



# PAN-AFRICAN WRITERS' ASSOCIATION QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

AUGUST-DECEMBER 2020



*Prof Wole Soyinka with the Secretary-General and team when he visited PAWA House.*

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## FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S DESK



**My primary focus and goal will be to re-energize PAWA and make it more relevant to the needs and aspirations of African writers.**



*Dr Wale Okediran, Secretary General*

I want to welcome our members, friends and supporters to the first edition of PAWA's Quarterly Newsletter which is one of the innovations of the new PAWA administration which commenced under my watch in August 2020.

Apart from being the mouthpiece of PAWA, the Newsletter will also assist in the promotion of African Literature.

I wish to thank the Founding fathers of PAWA including all the writers, late and alive who have contributed in no small measure to its existence and success so far.

In this regard, I pay particular homage to my predecessor and brother, the late Prof Atukwei Okai who was the foundation Secretary-General of the Association.

I worked with Prof Okai during his lifetime and learnt a lot from him. It is my hope to continue to add to the veritable foundation which he has laid.

My primary focus and goal will be to re-energize PAWA and make it more relevant to the needs and aspirations of African writers.

There is an urgent need to make every corner of the African continent feel PAWA's influence. To do this, it will be necessary to open Regional PAWA offices in the 5 regions of the continent with corresponding, Country officers. These officers will be established writers who may have to work as volunteers.

It is also important for us to spread PAWA activities and programs all over the continent. This way, more countries will benefit from PAWA and in return, will be ready to support the organization.

PAWA will continue to identify and celebrate notable African Writers including those in the Diaspora. In this regards, PAWA will like to resuscitate the annual Global African Writers Dialogue with a view of giving all Writers of African descent a worthy platform to showcase their works.

PAWA will also work with its member countries who are currently about 30 in number as well as all the organs of the African Union with a view to promoting Literature and Culture on the continent.

In the area of fundraising, PAWA is already reaching out to its Member Countries for their annual subscriptions as stipulated by the African Union.

We have also contacted notable captains of industry on the African continent for their support.

With God on our side and the support of all and sundry, it is our fervent wish and prayer for PAWA to soon reach the golden height where it rightly belongs.

**Dr Wale Okediran**  
Secretary-General

## -UPDATES-

### PAWA SIGNS PACT WITH LONGRICH/WORKS TO EMPOWER FEMALE WRITERS

Many female writers have benefitted from an empowerment project that is the result of a memorandum of understanding signed by PAWA and Women Organization of Resources, Knowledge and Skills (WORKS).

One of the beneficiaries, Lois Otse Adams from Nigeria gave her testimony thus: "I was one of the selected African female writers for the PAWA and Women Organization of Resources, Knowledge and Skills (WORKS) project. Through the project, I have been making some tidy income from the sale of I varieties of Longrich products and other cosmetics supplied to me. In addition, I was added to a well-coordinated platform that hosts other African female writers and this blew up my mind. I am sincerely thanking all stakeholders and assure you that the honour done to me will not be taken for granted as it has indeed given me the courage to do more for Africa as a writer.

9/03/2020

### SOYINKA COMMENDS PAWA BOSS AND TEAM



### OKEDIRAN VISITS TOGO

*..pledges to reach out to other Francophone Member Countries*



*A cross-section of the Togo writers.*

The SG had an interactive session with the Officials and members of the Togo Writers Association on possible areas of collaboration with PAWA. These collaborations which included literary seminars and workshops also included the need to use the leverage with the Togo Writers Association to reach out to other Francophone Member Countries that have been complaining of being sidelined from PAWA activities for a long time. PAWA also got the assurances of the President of the Togo Writers Association, Prof Koumealo Anate to assist the association in its request to collect the outstanding Country subvention from the Government of Togo. 11/30/2020

Prof Wole Soyinka visited PAWA House and commended the Secretary-General and his team for their good work.

Prof Wole Soyinka also encouraged the SG and his team to make PAWA a truly international body of writers in line with the vision of its founders.

9/25/2020

## -UPDATES-

### UNESCO PLEDGES SUPPORT FOR PAWA ACTIVITIES

During the meeting, the PAWA team which included the SG, Dr Wale Okediran, the Accountant, Mr Louis Mensah, the Programs Officer, Reine Fioklou and the Administrative Assistant Patricia Mensah was assured of the support of UNESCO in all of its activities.

The UNESCO Representative in Ghana, Mr Abdourahamane Diallo and the National Program Officer, Mr Carl Ampah promised to support PAWA in all its activities. 9/03/2020



### PAWA SCRIBE, TOGO WRITERS VISIT TOGOLESE MINISTER

The SG, during his meeting with the Hon. Minister of Culture, expressed the desire of PAWA to work closely with the Togo Writers Association to promote Arts and Culture in the country. He then solicited for the Minister's support in the payment of Togo's subvention to PAWA. In his response, the Hon Minister promised the support and cooperation of the government of Togo to PAWA. 12/01/2020



### NIGERIAN AUTHORS PLEDGE SUPPORT FOR PAWA

At the ANA Conference, the SG delivered a report of his activities at PAWA and solicited the support of ANA in PAWA affairs. He also delivered a Goodwill Message on behalf of the Ghana Writers Association at the Conference. In his response, the ANA President, Mr Camillus Ude commended the SG for the steps he had taken since his assumption of office in PAWA. He promised the support of ANA towards the success of PAWA. 12/04/2020



### PAWA, UNPFA EXPLORE AREAS OF COLLABORATION

PAWA paid a courtesy visit to the United Nations Population Fund Office in Accra on the 17th of December 2020. The very cordial meeting centred on the possible areas of collaboration between PAWA and the UNPFA such as the writing of Literature books on some aspects of UNPFA activities such as family planning, gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy, among others which will make these subjects more interesting and accessible to young readers.



## -NEWS-

### ENSURE THAT AFRICAN WRITERS CONTINUE TO TELL OUR STORIES, NIGERIA'S CULTURE MINISTER CHARGES PAWA



*PAWA SG, Dr Wale Okediran (l) addressing the Minister, Alhaji Lai Mohammed (right).*

During the meeting, the Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, called on the new Secretary-General of the Pan-African Writers' Association (PAWA), Dr Wale Okediran, to strive to revive the golden age of African writers, who actively worked for the unity, development and decolonization of Africa.

The Minister said that the main challenge that confronted African writers in the pre-decolonization era was the struggle for political independence. He, however, said today's crop of African writers have to contend with economic challenges and the inculcation, in the youth, of pride in African culture.

"I will urge Dr Okediran to do his best in his new position to revive that golden age of African writers, that age where African writers collaborated with our politicians to attain independence.

The challenge before our writers today is not about political independence but it is about how we take Africa out of the morass of despair and how we take Africa out of the economic challenges we are facing.

It is about how we instil in our young one's pride in their culture, pride in their tradition and how we use technology to promote our rich culture and traditions," Alhaji Mohammed said.

The Minister, who paid tribute to African literary giants such as Chinua Achebe, Ayi Kwei Armah, Wole Soyinka and Ngugi Wa Thiang'o among others, said they did

not only serve as role models but were also beacons of hope for the continent.

"I want to appeal to Dr Okediran to please use his exalted office to ensure that African writers continue to tell our stories in the best African tradition because if they don't do it, others will do it in a manner that will not be pleasant to us," Alhaji Mohammed said. He, therefore, urged the Secretary-General of PAWA to encourage African writers to continue to tell the African story in order to guard against the distortion of facts by foreign writers.

He said African culture and traditions provide enough materials for any writer to explore and advised PAWA to work with the private sector to ensure that some of the books written by African authors are adapted into films in order to reach out to the young population.

In his remarks, Dr Okediran said the African Union had since recognized the power of literature and it's using it effectively to promote unity on the continent.

He said PAWA recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with some international organizations to leverage literature for the promotion of African cultures.

Dr Okediran appealed to the Federal Government to support the Accra-based PAWA through the payment of its yearly subvention as approved by the African Union.

## -OTHER NEWS-

1. The Secretary-General, Dr Wale Okediran arrived at the PAWA Secretariat. The first physical staff meeting took place.
2. The Secretary-General visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
3. The Secretary-General and staff met with the Estate Department of the Ministry Of Foreign Affairs to discuss issues relating to the PAWA secretariat at Roman Ridge.
4. The Director of African Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited PAWA House.
5. The Secretary-General participated in the UN/APNET virtual meeting on SDG African books.
6. Courtesy visit by the PAWA Delegation to the Nigerian High Commission.
7. Courtesy visit was paid to the Denmark Ambassador. During the discussion, the Ambassador was very positive about PAWA's contribution to literature in Africa and assured to assist PAWA with the needed support for its subsequent activities most especially with the production of audiobooks.



8. Zoom meeting with the Association for African Universities Of Accra/Ghana. NB: memorandum of understanding to be developed and signed.
9. The Secretary-General was on the Spirit of Nigeria Radio to discuss PAWA activities in the continent.
10. The Secretary-General attended a virtual funeral service for the late David Mongoshi, former President of the Zimbabwe Writers Association.
11. The Secretary-General paid a courtesy visit to the library of Africa and Africans in diaspora in Accra both agreed to collaborate with pawa in organizing a literary conference.
12. The SG delivered a keynote address at the celebration of Nigeria's Independence at an event organized by the association of Nigerian and Ghanaian associations.
12. PAWA Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Centre for Intellectual

Renewable (CIR) for the publication of an anthology of short stories for Africa and the diaspora titled "Voices That Sing Behind The Veil". This is a publication in English and French and a multi-thematic work.

13. Courtesy visit to the Russian Embassy, where the Ambassador assured us of collaboration in the areas of literary conferences and exchange programs.



14. The Secretary-General delivered a keynote address at the "Femrite" virtual literary week under the title "Literary Art and the Unfolding World".
15. Courtesy visit to the Director of the Dubois Centre, Accra, Ghana.
16. The Secretary-General participated at the "Pa-gya" literary festival in Accra where he was part of a panel and also read from his new book titled "Madagali".
17. Virtual session for Africans who write in French. The writers were from five (5) different countries.
18. Courtesy visit to the Ministry Of Culture and Tourism by the PAWA management team; issues concerning PAWA were extensively discussed at the meeting.
19. Courtesy visit to the Italian Embassy where the Ambassador assured us of working with PAWA in organizing literary workshops and conferences.



## -OTHER NEWS-



27. Courtesy visit to the family of the late former Ghanaian President, Jerry John Rawlings in the company of members of the Ghana Writers and Ghana Publishers Association during which a condolence register was signed.

20. The Secretary-General delivered a keynote address at the “Ghana Read” event in Accra, Ghana.

21. New Program Officer, Reine Fioklou employed to manage PAWA’s programs, it and translations works.

22. The African Writers Day celebrations.

23. Virtual meeting with the management of the Essex Book Fair to discuss the digital collaboration concerning the British Council grant.

24. The Secretary-General gave a keynote lecture at the Ghana Publishers Association annual general meeting titled "Covid-19: Impact on the Ghanaian Publishing Industry: Challenges and Opportunities." The meeting was held at the Accra City Hotel.

28. The Secretary-General attended the presentation of Prof. Wole Soyinka’s new book titled *Chronicles of the Happiest People on Earth* in Ibadan, Nigeria.



29. The Nobel Laureate, Prof Wole Soyinka with the Okai Family during his visit to Ghana in 2020



25. The Secretary-General participated in the virtual literary conference between PAWA and the Lagos Book and Arts Festival (LABAF) on the theme: Writers And Freedom Of Expression In Africa.



26. The burial of Mr Paul Mensah, the father-in-law of Mr Louis Mensah, PAWA’s accountant in Asempanaye-Awoso, Ghana.



## -OTHER NEWS-



### OKEDIRAN WELCOMES NIGERIA'S VICE PRESIDENT

The Secretary-General was on the team that welcomed the Nigerian Vice President, Prof Yemi Osinbajo to Ghana. President was at the Nigerian High Commission Office to welcome the Vice President to Ghana.



### PAWA RECEIVES VISITING STUDENTS

A delegation from the National Institute for Security Studies, Abuja, Nigeria, visited PAWA as part of their West African tour. The SG, after a welcome address, delivered a Lecture on Nigeria / Ghana relations. In their responses, the delegates congratulated PAWA for its laudable objectives and activities.



### SG MEETS SPEAKER OF NIGERIAN PARLIAMENT

The Secretary-General was part of the team that welcomed the Speaker of the Nigerian Parliament, Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila to Ghana.

The SG, who was the Speaker's colleague during his time as a Member of the Nigerian House of Representatives accompanied the Speaker and his team on his visit to the Speaker of the Ghanaian Parliament.

# SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS TO THE HARSH ECONOMY CREATED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

EXCERPTS OF A KEYNOTE ADDRESS TO FEMRITE, UGANDA BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE THEME "LITERARY ARTS AND THE UNFOLDING WORLD"

The suggested solutions to the harsh economy created by the COVID-19 Pandemic are the following:

## 1. Financial Empowerment For Writers

It was in realization of the financial difficulties being experienced by many African writers that prompted the Pan African Writers Association (PAWA) to recently commence an Empowerment Project for African Female Writers. The project which will provide some financial support for interested writers when fully operational is believed will assist the writers in augmenting their incomes from writing.

## 2. Online Publishing

Digitalization has led to profound changes in the market for authors' works, which have also had an impact on their earnings.

## 3. Virtual Meetings And Arts Events

Virtual Literary activities have now become the vogue in beating the physical distancing that was brought about by the global pandemic. Although the practice is not as conducive as physical meetings, it has proven to be cheaper and quite appropriate for many Literary activities. In view of the uncertainty in the duration of the Pandemic, the practice may therefore remain with us for a long time.

## 4. The Social Media

Social media has become increasingly prevalent in the lives of authors and is viewed as

**It will be advisable if literary arts organizations can start reviewing their budgets in order to accommodate the likelihood of a reduction in their finances.**

particularly important for marketing purposes. Participation in social networks is now seen as crucial for authors wanting to make useful contacts and develop opportunities.

## 5. Improved Relationships With Publishers

There is the need for a better relationship between Writers and Publishers in order to mutually explore the right avenues with which to tackle the poor economic situation brought about by the Covid 19 Pandemic.6. Legislations And Policies While the boom in online services is good for writers, the development needs strong copyright laws that will ensure adequate and timely remunerations for the authors. Also important are legislations for endowments for artists. While many developed countries have provisions for endowments for their artists, the same is lacking in many developing countries and should not be so.

## 7. Improvement In The Reading Culture

The previously poor reading culture in many African countries has been worsened by the

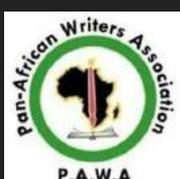
poverty that came with the COVID 19 pandemic. This poor reading culture has been identified as an issue that affects the ability of authors to make a living in their country of origin. As long as the reading culture is low, the readership will also be low. It therefore very important for this pervasive problem to be tackled if we want our writers to make a decent living from their writing.

## 8. Financing For Literary Arts

With the widespread economic down turn brought about by the global pandemic, financing for literary arts by donors, advertisers and government agencies, funding for the literary arts may also experience a decline. In view of this, it will be advisable if literary arts organizations can start reviewing their budgets in order to accommodate the likelihood of a reduction in their finances.

## 9. Collaborations

In the face of impending dwindling finances for literary activities, it will be a good idea for literary organizations to collaborate in executing their various projects. Apart from these kinds of collaborations assisting them to learn from each other, the organizations can also use the joint effort to pull resources together to achieve more. PAWA is already collaborating with some arts organizations and is willing to do more.



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