

# Opening speech

By

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Delivered at the conference *High Expectations, but Low Funding: How do poor museums meet their targets?*.  
Lusaka and Livingstone, Zambia July 28 - August 2, 2002.

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- YOUR EXCELLENCIES, THE AMBASSADOR OF NORWAY AND HIGH COMMISSIONERS
- DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVES FROM AFRICAN COUNTRIES
- REPRESENTED HERE
- THE CHAIRMAN AND SECRETARY-GENERAL OF SADCAMM
- THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AFRICOM
- THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR, PMDA
- THE NORAD REPRESENTATIVE
- THE CHAIRMAN AND EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, NATIONAL MUSEUMS BOARD OF ZAMBIA
- THE CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS
- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

IT IS MY GREAT HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE TO WARMLY WELCOME YOU ALL TO ZAMBIA AND TO LUSAKA IN PARTICULAR, ESPECIALLY TO THOSE OF YOU WHO MAY BE VISITING ZAMBIA FOR THE FIRST TIME. LOOKING THROUGH THE PARTICIPANT LIST, I REALIZE THAT YOUR CONFERENCE HAS DRAWN PARTICIPANTS FROM THE ENTIRE SADC REGION, EASTERN AFRICAN, AND FROM MANY COUNTRIES BEYOND THE AFRICAN CONTINENT. WE, THE PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA HAVE FOR THE PAST FIVE OR MORE CENTURIES OF OUR EXISTENCE DEVELOPED A VERY STRONG CULTURE OF EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH AND HOSPITALITY TO OUR GUESTS. YOU THE PARTICIPANTS TO THIS VERY IMPORTANT CONFERENCE ARE OUR SPECIAL GUEST, AND I WISH, THEREFORE, TO EXTEND OUR WARMEST WELCOME TO EACH ONE OF YOU PRESENT HERE.

MR CHAIRMAN, I AM GREATLY HONOURED TO BE ACCORDED THIS RARE OPPORTUNITY AND PRIVILEGE TO ADDRESS THIS CONFERENCE ON AFRICAN MUSEUMS, ESPECIALLY THAT IT COMES AT THE TIME WHEN AFRICA IS RESOLVING TO STRENGTHEN THE UNION AND UNITY OF THE AFRICAN STATES CULTURALLY, ECONOMICALLY, POLITICALLY, AND SOCIALLY. IT IS INDEED A CHALLENGING TIME WHEN THE WHOLE WORLD IS ALSO BRACING TO CONFRONT THE NEW INNOVATIONS. NEW ECONOMIC ORDER, NEW POLITICAL CHALLENGES AND A MORE HUMAN SOCIAL DISPOSITION.

MR CHAIRMAN, IN 1999 ZAMBIA HOSTED THE AFRICAN MUSEUMS CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, WHICH GAVE BIRTH TO THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF AFRICAN MUSEUMS (AFRICOM). NOW HEADQUARTERED IN NAIROBI, KENYA. I AM DELIGHTED, THEREFORE, TO STAND HERE TODAY TO OFFICIATE AT YET ANOTHER VERY IMPORTANT CONFERENCE ON FUNDING MUSEUMS IN AFRICAN AND DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE IN GENERAL.

WHILE THE ROLE OF MUSEUMS IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED, THIS RECOGNITION IS IN MOST COUNTRIES OF AFRICA NOT MARCHED WITH THE KIND OF RESOURCES ALLOCATED TO MUSEUMS DEVELOPMENT. MR CHAIRMAN, I AM VERY MUCH AWARE THAT MANY MUSEUMS IN AFRICA HAVE FOR DECADES BEEN POORLY FUNDED, IN SPITE OF BEING IN MANY CASES, IMPORTANT NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. THIS IS A COMMON PHENOMENON IN MOST PARTS OF AFRICA, A SITUATION WHICH RESULTS IN POOR EXHIBITIONS, POOR STORAGE AND CONSERVATION FACILITIES, POORLY ORGANIZED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, AND LACK OF CREDIBLE RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS. COOPERATING PARTNERS OR DONOR AGENCIES HAVE FOR ALONG TIME BEEN CRUCIAL IN SUPPORTING BOTH SHORT-TERM PROJECTS AND LONG TERM INVESTMENTS, BUT GENERALLY DO NOT FINANCE THE DAILY RUNNING OF THE MUSEUMS.

MR CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE MEANS USED TO FINANCE MUSEUMS IN AFRICA VARY WIDELY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STATUS GRANTED TO THESE INSTITUTIONS IN EACH SOCIETY. IN GENERAL TERMS, THESE RESOURCES ORIGINATE EITHER IN THE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SECTOR. PUBLIC

FUNDS, WHETHER ALLOCATIONS OR SUBSIDIES, CONSTITUTE THE MAIN ELEMENT OF THE BUDGETS OF PUBLIC MUSEUMS REGULATED BY STATUTES. THESE FUNDS, WHICH MAY ORIGINATE FROM NATIONAL, REGIONAL OR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, ARE GENERALLY CONSIDERED AS FAIRLY RELIABLE AND STEADY SOURCES OF SUPPORT. THERE ARE, NEVERTHELESS, CLOSELY TIED TO POLITICAL ECONOMIC ISSUES, WHICH IN MOST CASES HAS RESULTED IN A LOWER PRIORITY BEING ACCORDED TO MUSEUMS IN TERMS OF BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS.

DESPITE ALL THESE FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS, THE CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT SHOULD NOT BE SIDELINED, IGNORED OR TAKEN FOR GRANTED. THE CONTRIBUTION OF MUSEUMS TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC OR NON-ECONOMIC, NEEDS TO BE COMPLIMENTED BY GOVERNMENT. MUSEUMS MUST BE RECOGNIZED AND APPRECIATED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF A DYNAMIC PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT IN ALL COUNTRIES OF AFRICA. IT IS HIGH TIME WE STARTED TO IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP ALL THOSE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE WHOLE QUALITY OF AFRICAN LIFE. IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO TALK OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY OR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT FIRST APPRECIATING HUMANITY AND THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

WE MUST RECOGNIZE AND APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT TOURISM INDUSTRY IS NOW BECOMING A CRITICAL ENGINE OF AFRICA'S NATIONAL ECONOMIES, CONTRIBUTING CONSIDERABLY MORE INCOME THAN DO THE PRIMARY PRODUCTS OF FARMING OR MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY. CULTURAL TOURISM IS INCREASINGLY BECOMING ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL ASSETS FOR DELIVERING THE FUTURE ECONOMIC WELL BEING OF MOST PEOPLE OF AFRICA. IT IS NECESSARY, THEREFORE, THAT THE DIVERSITY AND QUALITY OF CULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS, INCLUDING MUSEUMS IN AFRICA, ARE DEVELOPED AS A MAJOR FACTOR IN ATTRACTING TOURISTS AND INCREASING REVENUE FROM TOURISM. BASICALLY, THERE IS NO SINGLE FORMULA THAT CAN BE ADVANCED AS THE MOST APPROPRIATE OR AS UNIVERSAL SOLUTION TO SUSTAINABLY DEVELOP ALL MUSEUMS OF AFRICA.

MR CHAIRMAN, I AM GLAD THAT AS AFRICAN MUSEUM PROFESSIONALS, YOU HAVE STARTED TO LOOK INSIDE YOUR INSTITUTIONS TO EVALUATE NOT ONLY YOUR STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND OPPORTUNITIES BUT ALSO THE FINANCIAL CAPACITIES AND EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR MUSEUMS IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF AFRICA. BECAUSE OF THE INCREASING FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES THAT MOST MUSEUMS OF AFRICA ARE PRESENTLY FACING, A REVIEW OF THEIR FUNDING POLICIES AND STRATEGIES AND THEIR POTENTIAL AS SELF-FINANCING INSTITUTIONS IS INDEED LONG OVERDUE. I CONGRATULATE YOU FOR THIS BOLD INITIATIVE AIMED AT REFOCUSING THE MISSIONS, VISIONS AND GOALS OF THE AFRICAN MUSEUMS IN THE AREAS OF PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING. IT IS MY HOPE THAT THIS CONFERENCE WILL CHART A CLEAR WAY FORWARD FOR MUSEUMS OF AFRICA TO FUNCTION MEANINGFULLY AND SUSTAIN THEIR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS EFFECTIVELY.

MR CHAIRMAN, ALLOW ME TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE NATIONAL MUSEUMS BOARD OF ZAMBIA, SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF MUSEUMS AND MONUMENTS (SADCAMM), INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF MUSEUMS OF ETHNOGRAPHY (ICME) FOR ICOM FOR HAVING WORKED TIRELESSLY OVER THE PAST MONTHS TO PUT TOGETHER STRATEGIES AND RESOURCES TO COMPLETE ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE LED TO THIS CONFERENCE TODAY. THIS IS NO MEAN ACHIEVEMENT. THEY CERTAINLY DESERVE OUR CONGRATULATIONS. FURTHER I WOULD REQUEST THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF MUSEUMS OF ETHNOGRAPHY TO CONTINUE TO WORK WITH AFRICAN MUSEUMS AND RENDER ALL THE NECESSARY SUPPORT TO HELP SUSTAIN THEIR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.

TO US IN ZAMBIA, THIS IS YET ANOTHER HISTORIC LANDMARK OCCASION FOR OUR MUSEUMS AND MY MINISTRY TO WITNESS AND PARTICIPATE IN A HIGH PROFILE CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS SURVIVAL STRATEGIES FOR MUSEUMS IN AFRICA. WE IN ZAMBIA HAVE AS OUR VISION FOR MUSEUMS, "THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIVE, EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE MUSEUMS THAT WILL ENHANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ZAMBIAN PEOPLE". I AM CONVINCED, MR CHAIRMAN, THAT EQUIPPED WITH THE ADEQUATE SKILLED MANPOWER, MATERIAL RESOURCES AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES, AFRICAN MUSEUMS CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS IN THE PRESERVATION AND PRESENTATION OF OUR HERITAGE.

I AM REMINDED HERE THAT RESOURCES FOR THIS CONFERENCE HAVE BEEN MOBILIZED FROM NORAD. TO THESE SPONSORS, I WISH TO EXTEND OUR SINCERE AND HEARTFELT GRATITUDE FOR THEIR SUPPORT. IT IS THROUGH THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND GOODWILL THAT THE DESIRED FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL RESOURCE BASE CAN BE CREATED TO SUSTAIN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AFRICAN HERITAGE PRESERVATION INSTITUTIONS. I WOULD FURTHER LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK, ON BEHALF OF THIS IMPORTANT GATHERING, ALL THOSE INSTITUTIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE CONFERENCE TO TAKE PLACE. IN PARTICULAR, I AM VERY GRATEFUL TO THE NATIONAL MUSEUMS BOARD OF ZAMBIA FOR MAKING THIS CONFERENCE A REALITY.

IT IS NOW MY HONOR AND PRIVILEGE TO DECLARE THIS CONFERENCE OFFICIALLY OPENED. I WISH YOU ALL VERY FRUITFUL AND PRODUCTIVE DELIBERATIONS.

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**ICME** - International Committee for Museums and Collections of Ethnography

<http://icme.icom.museum>

Updated by [webmaster](#), 20.02.03