. Mohamed "Mo" Ibrahim, President, Mo Ibrahim Foundation, Dr. Hanifa Mezoui, Chief of the NGO Unit of the United Nations, New York, Dr. Adhiambo Odaga, Country Representative, Ford Foundation West Africa, Lagos, Nigeria, Prof. Adebayo Olukoshi, Executive Secretary of Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, Dakar, Senegal, His Excellency Jean Ping, African Union Commission Chairperson, President Mary Robinson, Former President of Ireland, President, Realizing Rights, The Ethical Globalization Initiative; and Prof. Margaret Vogt, Deputy Director, Dept. of Political Affairs, United Nations, New York. Friends of Africa International (FAI) is a NGO, founded in 2005 by Ms. Onyeka Obasi. It focuses on advocacy, training, and research-oriented policy advice to regional and international institutions through its multifaceted programs in Africa. FAI has facilitated the annual Pan-African Youth Leadership Forum engage in development processes through dialogue and training workshops and use of the African Youth Charter. Current activities include human rights and democracy projects in Sudan.



(Staff writer)

Albert S.L.Kitcher, MA, PhD, DMinS, leader of the Ghanaian community in Ukraine

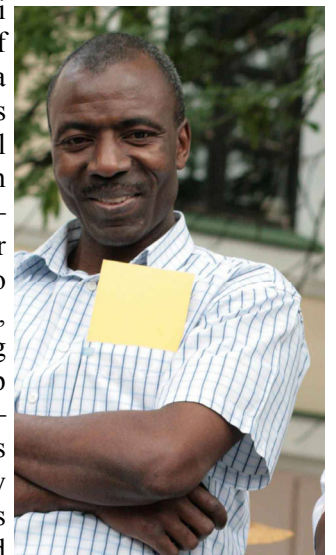
To all who attended Africa Day celebrations in Kyiv in 2008 and 2009 on Khreschatik, there was the unforgettable experience of a person conducting a quiz contest and introducing the artists and performers. His eloquence and communication skills amazed everyone. A huge crowd gathered in minutes and showed no sign of dispersing. The concert started with drummers and thanks to the communication know how of the conductor, the show could be a great success. It was precisely Dr. Albert S. L. Kitcher, who is the founder and president of “Today’s Family” a non-governmental organization headquartered in Kyiv, Ukraine. Since coming to the then Soviet Union in 1988, Dr. Kitcher had always been forthcoming to help the needy in the children’s homes, old peoples homes, prisons, hospitals, and worked for community development. Dr Kitcher have authored books dealing extensively with issues on the family, reaching out and serving orphans and the needy, the role of individuals in building communities and transforming the world. He holds degrees in Painting and Restoration from the Ukrainian Academy of Fine Arts, and a degree in Biblical Sciences from the Accelerated School of Ministry International. As a consultant, Dr. Kitcher travels extensively throughout the former Soviet Union and other countries, where he holds lectures, seminars and trainings in Leadership Development and Community Transformation Projects. He also serves as the chairman of the Ghanaian Community in Ukraine. With Beatrice, his beautiful architect wife, they make up a great team as they work with the communities. They have a son and a daughter.



(Staff writer)

Issa Sadio Diallo: Leader of the Guinean Community in Ukraine

To all Ukrainians, especially to all football fans, the names of Ismail Bangoura and Mamadi Sangare are well known. But many are not aware that they both hail from the Republic of Guinea. Many are also not aware that according to the leader of the Guineans in Ukraine, Issa Sadio Diallo, “Guinea has the most beautiful people in Africa, especially the most beautiful girls and women in Africa.” Any attempt to argue fails when you look at Issa’s two beautiful daughters, Mariam and Yana. Refined in taste, soft-spoken and polite Issa came to Ukraine in 1986 to study at the then Kyiv Institute for Civil Aviation. He even remembers the date – September 19. After graduation in 1992, he went back. Later, in 1993, he set up a business center Ukraine-Africa and since 1997 has been an active entrepreneur. The same year he got married to his Ukrainian fiancé, and in 1998 and 2002 respectively, the two daughters were born. Overall, there are 250 Guineans in Ukraine and only 10 among them have families, the rest being students. Issa wants to raise their awareness about Ukraine and also puts lot of efforts to develop relations between his country and Ukraine. There is a lot of potential for developing relations – Ukraine has the Mykolaiv Alumina Plant, also known as NGZ, the Former Soviet Union’s biggest alumina plant and Guinea is the largest producer of Bauxite in Africa. The first embassy of Ukraine in west Africa was also opened in Guinea. Issa had been visiting his mother, brothers and sisters in Guinea. Optimistic of the future of his country and amidst all his work and engagements, Issa also had obtained another degree in Economics and Human Resources management. Undoubtedly, for all Guineans in Ukraine, Issa is a role model for a leader with unending optimism.



(Staff writer)

Robe Ashenafi: Thoughts on East Africa and Ukraine



In 1987, when Air defense officer Robe Ashenafi of the Ethiopian Air forces came to Odessa Air Defense Academy, he never had the idea what turn fate may take. Changes in his country in 1991 prompted him to stay and finish and then think of the future. After graduation, he came to Kyiv in 1994 and has been living here since then. From 1995 till 2006, Ashenafi worked respectively for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Kyiv office and for its partner organizations. Since 2008, as a part-time expert of the EEDI, Robe assists in implementation of projects in the area of social integration, against xenophobia and racism. Speaking about his country, Ashenafi says, “Ethiopia is one of the oldest countries in the world and Africa's second-most populous nation. Ethiopia has yielded some of humanity's oldest traces, making the area a primary factor in the origin and developmental history of humanity, with recent studies claiming the vicinity of present-day Addis Ababa as the point from which human beings migrated around the world. But present day trends are dangerous. Even though I am proud that Addis Ababa is the headquarters of the African Union, yet the region may fall apart as a result of in fighting between various tribes.” Commenting on

Ukraine, he said, “If earlier I noticed that more than 75% of people and employers being taken by surprise at the sight of a black person seeking employment, over the years this number has come down and stands at about 50% today.” According to Robe, those who are hard working and want to contribute something to this country, is never bothered with issues of why and how many foreigners are coming and working. It is those, who are idle and try to gain more by working less, that are perturbed by the thought of competition and inflow of foreigners. This indeed, is an eye opener for many, seeking to know the situation with xenophobia in labor market. Robe Ashenafi is a hard working person, and works on independent contracts in the construction and repair sector. He is married to Olena, who holds a Ph.D. in biology and they have two daughters.

(Staff writer)

Muhammed Sesay: Head of the Sierra-Leonean community in Ukraine

Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone is far from Boryspil, but many of the staff of the airport and related industries around knows that Sierra Leone is a major producer of gem-quality diamonds, and is among the 10th largest diamond producing nations in the world. Annual production of Sierra Leone's diamond estimates range between USD 250-300 million. Formal exports have dramatically improved since the civil war with efforts to improve the management of them having some success. And they know all this from their English teacher, Muhammed Sesay, who had set up his English language college as early as 1996 in Boryspil. By this time, about 600 people received training in English skills, which enabled them to seek appropriate jobs in and around the airport. Muhammed Sesay came to Ukraine in 1988. Graduating from Odessa in Industrial air conditioning and refrigeration, in 1993 Sesay got married and settled in Boryspil, the home town of his wife. For some years he worked with Proctor and Gamble, before starting English Courses. Although very few in number, amounting to not more than 12 in Ukraine and only 5 in Kyiv, Sesay is also an active leader of his community, encouraging members to integrate and communicate. Sesay and his wife have two sons, both of them speaking English and Ukrainian fluently. There is something common about raising children and teaching, during both processes one needs to polish and bring the best out of a human being, just as the crude diamond is polished to brilliancy. Sesay engages in this process, with his broad framework of mind and a sense of humor that he probably picked up in Odessa during his studies. No doubt, he makes a very important contribution to the economy of Ukraine.



(Staff writer)

Yuriy Kamara: thoughts of the new generation

Just by looking at him, everyone takes him for someone from North Africa, or from Arab states. But everyone is surprised when he speaks fluent Ukrainian and Russian, not an inch worse than a native speaker. Then he introduces himself, “I am Yuriy”. Only by getting acquainted you come to know that he, Yuriy Kamara is the child of a Sierra Leonean father and an Ukrainian mother, born in 1979 in Kyiv. After graduating from the Institute of Tourism, he worked in the industry for a period of 8 to 9 years, those very years, when the closed Ukrainian society was being exposed to the world, its people could travel freely and get to know more about societies and peoples. During recent years, Yuriy has been preoccupied in entrepreneurial activities in the area of aluminum constructions, primarily for office and business needs. Fluent in Russian, English and Ukrainian, Yuriy is an active and dynamic young man of the new generation, capable of understanding the Ukrainians and Africans equally. “Ukrainians are very kind people and Africans too. They are also very open. Both express what they feel in heart,” says Yuriy and adds, “But certainly more needs to be done to make young people of different cultures and continents understand each other, integrate foreigners to the Ukrainian society.” He is communicative, has many friends and never fails to keep words. He actively participates in the life of the community. One of the African senior brothers said, “Everyone likes him. You know why? Because, he has charisma. Wherever he appears, he charms everyone, and leaves everyone indifferent. Isn't that great?”



(Staff writer)