



AFRICA FORUM OF TEACHING REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

(Le Forum d' Afrique d'Enseigner Régulateur Autorités)

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REPORT

Of the

1st AFTRA Teaching and Learning in Africa Conference
MAY 23, 2012 *Collocated with the*



**7TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ICT FOR
DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

MAY 23 – 25, 2012 LE PALAIS DES CONGRÈS DE COTONOU
COTONOU, BENIN

1. INTRODUCTION

The 1st AFTRA Teaching and Learning in Africa Conference (**ATLIAC**) was approved by AFTRA at its 2nd Roundtable held July 8-10, 2011 at the Southern Sun, North Beach Hotel, Durban, South Africa. In the Roundtable, AFTRA also put in place a Steering Committee to take charge of its affairs including the organisation of the ATLIAC. The AFTRA Steering Committee comprised of the following:

- *Maphila Lucas – Chair of South African Council for Educators and Chair of AFTRA, Centurion, Pretoria, South Africa*
- *Rej Brijraj – Chief Executive Officer, South African Council for Educators, Centurion, Pretoria, South Africa*
- *Professor Addison Mark Wokocha – Registrar/Chief Executive, Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, Abuja*
- *Dr. Steve Nwokeocha, Director of Operations, Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, Abuja*
- *Dr. John Geoffrey Mbabazi, Permanent Secretary, Education Service Commission, Kampala, Uganda*
- *Mrs. Beatrice Kabwa, Assistant Commissioner, Education Service Commission, Kampala, Uganda,*
- *Kutol Kikpogei, Kenya Teaching Service Commission, Nairobi, Kenya*
- *Hilary Lukhafwa, Kenya Teaching Service Commission, Nairobi, Kenya*

The **ATLIAC** was intended to provide opportunities for exchange of best practices and interaction between AFTRA (the regulators of the teaching profession in Africa) and members of the global community particularly the academia,

Information and Communication Technology experts, employers of teachers, governments, international development partners, non-governmental organisations, and the general citizens.

AFTRA further took cognisance of the unparalleled achievements of a German Company, named International Conferences, Workshops and Exhibitions (ICWE) GmbH which, over the years, has successfully organised the largest intellectual summit in Africa called *e-Learning Africa Conference* or *e-LA* for short. Therefore, AFTRA signed a contract to have ICWE as a Technical Partner for the organisation of the 1st ATLIAC and also to co-locate the 1st ATLIAC with the 7th e-LA scheduled to hold May 23-25, 2012 at the Le Palais Des Congress (International Convention Centre) at Cotonou, the Republic of Benin. The 1st ATLIAC was fixed for May 23, 2012.

The theme of the 1st ATLIAC was **“Repositioning Teaching and Learning in Africa for Global Competitiveness”** while the sub-themes were:

- ✚ A comparison of Teaching and Learning in Africa and other parts of the world based on selected indicators.
- ✚ Best Practices in Teacher Education in Africa and Globally
- ✚ Quality Assurance Mechanisms in Teacher Education
- ✚ Strategies for the Internationalisation of the Teaching Profession in Africa – Teacher Recognition, Registration, Licensing, Discipline, Continuing Professional Development, etc.
- ✚ Current statutes, structures and processes for the regulation of the Teaching Profession in the various countries of Africa and way forward.
- ✚ Integration of information and communication technology in teaching and learning in Africa
- ✚ Creating and sustaining learner-friendly and result-oriented classrooms in Africa
- ✚ Measures of Learning Achievement
- ✚ Other related issues.

2. PREPARATIONS

The legal procedures leading to the contractual agreement between AFTRA and ICWE and other organisational logistics were over by February 2012, leaving only about three months to publicize the conference throughout Africa and to the rest of the world. Three months were considered too short to successfully organise a world-class international conference, however, the AFTRA Steering Committee decided to give the conference a trial. Consequently, the AFTRA Headquarters at the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), the AFTRA Chair at the South African Council for Educators (SACE), ICWE and other members of the AFTRA Steering Committee worked day and night to make the conference a reality.

As part of the preparations, the AFTRA Steering Committee was hosted by SACE March 19-20, 2012 at the Garden Court Hotel, Isando, Kempton Park, South Africa to take final decisions on the organisation of the conference. Also, a team from the AFTRA Headquarters headed by the TRCN Registrar/Chief Executive, Professor Addison Mark Wokocha and another team from ICWE Germany led by the Managing Director, Rebecca Stromeyer from April 10 to 12, 2012 visited Cotonou for a preliminary inspection of the conference facilities and to make contact with all key stakeholders in the Republic of Benin in order to guarantee the success of

the conference. Yet again, the TRCN Registrar/Chief Executive, Professor Wokocha and his team visited Cotonou a second time on May 7th 2012 for further logistical arrangements.

The AFTRA Headquarters used courier services to send call for papers and request for participation to most of the Ministers of Education, Education agencies, universities and other teacher education institutions, development partners, ICT companies and other stakeholders in Africa. The AFTRA Headquarters further liaised with ICWE to despatch the electronic version of the call for papers and request for participation to all the organisations whose addresses are in the database of AFTRA and ICWE. The Conference was also advertised on the AFTRA website (www.trcn.gov.ng/aftra) and ICWE websites (www.icwe.net; www.elearning-africa.com).

The feedback received from the persons and organisations all over Africa and beyond was simply overwhelming. Despite the very short time given for submission of papers, more than one hundred and fifty (150) papers were received from authors. After assessment, ninety seven (97) were accepted, and the full papers were edited and published as **1ST AFTRA Teaching and Learning in Africa Conference Proceedings Volumes 1 and 2**. The Conference proceedings were edited by Magope Lucas Maphila, Rej Brijraj, Addison Mark Wokocha and Steve Nwokeocha, and published by SACE.

Following the unprecedented response from a large number of intending participants, AFTRA saw the need to secure another venue for the Conference in addition to the original venue which was the Palais Des Congress, Cotonou. Consequently, AFTRA booked the Benin Marina Hotel (Cotonou's most prestigious five star hotel) and paid for luxury buses that would shuttle between the two venues to move participants.

3. PATRONS OF AFTRA CONFERENCE

With written requests from AFTRA and later preliminary visit to the Republic of Benin by AFTRA team led by TRCN Professor Addison Mark Wokocha, AFTRA received the full support of the following Ministers as Patrons of the AFTRA conference:

- **Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Republic of Benin**
(*Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique*)
- **Minister of Secondary, the Technique Professional Formation, the Reconversion and the Youngs Insertion, Republic of Benin**
(*Secondaire de la Formation Technique et Professionnelle de la Reconversion et de l'Insertion des Jeunes*)
- **Minister of Maternal and Primary Education, Republic of Benin**
(*Ministère de l'Enseignement Maternal et de la Primary*)
- **Minister of Communication and Information and Communication Technology, Republic of Benin**
(*Ministère de la Communication et des Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication*).

4. THE OPENING CEREMONY OF AFTRA CONFERENCE

With excellent logistical arrangement concluded, the conference took place as scheduled and recorded success that was far beyond the imagination of both

AFTRA and participants. While the registration of participants began a day earlier (May 22, 2012), the Opening Ceremony of the conference held during the morning hours of May 23, 2012. The key speakers at the Ceremony were:

- *Magope Lucas Maphila, AFTRA Chair and Chair of SACE represented by John Jeftha, the SACE Chair of International Committee;*
- *Rej Brijraj, SACE Chief Executive Officer;*
- *Professor Addison Mark Wokocha, AFTRA Secretary and TRCN Registrar/Chief Executive;*
- *Dr. Steve Nwokeocha, AFTRA Director of Operations and TRCN Director of Professional Operations;*
- *Ms. Tsedi Dipholo, AFTRA Co-Director of Operations and SACE Chief Operations Officer;*
- *Rebecca Stromeyer, ICWE Germany Managing Director;*
- *Professor Francois Adebayo Abiola, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Republic of Benin, represented by the Ministry's Director General;*
- *Gary Fluitt, Executive Director, Certiport, United States of America;*
- *And a host of others.*

The Conference was declared open by the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Republic of Benin. Both registration of participants and the Opening Ceremony took place at the Palais Des Congres, Cotonou.

5. AFTRA SYNDICATE SESSIONS

After the Opening Ceremony, syndicate sessions began. One syndicate session took place at the Palais Des Congress while five other syndicate groups held simultaneously at the Benin Marina Hotel. During the conference, many more speakers who could not reach AFTRA before the conference arrived and further 28 speakers were cleared to present papers to be published as Volume 3 of the AFTRA Conference Proceedings.

6. AFTRA CLOSING CEREMONY

The Closing Ceremony of the AFTRA conference held May 23, 2012 at the Palais Des Congress, Cotonou between 17.00 and 17.30 hours with a valedictory speech by SACE Chief Executive Officer, Rej Briraj. The Registrar/Chief Executive of Nigeria's National Business and Technical Examinations Board, Dr Aworanti, spoke on behalf of participants. He described the conference as a huge success stated that the success eloquently confirmed the readiness of AFTRA to make indelible mark on the educational landscape of Africa. He was joined in the appreciation by the Director General of Nigeria's National Teachers Institute, Dr. Aminu Ladan. Many other participants expressed their joy for the exposure, the great ideas exchanged and the hope that AFTRA would sustain the conference.

At the close of the AFTRA Conference, a total of 120 papers were delivered by speakers from all over Africa, and other parts of the world including the United States of America. The stage was therefore set for the e-Learning Africa Conference to begin with an opening ceremony at 18.00 hours on same May 23, 2012 and at the Palais Des Congres, Cotonou.

7. OTHER CO-LOCATED CONFERENCES

On May 23, 2012, several other conferences organised by ICWE held at different parts of the Palais Des Congress, thereby providing AFTRA participants opportunities to meet and interact with hundreds of other participants from all over the world. This was one of the main reasons for the co-location of AFTRA conference with the e-LA, i.e. to give participants opportunity to benefit from various events and personalities of diverse backgrounds.

8. OPENING CEREMONY OF E-LEARNING AFRICA CONFERENCE

The e-LA was the climax of all the conferences and held May 24th and 25th 2012 at the Palais Des Congres. The Opening Ceremony of the e-LA took place on May 23, 2012 immediately after the closing ceremony of the AFTRA conference. Therefore, the AFTRA participants now joined the e-LA. The e-LA Opening Ceremony was great entertainment evening with the very best of cultural dances from the Republic of Benin. This was capped with speeches and keynote papers presented by renowned international scholars and conference organisers. The Ceremony was declared open by the President of the Republic of Benin, His Excellency Dr Boni Thomas Yayi, represented by the Vice President and several Ministers.

9. AFTRA STEERING COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING

May 23, 2012 was closed by a special meeting of AFTRA Steering Committee held at the Benin Marina Hotel, Cotonou starting 21.00 hours. The meeting was chaired by SACE Chief Executive, Rej Briraj and attended by other AFTRA Executive Officials and Teachers Unions, most prominently, the Tanzania Teachers Union led by its Deputy General Secretary, Ezekiah T. Oluoch. A key outcome of the meeting was the endorsement of the request by the Tanzania Teachers Union to host the 3rd AFTRA Roundtable. The meeting therefore charged the AFTRA Headquarters (TRCN) to liaise with AFTRA Chair (SACE) and the Tanzania Teachers Union to organise the Roundtable for 2012. The meeting also underscored the need for every African country to have its Teaching Council, Ministry of Education or Teaching Service Commission, as the case may be, as member of AFTRA and to support AFTRA in the task of turning around the Teaching profession and Education in Africa.

10. THE MAY 24-25, 2012 E-LEARNING AFRICA CONFERENCE

May 24-25, 2012 featured intellectual activities of enormous proportions with about two thousand (2,000) participants from all over Africa, America, Europe Asia and other parts of the world. At this point, AFTRA participants fully integrated with e-LA and the leaders of AFTRA equally played key roles in the success of the e-LA. For instance, the SACE Chief Executive, Rej Brijraj and TRCN Registrar/Chief Executive, Professor Addison Mark Wokocho featured as speakers at the e-LA. The TRCN Director of Professional Operations, Dr Steve Nwokeocha equally chaired an e-LA session.

The evening of May 24, 2012 saw an awesome carnival that brought all participants in a merry-making mood, to be entertained, to interact, dine and wine. The Republic of Benin also seized the opportunity to showcase the very best of its rich cultural heritage.

The final day (May 25, 2012 featured further plenary and syndicate sessions, tours and a very impressive closing ceremony during which Namibia was announced to be the host of 2013 e-LA.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The conference made the following key recommendations among others, that:

- The AFTRA Conference should hold annually and strengthened to be one of the best in Africa.
- Registration for subsequent AFTRA conference should be direct via AFTRA website to avoid confusions and delays experienced during registration using e-Learning Africa Conference and ICWE websites.
- The preparation for the 2013 AFTRA Conference should start early to allow for widest circulation of the information and massive attendance by participants.
- AFTRA countries should support AFTRA efforts to internationalise the teaching profession in Africa – that basically Africa countries without teaching councils should ensure that their Ministry of Education and Teaching Service Commissions effectively represent them in AFTRA.
- Teachers unions, though not professional regulatory authorities are the closest allies of AFTRA and are encouraged to attend AFTRA Roundtable on observer status.
- The 2012 AFTRA Roundtable shall hold in Tanzania under the auspices of the Tanzania Teachers Union.

In conclusion, the 1st AFTRA Teaching and Learning in Africa Conference was a great success. Since the end of the conference, several individuals and organisations have sent solidarity messages to AFTRA through post, email and telephone praising the doggedness of AFTRA and encouraging it keep up the lofty ideals and conference.

In fact, a letter has been received by AFTRA from a group in Nigeria that has even volunteered to convene a national/international network of AFTRA Conference enthusiasts so as to project the goals of the conference in particular and AFTRA in general. Conclusively, the stage is set for AFTRA to move on now to plan for the 2nd AFTRA Teaching and Learning in Africa Conference.



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