



Report on the

XXII Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa Library and Information Associations (SCECSAL) 25 – 29 April 2017 Ezulwini, Swaziland

Host: Swaziland Library Association

1. BACKGROUND

The Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa Library and Information Associations (SCECSAL) is an independent, non-profit making body of Library and Information Associations in the region governed by a constitution. Since its establishment in 1974, twenty-one SCECSAL biennial conferences have been held without a break on a rotational basis by different member countries.

The SCECSAL forum brings library and information professionals in the region in one place every two years to discuss professional issues that are of common interest. It has become the most successful sub-regional forum not only for library and information professionals in the Sub-Saharan region but also for international partners in the library and information field.

Membership is open to national Library and Information Associations of countries in the Sub-Saharan region and currently there are 11 active member country Associations and these are: Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The report outlines the activities of the 22nd conference hosted by the Swaziland Library and Information Association at the Royal Swazi Convention Centre, Ezulwini from the 25 – 29 April 2016.

2. INAUGURATION

The conference attracted high-level speakers and participants from the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland, from International bodies, SCECSAL member countries as well as from beyond the SCECSAL region.

Principal Secretary in the Ministry of ICT, (the parent Ministry of Libraries in Swaziland) Prince Sikelela Dlamini officiated as the programme director for the inauguration. SWALA President, Ms. Jabu Hlope, gave the welcome address. The welcome address was followed by an address by IFLA Secretary General, Ms. Jennefer Nicholson who reminded all present that we are part of the global community and everything we do should reflect the needs of the communities as we serve our local communities. She touched on three aspects collecting

cultural heritage, creating cultural heritage and capacity building for which IFLA stands for. The Keynote speaker was Dr. Buhle Mbambo-Thatha who inspired the audience with her positive outlook on Africa and how the real Africa is rich in minerals, youthful energy and overflowing with potential and the challenge of how to use that energy and resources to develop our countries and continent. She reiterated the libraries support to the Africa Union Agenda 2063 by saying information will be a critical ingredient in the success of the AU Agenda and UNs SDGs.

The Guest of Honour was introduced by the Honourable Minister of ICT, Mr. Dumsani Ndlangamandla who reminded the audience that the conference takes place at the right time when the government of Swaziland has approved the e-government strategy which encourages ministries to utilize technology in providing services and the participants will take advantage of the deliberations at the conference. The guest of honour was Her Royal Highness Princess Sikhanyiso, also the Patron of SWALA, who officially opened the conference. In her remarks, her Royal Highness touched upon the digital migration and urged libraries to fill with local content, cultural and traditional information and urged libraries to employ technological infrastructure to create an inclusive information highway to showcase e-books, e-journals, multimedia which will reduce the digital divide. The inauguration was punctuated in-between by a number of entertainment performance.

3. THEME AND SUB-THEMES

The conference theme was: *Digital Transformation and the Changing Role of Libraries and Information Centres in the Sustainable Development of Africa* with the following sub-themes:

- Emerging technologies and their role (big data, cloud computing, mobile applications, semantic web, text mining, next generation web services etc.)
- Issues of Digital Rights Management and Intellectual Property Rights
- E-Infrastructure development for sustainable development
- E-Governance, E-Agriculture, E-Health and their roles and impact
- Indigenous Knowledge and digital transformations
- Knowledge management and Resource Discovery Tools
- Digital preservation of Cultural Heritage and cultural archives
- Quality assurance and best practices in digital scholarship
- Role of social media, social networks and networked information
- Library advocacy in the age of ICT

4. KEY-NOTE ADDRESSES

There were a number of keynote speakers and each day began with a keynote address in plenary. Following the inauguration on the first day, the first keynote address was presented by Professor Ondari-Okemwa Ezra who spoke on: *Developing digital information literacy at institutions of higher learning in Sub-Saharan Africa: opportunities and challenges*. The presentation identified obstacles that hinder students at institutions of higher learning from developing digital information skills, how such developments may be speeded up as well as the role that digital information literacy may play in the socio-economic development of Sub-

Saharan Africa. The address was followed by presentations by two sponsors ie. Sabinet and Elsevier on their products.

The second key-note address also on the first day was presented by Professor Kingo Mchombu and Dr. Chiku Mnubi-Mchombu whose topic was: *Achievement of digital literacy in a country: the role of African public libraries*. The presentation identified benefits of digital literacy in Africa, the challenges and barriers to digital literacy as well as the role of public libraries in the SCECSAL region in the provision of digital literacy. Two additional sponsors i.e. WWIS and EBSCO made presentations after the address.

The second day was graced by an address by Ms. Jennefer Nicholson, the IFLA Secretary General who made a presentation on the International Advocacy Program (IAP). This session was followed by a panel discussion on the “Cape Town Declaration” on the status of African libraries and actions that must be taken to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. She urged library and information professionals in the SCECSAL region to support the Declaration.

Day three was a day for participants to go sightseeing and visit places of interest which ended with a cultural evening where countries were competing in showcasing their cultural dances. The competition was won by the lone Lesotho participant who was awarded a trophy.

Day four had three presentations in the plenary sessions and these were: “***Sustainable Library Business Model: a case with Yunus Social Business Foundations***” presented by Carolyne Kirabo, the second was “***A sustainable information environment in Africa, with reference to cloud and mobile technologies***” presented by Neesha Ramsumar. The presentation explored how cloud computing and mobile technologies can contribute towards a sustainable information environment in the face of hard financial times and other challenges and the third presentation was “***Using WhatsApp to sustain functional school libraries in Khayelitsha***” by Dr. Connie Bitso.

The three presentations were also followed by sponsor presentations and these comprised of Springer and UKS.

Day five which was the last day of the conference, began with a panel discussion on “**Where to SCECSAL from here**” which was followed by the SCECSAL General Assembly Meeting.

5. PAPERS AND PRESENTERS

Due to the sheer number of paper presentations, it was necessary to have parallel sessions in addition to the main session that took place in the main auditorium. There were therefore three parallel sessions taking place at the same time on different themes and participants were free to choose the sessions to attend.

A total of **54 papers** were presented in **13 sessions** and these are a reflection of the diversity and innovation that represents the work within the library profession. Paper presenters came from all SCECSAL member countries (Please see conference proceedings for more details on papers and presenters).

6. PARTICIPANTS

A total of **303 participants** including sponsors and vendors attended the conference and these represented **16 countries** (5 from outside the SCECSAL Region)

The conference was a resounding success and Swaziland did a sterling job in all aspects of organising the conference such that a number of participants implored Swaziland to consider hosting IFLA in the future.

7. PRE- AND POST SCECSAL EVENTS

SCANUL-ECS

The SCANUL-ECS meeting was held on 23 April 2018 on the theme “Sustainable Development Goals: Libraries and Information Centres Beyond 2015”. A welcome address was delivered by the Under Secretary in the Ministry of ICT and a keynote address by the Governor of The Central Bank of Swaziland. Discussions centred around issues on library advocacy strategies and aligning libraries with local development agenda and SDGs.

The members agreed to review the constitution to include a standing Secretariat that will link the two conferences, include Lusophone and Francophone countries within the region. They also expressed concern on continuity of the SCANUL-ECS forum due to poor attendance.

Second Public Library Summit

Second African Public Library Summit by AfLIA was organised on 30 April 2016 and 1 May 2016. The theme of the summit was *21st Century Public Libraries – Innovation Develops Communities*. This Summit was co-sponsored by the Global Libraries Program of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The summit started with the keynote address by Deborah Jacobs on “21st Century Public Libraries – Innovation Develops Communities” followed by a number of presentations.

8. CULTURAL EVENING AND OTHER SOCIAL EVENTS

On the opening day a Welcome Dinner was organised to welcome the participants to the conference. A number of entertainers from Swaziland provided a variety of entertainment along with a cocktail dinner for the guests.

On 27th April an Excursion to Swazi Candles, Ngwenya Glass and Maguga Dam was organised for the participants. The same day the Cultural Evening was held at UNISWA Kwaluseni Sports Emporium. All the participating countries performed their cultural dances on that evening which was anchored by Ms. Busi Simelane and adjudicated by Ms Sibongile Mamba and Mr. Mathokoza Sibiyi. Lesotho won the culture day dance trophy which was presented to Ms Masechele Qoola.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SCECSAL GENERAL CONFERENCE

The General conference recommended:

- To work towards establishing a Permanent Secretariat for SCECSAL to coordinate, monitor and regularly report on the implementation of SCECSAL decisions, resolutions and activities by the member Associations and Institutions.
- To assign the Swaziland Library and Information Association (SWALA) the role of temporary SCECSAL Secretariat until a permanent secretariat is established and becomes operational.
- To review and amend the SCECSAL constitution to include terms of reference for the proposed Permanent Secretariat and other appropriate provisions to strengthen SCECSAL operations and monitoring mechanisms, and simplify the bidding process for hosting SCECSAL.
- Member Associations and Institutions to abide by the decisions of the SCECSAL General Assembly meetings of 2002 (Johannesburg, South Africa) and 2004 (Kampala, Uganda) to establish the SCECSAL Archives at UNISA and submit to the Archives all SCECSAL records and related documents including agendas, minutes, financial statements, other agenda documents such as country reports, proceedings, other relevant documents of an historical nature, and informal documents of historical value such as photographs, videos, etc. Stressing the importance and the urgent need to develop capacities of Library and Information Service professionals in the SCECSAL region, especially of the young professionals,
- SCECSAL member Associations and Institutions hosting future conferences should make provisions for continuous capacity development events (i.e. seminars, workshops, training, etc., either as pre-, post or during the conference) on areas/themes identified in consultations with other SCECSAL members.
- All SCECSAL member Association and Institutions should continually implement appropriate continuous capacity development initiatives, including training in research methods, targeting their members and especially the young professionals, and report on these during the SCECSAL General Assembly meetings as part of their country reports.

11. NEXT SCECSAL CONFERENCE

The SCECSAL General Council awarded the hosting of the XXIII SCECSAL Conference to the Uganda Library and Information Association (ULIA) in April 2018, and the XXIV conference to the Namibia Library and Information Workers Association (NIWA) in April 2020.

*Prepared by the Swaziland Library Association
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