



International Publishers **ASSOCIATION SEMINAR**

LAGOS
9th May
2018

Report on the International Publishers Association
Seminar: 'Publishing for Sustainable Development
– The Role of Publishers in Africa'

Introduction

The inaugural International Publishers Association (IPA) Africa Seminar, entitled 'Publishing for Sustainable Development – The Role of Publishers in Africa' – was jointly organised by the IPA and the Nigerian Publishers Association (NPA), and held at the sumptuous Eko Hotel and Suites in Lagos, Nigeria on 9 May, 2018.



Guest registration desk.



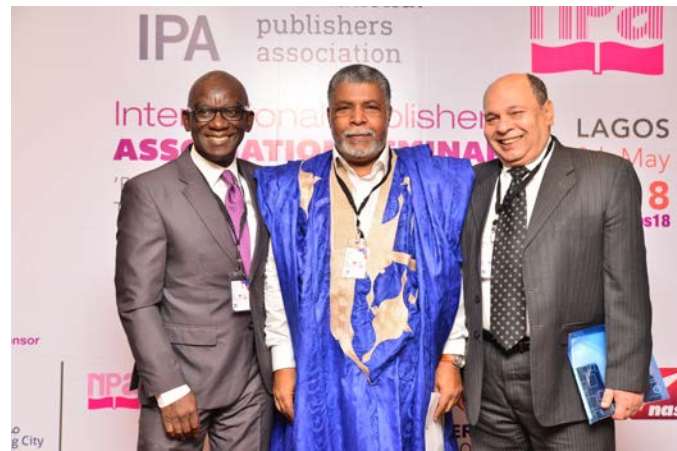
Guests networking at the welcome reception.

Like the Oscars...

Some 180-odd delegates and guests knew they were at a special event as soon as they saw the entrance lobby to the conference room. This was decked-out, Oscars style, with 'wrapped walls' featuring the name of the event and the logos of the main organisers, the IPA and NPA. This made the perfect backdrop for pictures and was stylishly executed. It also added a touch of glamour, an effect accentuated by the presence of conference 'stewardesses' in sparkling dresses.



Guests at the welcome reception.



Speakers at the welcome reception, left to right : Elliot Agyare, Sellami Ahmed El Meki, Mohammad Radi.

A professional room

Badges and Seminar programmes were duly collected and delegates were able to mingle over refreshments before making their way into the spacious conference room where the stage and lighting were also very professional. The presence of a drumkit and African drums to the side of the stage was a hint of further excitements to come.



Guest registration desk.

Welcome Speeches



Opening speech given by Gbadega Adedapo,
The President of the Nigerian Publishers Association.

The President of the Nigerian Publishers Association Gbadega Adedapo gave the first opening address in which he said that African publishing had a good story to tell, but that it hadn't "shouted about it loudly enough". He also said that the African book industry was under threat from piracy, observing that "if we don't tackle the scourge of piracy, then, to quote Chinua Achebe: 'Things Fall Apart'. When authors' works are unprotected, when pirated copies are everywhere, when booksellers themselves are acting as pirates, then authors do not receive royalties and publishers do not receive sales revenue.



Opening speech given by Gbadega Adedapo,
The President of the Nigerian Publishers Association.

He continued: “And that means ‘Things Fall Apart’; the centre of publishing cannot hold and anarchy is loosed upon our book world.”

He said the time was right for a seminar focused on publishing in Africa “because rough estimates of African’s publishing market say it is worth more than one billion dollars, and there are more than 500 million book-buyers across the continent”. He added that it is estimated that the market is showing cumulative annual growth of 6%.

Africa and “big tech”



Welcome speech given by Dr. Michiel Kolman,
The President of the International Publishers Association.

Adedapo was followed by Dr. Michiel Kolman, President of the IPA, who voiced concerns about “big tech”, a subject he has raised before. “The current discussion around exceptions and limitations [in educational publishing for example] pits the global north against the global south in a proxy war for big tech to erode copyright,” he said. “This development directly undermines your efforts in building a sustainable market for African publishers.”



Welcome speech given by Dr. Michiel Kolman,
The President of the International Publishers Association.

He continued: "Next to protecting copyright, one of Africa's immediate battles is the fight against illiteracy. Success in our adult lives can often be traced back to just a few key characteristics in school. Learning to read from a young age is a crucial one. I am curious to hear more about how IT-based literacy programs and digital start-ups can contribute to this important effort."

He said that high quality content was coming from Africa – especially in the field of educational publishing – and that "there is such a thirst for knowledge across the African continent that educational publishers want to play their part and go from strength to strength. Publishers are aware that there are many challenges, some of which African publishers can resolve for themselves. Others will depend on local cooperation. And some will involve international cooperation."

Panel Discussion – 1

Publishing in the 21st Century: the Socio-economic Contribution of the Publishing Industry in Africa.



From left to right, Moderator: Samuel Kolawole – Chair, African Publishers Network

Asare Yamoah – Former President, Ghana Book Publishers Association

Mohammad Radi – Vice Chair, African Publishers Network

Sellami Ahmed El Meki – President, Mauritanian Publishers Association

Elliot Agyare - President of the Ghana publishers Association, President of the Commonwealth Book Publishers Association, Chief Executive Officer - Smartline Publishers Ltd

The publishing industry started late in Africa, according to Sellami Ahmed El Meki, President, Mauritanian Publishers Association, “because the colonisers left no facilities on the ground”. As a result, the industry is lagging behind in areas like distribution.



Panel Discussion – 1: **Mohammad Radi**
Vice Chair of the African Publishers Network during the discussion.

Asare Yamoah, former President, Ghana Book Publishers Association, said it was important to concentrate on four key areas: literacy, a reading culture, author development and government policies and interventions.

Elliot Agyare, current President, Ghana Publishers Association, was critical of African publishing. “Our contribution is marginal. We are a net importer of books. We contribute 10 to 15% of books to educational institutions – this could be more, but we lack some capacity. We need to improve educational capacity, production capacity. We need to develop our skills.”

Mohammad Radi, vice chair, African Publishers Network, said there was a need to establish relationships with great publishers in the world and share experiences.

From the floor, José Borghino, Secretary General of the IPA, voiced the importance of data and urged African publishers to start collecting data about their industry. “Without accurate data, all our stories to publishers are just anecdotes,” he said. Data can support publishers when they lobby governments for change.

Panel Discussion – 2

Strengthening Educational Publishing in Africa.



From left to right, Moderator: Dr. Yemi Ogunbiyi – Publisher, Tanus Books Limited
Adele Nibona - Culture Programme Specialist, UNESCO
Lily Nyariki - Bookshop Manager - Moi University, Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)
Gbenro Adegbola – Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, First Veritas
Otunba Olayinka Lawal-Solarin – Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Literamed Publications

Almost as an aside, Adele Nibona, Culture Programme Specialist UNESCO, kicked off by noting that women were underrepresented in publishing in Africa. Otunba Olayinka Lawal-Solarin, Chairman and CEO of Nigeria’s Literamed Publications, said that Africa was still dominated by foreign publishers and badly needs more national book policies. He said there weren’t enough books for children, a situation the government could rectify with funding. He did not think it was true that parents could not afford to spend money on books for their children “because they are happy to take out subscriptions for their mobiles”.



Panel Discussion - 2, speaker **Lily Nyariki**, Bookshop Manager at Moi University discussing the importance of bookshops in building a reading culture.

Lily Nyariki, Manager of Moi University Bookshop, Kenya, also pointed out the shortage of books across Africa and the lack of a national book policy. She stressed the importance of bookshops in building a reading culture, and she called for a pan-Africa booksellers association.

Nyariki also warned of the danger of “talking to ourselves”, and asked: “Are there any government people here? We need key people from the government to be here so that they can understand why we are so important to education.

Panel Discussion – 3

Bringing the Voice of African Writers, Publishers and Content Creators to the World.



From left to right, Moderator: Bibi Bakare-Yusuf – Co-founder and Publishing Director, Cassava Republic Press

Walter Bgoya – Managing Director, Mkuki na Nyota Publishing and Chairman of the International African Books Collective

Akoss Ofori-Mensah – Founder, Sub-Saharan Publishers

Lola Shoneyin – Founder, Ouida Books

Dr. Wale Okediran - Former President, The Nigerian Authors Association

Akoss Ofori-Mensah, founder of Sub-Saharan Publishers observed that many African children did not know how to read and write “because they are taught in foreign languages – we need to develop reading in local languages supported by the Global Book Alliance [the partnership of donor agencies, multilateral institutions, and civil society organizations that are committed to bringing books to every child in the world by 2030].



Panel Discussion - 3, speaker **Lola Shoneyin**, founder of Nigeria's Ouida Books discussing book accessibility in the region.

The importance of local languages was supported by the MD of Tanzania's Mkuki na Nyota Publishing, Walter Bgoya. He said that "every language, no matter how small, has the right to exist". He also pointed out the support some countries give to their book industry. "In Norway, 1000 copies of every book published is bought by the government for libraries," he said.

Moderator Bakare-Yusuf said that the government should provide grants for publishing in indigenous languages "otherwise you're simply supporting European languages".

Lola Shoneyin, founder of Nigeria's Ouida Books, said she wasn't so much worried about African books travelling to the world, being available in the next African country would suit her as a start. "I'd like to ensure that when a book is published in Nigeria, it can be read in Ghana and Uganda. There is a growing number of readers on our continent – we should look at Africa as a huge opportunity. Top of my wish list would be sorting out NiPost [the Nigerian postal service] which currently fails everyone."

Panel Discussion – 4

The Role of Technology in Overcoming Illiteracy and Promoting a Reading Culture.



From left to right, Moderator: Masennya Dikotla – Chief Executive, Molteno Institute for Language and Literacy
Harry Hare – Chairman, CIO East Africa
Godwin Fiagbor - Africa Director of Educational Technology Solutions, Edify
Okechukwu Ofili - Founder, Okada Books
Ama Dadson - Founder & CEO, AkooBooks Audio

This panel featured one of the Seminar's most popular speakers – Okechukwu Ofili, founder of Nigeria's online platform Okada Books. He wasted no time in telling the panel – and the audience – that they were too old. "The people in this room are not our audience," he said. "And we need younger people on this stage. I'm 37 and I feel too old."



Panel Discussion - 4, speaker **Okechukwu Ofili**, founder of Nigeria's Okada Books discussing the importance of online platforms.

He said that the industry suffers from a distribution problem. "It is easier to buy *Things Fall Apart* in Germany than it is in Nigeria," he claimed. "People say that Nigerians don't read, Africans don't read, yet when we launched in 2013 our platform quickly had 100,000 active monthly users. How do we get to people across Africa? It's digital. The cost of building libraries is too much."

He said the industry should stop looking to government for help – "The government is too busy with NEPA [the Nigerian electricity company] and the roads to worry about reading."

He believes that there are Nigerian writers for whom there is a local audience and he believe that too much emphasis has been put on "writing books for the west – Adichie's feminism needs to be read more here than in America".

He believes the best way to tackle piracy is to "provide as many legal routes as you can – this is how they tackled it in the music industry".

Panel Discussion – 5

Addressing Freedom to Publish Challenges in Africa.



From left to right, Moderator: **Folu Agoi** – President, PEN Nigeria
Dr. Festus Adedayo – Member of Editorial Board, Sunday Tribune
Kristenn Einarsson – Managing Director, Norwegian Publishers Association and Chair of IPA Freedom to Publish Committee
Trevor Ncube - Chairman, Alpha Media Holdings (Private) Limited, Recipient of the IPA Prix Voltaire

In a wide-ranging introduction Dr. Festus Adedayo, member of the Editorial Board of South Africa's *Sunday Tribune*, set freedom to publish in context. He made references to Plato's *Republic*, the execution of Socrates, Confucius, the English poet John Milton and George Orwell.



Panel Discussion - 5, speaker **Kristenn Einarsson**, MD of the Norwegian Publishers Association and Chair of the IPA's Freedom to Publish Committee addressing the current situation of freedom to publish.

He said that the landscape of freedom to publish in Africa had changed and that the press no longer had a monopoly of the offline narrative. "Publishers themselves are the kingpins of censorship today" – in other words, one of the worries today is self-censorship because of the fear of libel, for example.

Kristenn Einarsson, MD of the Norwegian Publishers Association and Chair of the IPA's Freedom to Publish Committee, said: "Every publisher should be allowed to publish what the publisher deems worthy of publishing, even when those words challenge the boundaries."

He said the general situation was getting worse. He talked about government or state intervention and also expressed concern over the use of libel laws to stifle freedom to publish. He said the IPA wanted to make an index on the use of libel laws around the world. He added that pressure groups were causing self-censorship to take place and that there was an increasing problem in educational publishing with governments wanting to publish educational material themselves.



Panel Discussion - 5, speaker: **Trevor Ncube** (Recipient of IPA Prix Voltaire)

Former recipient of IPA Prix Voltaire, Trevor Ncube, Chairman of Alpha Media Holdings in Zimbabwe, noted there was a new – and perhaps surprising – threat to freedom to publish: namely, people themselves. He said that people were becoming more intolerant than governments. “Social media has exacerbated groups that are intolerant. In South Africa a book on Nelson Mandela was withdrawn from bookshelves because of social media. Power has been handed over to each one of us. This power is stifling freedom of expression. Social media has taken away power from governments. We should all look at ourselves and ask: how tolerant are we?”



A member of the audience addressed a question to Trevor Ncube during the panel.

He was asked what difference receiving the IPA Prix Voltaire had made. He replied that it had raised his profile and helped him get protection, “and it made the government realise that I had support outside the country. The flip side was that some people said I was a ‘puppet of the west’, but it did show the government that I wasn’t alone in what I was trying to do.”

Panel Discussion – 6

Enhancing Enforcement of Copyright and Intellectual Property (IP) Laws.



From left to right, Moderator: Lawrence Njagi – Chairman, Kenya Publishers Association

John Asein – Executive Director, Reproduction Rights Society of Nigeria (REPRONIG)

José Borghino – Secretary General, International Publishers Association

Afam Ezekude - Director General, Nigeria Copyright Commission

Book pirates need to be called out for what they are: thieves. That was the opening statement from Moderator Lawrence Njagi. He asked the audience to close their eyes for a few seconds and suggested that that darkness was what the world would be like without books, a situation that could arise because piracy kills investment in publishing. “It is books that provide light,” he said.



Panel Discussion - 6, speakers **Afam Ezekude**, Director General, Nigeria Copyright Commission discusses government intervention on piracy.

He said that between 30 and 50% of books used in secondary schools are pirated and he asked three questions: Are the legal provisions against piracy adequate? Are booksellers themselves ethical? How can the industry protect itself against pirated books coming from outside the country?

Afam Ezekude, Director General, Nigeria Copyright Commission, had some answers. He said that the government had a zero-tolerance approach to piracy and that the results had been positive. "Since January we've carried out more than 340 raids and seized nine million items with a market value of 9bn Naira," he said. "We also work closely with the Nigerian Customs Service and in January intercepted 28 containers from China, 20 of which contained pirated books."

But he wants stakeholders to do more, and in particular, asked that the Nigerian Publishers Association be more supportive.

John Asein, executive director of Nigeria's Reproduction Rights Society, put forward the idea of "safe corridors" for books printed overseas, with reliable entry points that publishers trust, so that pirated books cannot come in. "We did this successfully some years back with pharmaceuticals," he observed.

Asein also described publishers as "orphans" in Africa and asked why there were no book policies. Indeed, the lack of national book policies in African countries was frequently mentioned throughout the day.



Panel Discussion - 6, speaker **José Borghino** discusses the importance of copyright and its relation to public interest.

José Borghino, Secretary General at the IPA, said that “copyright was in the public interest” and said the seriousness of the threat to copyright was underlined by the fact that saying it was in the public interest “has become a controversial thing to say”. He said that ‘GAFA’ – Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon – had made copyright seem as if it wasn’t in the public interest, that it was somehow an impediment to creativity.

But he stressed that “Copyright is the basis of what everybody in this room does – it makes writers’ ideas a reality, and a lot of the time we don’t say this loudly enough.”

He noted that the Africa Group of publishers was among those that want WIPO (the World International Property Organisation) to broaden the exceptions to copyright, in education for example. He warned that the production of high quality educational material requires investment which could be threatened by educational exceptions to copyright which have the result of reducing publishers’ income. He pointed out the irony that it was “the old colonisers – Europe and the US” who were the ones saying no to these increased exceptions.

Closing Remarks

Some closing remarks were given by Bodour Al Qasimi, Founder and President of the Emirates Publishers Association, Member of the IPA Executive Committee.



Closing remarks given by Bodour Al Qasimi.

She summarised some of the main points made during the Seminar and said: "I am truly in awe of the quality of the discussions, the quality of the writers, and the quality of the creative industry talent coming out of Nigeria and Africa. I think the rest of the world has to start paying attention to the stories and beautiful art coming out of this region. They deserve our respect, our appreciation and our support."



Bodour Al Qasimi's speech during the closing remarks.

She echoed Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's warnings on the "dangers of a single story", the danger of reducing people to a single narrative, and she observed that, fortunately, people are increasingly interested in "other cultures, countries, ideas, lifestyles".

She said it was heart-warming to witness the momentum created by the efforts of the publishing industry in Nigeria and Africa, and ended on the best possible note: by announcing that the Kenya Publishers Association has agreed to host next year's IPA Africa Seminar in Nairobi.

Gala Dinner



Adunni & Nefertiti Band performing during the gala dinner.

The Seminar ended with African singing, drumming and dancing, courtesy of Nigerian vocal and dance troupe Adunni & Nefertiti who describe themselves as folksong ambassadors, keeping alive music that appeals across language and ethnic barriers. They gathered various members of the audience to join in the dancing which made for a joyous end to a stimulating day.

The Sponsors



Salem Omar Salem, Director of Sharjah Publishing City (SPC) giving a speech as the Platinum Sponsor of the event.

There were a number of sponsorship options available. As Platinum Sponsor, Sharjah Publishing City (SPC) received many opportunities to tell their story. Its Director Salem Omar Salem was able to give a five-minute presentation before the Gala Dinner, and as Platinum Sponsor, SPC was also able to leave its promotional material on every table.

Platinum Sponsor



Silver Sponsors



Session Sponsor



Silver sponsors included the Nigerian Publishers Association, the Association of American Publishers, The London Book Fair, the Frankfurt Book Fair, the Emirates Publishers Association, the UK Publishers Association and NAS.

Each session was sponsored by Emaar Properties and all sponsors were able to see their names and logos captured in photographs throughout the day.

Sponsors organisations and associations have also been mentioned in the speeches given by the President of the IPA, and the President of the Nigerian Publishers Association as well as the closing remarks given by Bodour Al Qasimi.

Sponsors logos have been promoted on all seminar material including, and not limited to; the program, badges, certificates, and backdrop of media interviews.

Testimonials



**Akoss Ofori-Mensah – Founder
Sub-Saharan Publishers**

"I would like to appeal to my colleague African publishers, as our corporate social responsibility, to develop some early readers in mother tongue languages and make them freely accessible on the internet where the children can read them or download them onto their phones or tablets to read. This could help to reduce illiteracy on the continent; it will also help develop future readers who would like to purchase the books we publish. By helping to make the children literate we are also developing a market for our books."



**Gbenro Adegbola - Managing
Director First Veritas Educational
Content Delivery Ltd.**

"It was for me, and I am sure many other participants, a very useful platform to exchange ideas, validating some things one is already doing and pointing out other directions in which we should consider moving in... It was refreshing learning about what others were doing in other countries and finding out that some problems are probably not unique to one's country!"



**Okechukwu Ofili – Founder
Okada Books**

"It was truly a moving event, that opened my eyes to different ideas and strategies to help my company OkadaBooks.com grow. Worth the 10 hours spent!"



Walter Bgoya

Chairman, International African Books Collective and Managing Director, Mkuki na Nyota Publishers

"IPA's selection of participants with great knowledge of the industry from the different regions of Africa; its encouragement of open, frank debate in a spirit of respect and camaraderie, provided rich content and rewarding experience. Cutting across age, gender, special interests and language difference, the one-day seminar covered a great deal more than one would expect in such a short time. I have participated in hundreds of seminars, workshops and conferences in my forty-six years in publishing. This was one of the best I have attended and thanks and congratulations are due to the organisers – IPA and Nigerian Publishers' Association who made it all happen."



Ama Dadson – Founder & CEO AkooBooks Audio

"I believe that digital is here in Africa to stay! A big challenge for start-up digital publishing companies like AkooBooks Audio and Okadabooks with our new ideas for the African content industry, is the need to make contacts with the established publishing industry to find partners and market our products. We did that effectively at IPA Lagos 2018 and I hope to strengthen the links made."



**John Asein - Executive Director
Reproduction Rights Society of
Nigeria (REPRONIG)**

"Being the first to be held in Africa, the IPA Regional Seminar in Lagos was a huge success. The diversity and quality of participation were impressive and enriching... This is a new dawn for the book industry in Africa."



Mohammad Hamed Radhi
Vice - Chairman, African Publishers' Network

"The conference has professionally discussed the impact of publishing and its contribution in developing the social and economic aspects in African countries. The team has excelled in organisation and provided a huge professional event that is on par with the International Publishers' Association' position and reputation."



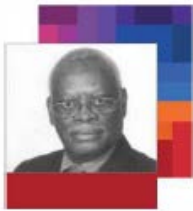
Samuel Kolawole
Managing Director/CEO - University Press Plc, Nigeria; President of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators, Nigeria; and Chairman of the African Publishers Network

"The opportunity to participate in the IPA Seminar in Lagos Nigeria is a wonderful opportunity for me and many African Publishers that participated. Not only did I benefit immensely from sharing information and ideas with colleagues across the continent of Africa, that IPA could organise a seminar of this magnitude on African soil with a focus on the African publishing industry has dismissed the impression that IPA has no interest in African Publishers."



Folu Agoi
President, PEN International, Nigerian Centre (PEN Nigeria)

"The event, the first of its kind in Africa, was, in a word, grand. It was very rich in content and presentation, as enlightening as it was glamorous. The seminar is bound to make a lasting impression on the participants in the event, and indeed every individual and organisation across the world that is connected to the book industry."



Otunba Olayinka Lawal-Solarin
Chairman & CEO, Literamed
Publications

The Seminar the IPA organized in Lagos was one of the best organized seminar I have attended lately that also addressed the topic 'Publishing for Sustainable Development, The Role of Publishers in Africa' appropriately.



Bibi Bakare-Yusuf
Co-Founder and Publishing Director,
Cassava Republic Press

"It was a full and intense day of so much goodness about the publishing industry. It was a good opportunity to learn from what people are doing in their different context to tackle shared problems and challenging. I really hope there'll be more of this kind of workshop on the continent."



Dr. Wale Okediran
Former President – The Nigerian
Authors Association

"I enjoyed the quality interventions of the Speakers and Contributors as well as the well-ordered and punctual sessions. I look forwards to more of such well organised events in the future."

