

# The Future of Indigenous Publishing in Africa

## A Seminar Report

By Wendy Davies

African publishers are not just in business. They are part of the process of change.

*Talent Nyathi*

### Introduction

In April 1984, a seminar on 'The Development of Autonomous Publishing Capacity in Africa', organised by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, was held in Arusha, Tanzania. At this, both ideological and practical issues were analysed. Seminar participants emphasised that indigenous authorship and publishing were a cultural and educational imperative for the continent, and a number of proposals were made for strengthening autonomous African publishing. A selection of the papers presented at the seminar was published in the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation's journal, *Development Dialogue*, 1984:2.

Over the next several years, many of the recommendations made at the seminar were translated into action, including the establishment of a loan guarantee scheme for publishers, piloted in Kenya and administered by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (DHF).

After more than a decade of both progress and continuing problems the need for a new analysis of the issues facing African publishers emerged very clearly in the ongoing dialogue between publishers and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation. The outcome was a second Arusha seminar, held in March 1996, and entitled 'The Future of Indigenous Publishing in Africa'.

The 1996 seminar, given the short name 'Arusha II', gathered 30 participants from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Sweden, Canada and the UK, including publishers, writers, librarians, academics, bankers, and representatives from Northern donor and support organisations (see list of participants at the end of the Summary Conclusions, p. 96. It was directed by Walter Bgoya (Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, Dar es Salaam), Henry Chakava (East African Educational Publishers) and Per Gedin (Gedins Förlag, Sweden), all of whom had played key roles in the 1984 seminar.

On the third afternoon, seminar participants had the privilege of being addressed by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, His Excellency Benjamin William Mkapa, followed by an exchange of ideas and concerns with the President.

Three papers provided the main framework for discussion: The Develop-

ment and Future of Indigenous Publishing in Africa: 12 Years after Arusha I (Walter Bgoya); Book Marketing and Distribution: The Achilles Heel of African Publishing (Henry Chakava); and A Real Cultural Revolution (Per Gedin), on technological developments. The marketing and distribution theme was further explored through case studies on publishing and the book trade in Kenya, and the African Books Collective; and the issue of finance through case studies on the Children's Book Project in Tanzania, the DHF loan guarantee programme in Kenya, and joint ventures in publishing. The relationship between government and indigenous publishing, which received special attention during the visit of President Mkapa, was a recurrent theme throughout the seminar.

All sessions were held in plenary, in an informal and participative ambience. In the tradition of Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation seminars, participants were encouraged from the outset to intervene at any point during the presentation of papers and case studies.

### **Developments in Indigenous Publishing since 1984**

In a wide-ranging presentation of developments in indigenous African publishing since 1984 and future challenges to the industry, Walter Bgoya addressed two fundamental questions: has an autonomous publishing capacity in Africa been enhanced or not in the 12 years since Arusha I, and what can and should now be done to make African publishing both viable commercially and responsive to Africa's needs as the 21st century approaches?

#### *The situation in 1984*

In 1984, the publishing field in Africa was dominated by transnational publishing corporations and by a number of state publishing houses. African writers tended to look to a Western rather than an African readership, educational textbooks produced externally were often highly inappropriate, and publishing in indigenous languages was neglected. The greatest obstacle to the development of autonomous publishing was a lack of investment and working capital.

#### *Achievements*

Since 1984, a significant number of African entrepreneurs have entered the publishing field. (Reasons for this include the departure of many transnational publishing companies as a result of the economic crisis of the 1970s and 1980s, usually leaving behind senior personnel, and the collapse of much state publishing.) Precise statistics on numbers of publishing houses are not available, but at least 40 companies came into existence between 1984 and 1993. This would appear to be a conservative estimate in the light

of information from Aigboje Higo that 40 new companies have been formed between 1984 and 1996 in Nigeria alone and from Gacheche Waruingi that 12 have emerged in Kenya over the same period. There has also been a qualitative improvement in the professional operations of African publishers with evidence of enhanced publishing skills and business acumen as a result of training and experience.

The African Publishers' Network (APNET), established in 1992, is beginning to play an important role in strengthening existing national publishers' associations (NPAs) and assisting the formation of new NPAs. It has allocated substantial resources to the training of trainers in various publishing functions and to the establishment of an African Publishing Institute which will assume overall responsibility for training programmes in future. APNET's journal, the *African Publishing Review*, gives information on new publications, book fairs and developments in publishing, and is an important vehicle for the exchange of ideas. Hans Zell, publisher of *African Book Publishing Record*, has donated to APNET his archive of materials on African publishing built up over more than three decades. This is to be housed in a new African Publishing Resource Centre in Harare and will be an invaluable source of information to researchers.

Several other developments have increased sales outlets, improved communication and helped to raise the profile of African publishing, regionally and internationally. Prominent among these have been the growth of book fairs, in particular the Zimbabwe International Book Fair; the establishment of the African Books Collective, promoting sales in the UK and North America; and the formation of the Bellagio Publishing Network, focusing on communication between donors and publishers. Initiatives such as the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation's Loan Guarantee Programme in Kenya and the Children's Book Project in Tanzania have also made an impact at the national level.

### *Constraints*

Despite these considerable achievements the situation of African publishing remains precarious and difficult. Many publishing houses have withered and died, and only a very few can be said to be on a reasonably secure footing.

The enormous economic problems bedeviling the African continent have resulted in an overall decline in living standards and a widening gap between a small elite and the mass of the people. Structural adjustment programmes adopted by African governments in line with IMF/World Bank conditions for credit have led to the devaluation of currencies, reduction of

expenditure on social services including education, and high interest rates. Among the consequences have been impossibly high prices for the requirements of the publishing and printing industries, unaffordable credit, plummeting production and high book prices, and drastic cuts in purchases by libraries and other institutions. The deterioration in educational provision—infrastructure, adequately trained teachers and availability of textbooks—has inevitably meant declining literacy and falling educational standards.

In the absence of measures to strengthen the capacities of small enterprises, the ‘liberalisation’ of economies and World Bank insistence on international competitive bidding place African publishing houses at a severe disadvantage. World Bank interventions in education, specifically in the provision of textbooks, have undoubtedly helped foreign publishers to procure contracts, while indigenous publishers have been given only token assistance through the single measure of a 15 per cent preference above the lowest foreign bidder in tenders for contracts. A visit to Washington by an APNET delegation in 1993 to argue for active World Bank support to indigenous publishing produced no change in Bank policy.

Participants held varying views on the question of the impact of World Bank and donor organisation credit schemes for book-buying on the rise in the volume of imports. Victor Nwankwo noted that Nigeria’s book imports had dropped, largely as a result of high UK prices, and that production in his publishing company (Fourth Dimension) had risen. Walter Bgoya, on the other hand, provided statistical evidence of sharply rising book exports from the UK to Tanzania between 1989 and 1994.

The publishing industry and book trade also suffer from internal weaknesses. Although some publishers and some—but fewer still—booksellers have gained in professional expertise in the course of the last 12 years, many are still inexperienced and unbusinesslike. Clearly, external and internal constraints are closely related. In particular, as long as African publishers are underfinanced they lack the sufficient means to train and retain high-calibre staff.

#### *The future of publishing in Africa*

In Walter Bgoya’s view, three scenarios for the future of publishing in Africa may be envisaged: one, African publishing playing an insignificant role, with the source of books remaining largely external and indigenous publishers acting as intermediaries between the ‘European’ publisher and the African book market; two, a long period of trial and error in which African publishing becomes moderately successful; and three, recognition of the

strategic importance of publishing and special support to enable it to play its full role in the overall development of the continent.

For publishing truly to become a strategic industry, Walter Bgoya argued that a number of issues require urgent attention. Among these are national book policy development, language policy and new initiatives to secure adequate finance for publishing. The debate on these issues and on marketing, distribution and technological challenges is summarised in the next section.

## **Key Issues and Debates**

### *Publishing as a strategic industry*

High investment in human capital is essential to any viable development strategy, as has been clearly demonstrated by the Southeast Asian ‘miracle’. Walter Bgoya argued that East Asian governments have been distinctly more interventionist than is normally conceded by the advocates of an unfettered free market. They have adopted effective education policies, generating a substantial increase in labour force skills, and have systematically fostered development through such means as targeted and subsidised credit to selected industries.

Indigenous publishing in Africa requires the support of governments, above all because it is vital to the rehabilitation of education. The dearth of suitable teaching materials, especially books, is acknowledged to be one of two overriding causes of declining educational standards (the other being the shortage of qualified teachers). While book provision from external sources can play a useful role in the short term, providing it is demand-driven, there is no substitute for authentic, relevant book development and production by indigenous publishers who know the requirements of their educational and cultural environment. At present, World Bank strategies for increasing book provision work strongly in favour of transnational companies, thus making the position of indigenous publishers even more precarious.

Seminar participants firmly endorsed Walter Bgoya’s contention that publishing should be recognised as a strategic industry by African governments and prioritised for support. Related activities such as book distribution and the development of libraries should similarly be accorded strategic industry status.

We are constantly told by governments that agriculture is the backbone of African economies, although agriculture is in fact extremely weak. I don’t know whether publishing is the collar bone or which bone it is, but we need to find a way of persuading governments to take us seriously.

*Walter Bgoya*

Participants held varying views about what this support might or should be expected to mean in practical terms. Aigboje Higo suggested that governments should make cheap credit available to publishers, as they do to farmers for the purchase of seeds or machinery. Theophilus Mlaki felt it was unrealistic to anticipate direct government funding for publishing—a position later articulated by the President of Tanzania, H. E. Benjamin William Mkapa. Several participants argued that governments should be persuaded to assist publishers in their efforts to obtain concessionary credit from other sources, in particular the World Bank and regional development banks.

Gacheche Waruingi commented that some governments are fully aware of the strategic importance of publishing, to the extent of being reluctant to share it with anyone else, and Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba said that calling for government support for the free publishing industry could be asking some regimes to ‘commit suicide’.

The fact that some kinds of books and publishing can be seen as a threat by government was graphically illustrated by Talent Nyathi in her account of publishing for community mobilisation and change in Zimbabwe. Initially under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, the project involved community participation in the production of books on issues such as gender and community development, democracy, elections and leadership. The views expressed were found too radical and even ‘dangerous’, donor support was withdrawn, the book team intimidated by government officials, and use of the books banned. The organisation is now independent and self-financing.

In Elieshi Lema’s view, presentation of the argument was the key issue: governments *could* be persuaded that books are central to everything, including their remaining in power. As a start, national publishers’ associations should try to set up a meeting with government officials at a high level; Henry Chakava said this had happened in both Kenya and Zimbabwe. There was a clear consensus among participants that state intervention should not mean state control of publishing.

In his speech on the cultural context of publishing, President Benjamin William Mkapa of Tanzania expressed his own belief in books and publishing as ‘a vital area of national life’. The Tanzanian Government has pledged itself to reinvigorating the literacy campaign and increasing investment in education generally, and indigenous publishing has a primary role to play in the development and production of books relevant to all levels of education. In the course of a lively and often humorous debate with seminar participants President Mkapa committed himself to raising awareness of the stra-

tegic importance of publishing not just in Tanzania but in the wider region, and added that he would be checking up on the reading habits of his Cabinet.

My government will be happy to be educated about publishing and about a positive role that it can play to make it easier and worthwhile for the industry and its captains. So, publishers in Tanzania need not hesitate to raise matters with relevant authorities in government. Indeed, I am sure that it is not only in Tanzania that such pressure from publishers must be constantly applied in order to achieve the desired results. I really do believe that serious lobbying is the only way to get things working.

*Benjamin William Mkapa, President of Tanzania*

*Reading and the  
cultural environment*

The strategic function of indigenous publishing and related industries will be realised only if, first of all, there is a clear analysis of the cultural context of books and reading.

African countries still suffer from high levels of illiteracy. In addition to the paucity of school textbooks, there is the further problem of the widespread unavailability outside the classroom of supplementary readers, fiction and general books, especially in the rural areas. Moreover, the onslaught of television and other media have undermined the habit and culture of reading, even among the more privileged and educated sectors of society. For the vast majority of people, reading is an activity to be endured during a short period at school and then abandoned.

There is talk in the North about a 'bookless' society, meaning a post-book society, while for us in Africa 'bookless' societies are indeed pre-book societies.

*Henry Chakava*

The creation of a reading culture is partly, and importantly, to do with the concrete provision of relevant books, as Elieshi Lema and other participants stressed. It is also indivisible from the question of how much control people feel they have over their lives and development. The principle and practice of participation by communities in choosing and even helping to create reading material relevant to their needs were seen as fundamental by some participants, in particular Talent Nyathi.

Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba expressed the view that when books and reading are perceived as the prerogative of an elite, and knowledge as coming from the 'centre', the majority of people have no incentive to read; by contrast, in situations of democratisation, change and excitement, people do read.

The cultural context of publishing in Africa is, as President Mkapa pointed out, one where the values and knowledge systems of traditional, oral society have been undermined—not least by the way in which the written word was superimposed historically. He called for indigenous authorship and publishing that is sensitive to the task of transforming the means by which education is imparted and minds are 'cultured' in African society.

We need to ask fundamental questions. Who plans for Africa? Where does knowledge come from? What makes people read?

*Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba*

Education is not a tool to dismember us from our traditional societies but a tool to better adapt our traditional societal values to new knowledge and the requirements of modern times ... Before African writers, authors and publishers can begin to see the book industry in these terms all efforts at promoting a truly indigenous publishing capacity will not succeed.

*Benjamin William Mkapa, President of Tanzania*

Seminar participants urged that campaigns to increase literacy and promote reading be undertaken by governments, in consultation with all players in the book chain, as a matter of urgency.

As Walter Bgoya emphasised, Africa's literary culture has been greatly impoverished by the demise of the highly respected and influential literary journals of the 1960s and 1970s, such as *Black Orpheus*, *Transition*, *Zuka*, *Busara*, *Marang* and *New Culture*. The revival of high calibre journals would provide essential publishing outlets for new writers, but this is unlikely to happen in the current frosty economic climate without underwriting by donors.

### *National book policy*

Government support for indigenous publishing presupposes the existence of policies in such areas as education, literacy, books and language. As Henry Chakava pointed out in his presentation, in reality most African countries function without any clear policies in these interrelated areas. He called on African governments to formulate policies that enable publishing to develop within a mainstream national development strategy.

In Walter Bgoya's view, the first step towards according publishing the status of a strategic industry is the establishment of a national book policy to deal in a comprehensive way with all elements of book production, dissemination and use. This requires a process of dialogue and close collaboration between government, publishers and all other component constituencies of the book chain.

In their report, *Publishing and Book Trade in Kenya*, launched at the seminar and summarised by the authors in a case study, Ruth Makotsi and Lili Nyaraki also call for the formulation of a national book policy as a priority for action by the Kenyan government. To advance this process they argue that 'sensitising forums' and an overall implementing agency are required. Participants urged that the time was ripe for the introduction of national book policies elsewhere in Africa and that the issue of developing these should be taken up by professional associations in the industry and taken into the public realm for debate.

Per Wästberg reported on two pillars of Sweden's national book policy, the Literature Support Scheme and the Library Lending Scheme. Under the latter, writers receive royalties based on the frequency with which their books are borrowed from libraries, but above a certain level the amount that would be payable to authors of the most popular books goes to poets and other writers with a small readership. The scheme works well and may offer a model for adaptation elsewhere.

Almost no attention has been given to the development of reading habits among the people. Public libraries are understocked and are staffed with untrained personnel. In the few schools where libraries are developed, this has been done through the initiative of the teachers with little or no support from the Ministry of Education.

*Lily Nyaraki*

We all know the benefits of reading, including the confidence we acquire because we know better than those who don't.

*Ruth Makotsi*

The issue of language should be central to discussions on national book policy. A larger volume of publications in African languages is not only crucial on grounds of equity, as the proportion of the population of African countries that can speak and read the former colonial language is still very small. It also makes good business sense for publishers to develop what is potentially their largest market.

It is fair to say that the slowness in development of the reading habit is partly attributable to a lack of genuine literacy and proficiency in the relevant foreign languages; and at the same time, over-dependence on foreign languages is undermining both national language development and publishing. In my view, fundamental human and societal values are being undermined, and the mass of African people are being disempowered.

Walter Bgoya

*Communication and networking*

Publishing is not an activity carried out in isolation. Communication and collaboration with other interested parties are crucial to the success of individual enterprises and to the progress of indigenous African publishing continentally.

One aspect of this issue relates to communication with government. Barack Muluka spoke of the 'frequent, almost whimsical' changes in curriculum which can result in dead stock for educational publishers, and render planning and sales projections meaningless. While acknowledging the importance of innovation in the school curriculum, he made a strong plea for changes to be planned and phased in, after consultation with publishers. Alex Bangirana stated that in Uganda government guidelines had helped publishers plan and develop suitable educational publications.

National publishers' associations (NPAs) should be involved, with governments, in the process of shaping policy relating to education and book provision. Pelle Knutsson called on donors to argue for the inclusion of NPAs in donor/government discussions and pointed out that donors would have a narrower space in which to make mistakes if they talked with the collective body rather than just with individuals, a view endorsed by Anita Theorell.

APNET has already successfully begun the task of improving intra-African communication, particularly through the *African Publishing Review*. Serah Mwangi paid tribute to APNET but said there was a need for further channels between APNET and NPAs to avoid duplication, particularly where a similar syllabus exists. Gacheche Waruingi observed that publishers in East Africa had met in 1993 to discuss regional cooperation in their profession, three years ahead of the political leaders.

When I go to Kampala [from Nairobi] I tend to be viewed as a latter-day transnationalist ... Is it possible to have a more open-border policy while protecting overall national interests?

Barack Muluka

Ordinary people show consistently that especially where currencies are convertible between neighbouring countries, cross-border trade can flourish. Wider South-South cooperation also needs to be pursued energetically, through the exchange of films and other *quid pro quo* arrangements, although more than one participant commented that publishers from some Southern countries, particularly India, seemed only to be interested in selling. In some cases, what appears to be cooperation may actually be exploitation, such as one publisher using another as an agent.

### *The electronic revolution*

Per Gedin argued that the new techniques in digital printing, whereby a book can be sent electronically through a computer and printed at the place it is needed, will change the face of publishing in all countries. This system, which he predicted would be commonplace in the North within the next five years, could also enable African publishers to take a great leap forward, a short cut of several decades. Essentially, the technique cuts out the costs of overprinting, unsold stock and transportation. It particularly favours the publishing of titles of minority interest as there is no need to print high-run editions to reduce the unit cost.

In Per Gedin's view, this is a truly international system which, in theory, gives everyone a chance to compete. Transnational companies will, of course, be fast to use the new technique but local knowledge will be very valuable. Writers and publishers who know local markets could have an unprecedented opportunity.

Participants recognised the importance of keeping these technological developments in view and acknowledged that the changes would inevitably come, whether they wanted them or not. Mary Jay observed that their successful introduction in Africa begs the question of functioning telephone lines and electricity. These are still deficient or unreliable in many parts of the continent.

Concerns were expressed about piracy (James Currey, Gacheche Waruingi, Aigboje Higo), add-on costs (Victor Nwankwo) and obsolescence (Walter Bgoya). Per Gedin recommended that APNET undertake an immediate study of the new technique, so as not to be left behind by international competitors. Diana Newton recommended Nicholas Negroponte's book, *Being Digital*, as a useful introduction to the 'bits and atoms' argument.

### *Marketing and distribution*

Describing marketing and distribution as the Achilles heel of indigenous African publishing, Henry Chakava opened his presentation with a warning that his critique might seem excessively harsh and therefore offend his col-

leagues, but that some honest soul-searching was important. Reasons for inadequacy in this vital area were of course in large measure external (shoestring budgets, generally poor support and infrastructure, etc.) but they also undoubtedly derived from internal weaknesses, at the firm level, including unwise investment of profits, part-time publishing, and lack of concerted promotional activities. Discussion centred on a number of key issues raised in the presentation.

It is our view that the African publisher has not, in spite of these handicaps, approached his job with the energy, determination and innovativeness that would guarantee success.

*Henry Chakava*

#### *Market research*

Overpublishing in certain areas, especially school textbooks, remains a problem. While competition is healthy and can lead to improved products, publishers need to be innovative and to seek out their own areas of specialisation. Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba recommended that publishers of academic books, for example, keep in closer contact with universities as one means of investigating possible new areas of academic enquiry (his own department at the University of Dar es Salaam receives over 400 research proposals a year). Several participants (Talent Nyathi, Elieshi Lema, Mary Jay and others) stressed the importance of working closely with teachers, parents and librarians so as to determine the interests and book requirements of schools and other communities.

In Henry Chakava's view, the majority of authors embark on the writing of a book because of their area of specialisation without any knowledge of whether or not there is a market for their ideas: publishers need therefore to take the lead in guiding authors on what may be a marketable product. From a rather different perspective, President Mkapa of Tanzania called for authorship and publishing that reflects a sensitive response to the interests of society.

#### *Promotion*

In general, strategic promotional campaigns are lacking. Henry Chakava said that, as far as he was aware, no African publisher produced advance publicity information on forthcoming titles. Few indigenous publishers print promotional leaflets, extra covers or even annual catalogues. Those catalogues that are produced are often inadequate, omitting essential infor-

mation such as ISBNs, and imperfectly proofread for spelling and grammatical errors. His experience was that direct mailing, especially to named individuals, constituted the most effective form of promotion; by contrast, direct advertising yielded few results. The extensive address list in APNET's database could be better used by publishers.

Book fairs, though known to be an important promotional tool, are not taken seriously enough by many publishers. Henry Chakava identified poor presentation and layout of stands, failure to bring catalogues and visiting cards, lack of follow-up on contacts, and the tendency of representatives to abandon stands and go on shopping sprees as common manifestations of a lack of professionalism.

They will go to book fairs without any catalogues, or outdated ones, the majority without even visiting cards so that they have to constantly write their addresses on scrappy pieces of paper for their impatient customer. In some cases, the people 'manning' the stands have no information about the books on display and ... remove archaic calculators from their pockets to convert their local prices into an international currency for the foreign buyer.

*Henry Chakava*

These criticisms gave rise to a lengthy discussion. Katherine Salahi said the subject would be an agenda item at the next Bellagio meeting, to be held concurrently with the Ghana Book Fair in November, and Mary Jay mentioned a forthcoming African Books Collective guide to book fairs. Participants pointed to the need for careful consideration of which fairs were worth attending and which personnel should be sent as representatives.

The latter issue emerged as particularly controversial. Attendance at book fairs and foreign travel tend to be viewed as perks, thus arousing envy among office-based personnel. Some publishing houses in the North have a policy that all staff members should attend a book fair at least once during their term of employ, based on the potential benefits of a representative learning about a different aspect of the firm's operations, including the fact that there is more to book fair attendance than joyriding. Mugyabuso Mulokozi expressed the view that trainees should be sent to local book fairs first. Some participants thought adequate briefing was the key requirement while others argued that it was not possible to brief an accountant, for ex-

ample, in public relations. Serah Mwangi noted the importance of addressing the issue within the context of overall recruitment, management and staff/career development.

There's a danger that everyone wants to be President in hell rather than an MP in heaven.

*Victor Nwankwo*

### *Discounts*

The question of what constitutes a desirable and affordable level of discounts to booksellers is another highly controversial issue. Henry Chakava argued that the practice of giving discounts of well over 40 per cent (sometimes as high as 60 or 70 per cent), now common in the North, could not possibly be emulated by African publishers. In Africa, where discounts generally range between 15 and 40 per cent, there are no large department stores with book sections, and few retail outlets of any kind, especially in the rural areas. While appreciating the severe constraints under which booksellers labour, publishers themselves operate on very limited budgets and are often unable to pay their authors high enough royalties to encourage them to take writing seriously. The solution does not lie in extending further discounts to distributors but in the adoption of policies by African countries to increase literacy and build and sustain a reading environment.

Although there may be some room for differentiation of discounts according to categories of retail customers (Heinemann Nigeria, for instance, operates varying terms for primary/secondary, tertiary/general, large-order, etc.), most participants agreed that a 25 per cent discount was as high a level as publishers could sustain. Lili Nyariki, however, emphasised the point that small booksellers get the same discount regardless of their distance from the distribution centre and the consequent costs of transportation. Some participants supported the idea of NPAs reviewing discounts on a periodic basis.

### *Strengthening bookselling*

The question of discounts illustrates the need for support of the whole book chain since—in Victor Nwankwo's words—what happens downstream affects upstream activity. Booksellers are undercapitalised, usually untrained and few in number. Their remoteness from distribution centres and the consequent problem of high transportation costs can force them to mark up prices beyond the reach of consumers. According to Mugyabuso Mulokozi, in Tanzania this can result in the reader paying anything up to ten times the publisher's price, a situation which he described as chaotic.

The majority of booksellers in Africa are generally inept and do not adopt a creative approach to their business. They sit behind their counters and wait for orders to flow in.

*Henry Chakava*

In their report, Ruth Makotsi and Lili Nyariki identify the difficulties experienced by both publishers and booksellers and the need for an integrated approach to solving these problems. They advocate the appointment of regional distributors, membership drives and greater activity by professional associations in the book industry, and more dialogue between the various professions through frequent book forums. They also recommend either the expansion of APNET to include related professions or the formation of separate regional associations. Alex Bangirana cautioned against the former proposal in the light of Uganda's experience of having one large association where non-publishers complained of being marginalised.

Parastatal distribution has been tried in the past—in Tanzania and Zambia, among other countries. It has not worked because books were largely provided free of charge and there was no incentive for the bookseller. Governments need to address the structural aspects of the problem, and to provide incentives for booksellers to set up in rural areas.

#### *The African Books Collective*

Mary Jay outlined the work of the African Books Collective (ABC), a self-help initiative established in 1989 by 18 African publishers to promote and disseminate African-published material in the major English-language book markets outside Africa. In the six years since ABC started trading, remittances to members have totalled well over six figures in pounds sterling. The collective is registered as a UK company, is administered from Oxford, and is governed by a Council of Management comprised of elected representative publishers from West, East, and Central/Southern Africa. Membership currently stands at 48.

The time-scale envisaged for becoming self-financing has proved to be over-optimistic in an unpropitious economic climate, and ABC has continued to rely on the generous support of the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida) and other donors in order to operate as a non-profit making organisation. In 1995, the collective was able to meet nearly 50 per cent of its own income needs.

Founder members each contributed a £1,000 membership fee; new full

members pay £500 and associate membership is free. These categories of membership receive, respectively, 65, 60 and 55 per cent of net ABC income from sales of their publications.

Mary Jay invited guidance from participants on future directions and priorities for the collective. Although innovation is important, she felt that ABC should retain its core mission of promoting, selling and trying to mainstream African publishers' books outside Africa. Other plans included: expanding its resource and information materials, including producing a revised version of the *African Publishers Networking Directory*; undertaking more outreach activities, including author promotions; and working more closely with APNET.

In the foreseeable future ABC would also continue its work for the Intra-African Book Support Scheme (IABSS). Run jointly with Book Aid International, this scheme enables libraries and institutions in Africa to select books for purchase from other African countries, which donors then pay for by standing order. An important contribution to the movement of books across borders, this has become part of ABC's core mission. In Mary Jay's view, there was a case for considering indigenising the scheme in due course, although this could happen only when ABC was closer to achieving the aim of operating without donor funds, since IABSS represents a major source of finance for the collective.

A very important long-term aim is to establish an office in the US. The present system of operating from Oxford works smoothly and effectively in terms of sales of scholarly and academic books, but is less able to promote trade to US public libraries and create a market for children's books, fiction and general titles.

Participants expressed their warm appreciation of the work of Hans Zell (one of the two consultants to the collective until 1995), Mary Jay (who has assumed overall responsibility since then), and the 'team' in Oxford. As Walter Bgoya pointed out, publishers are provided with excellent market feedback and the reporting system is a model of clarity and transparency. Several participants welcomed the plan to publish an updated version of the very useful *African Publishers Networking Directory* and to publish further resource materials.

Gacheche Waruingi asked that the system of preferential terms for founder members be reviewed. Most participants thought these were fair and that the excellent returns enjoyed by all members were of far greater importance

than the small differential in remittances. There was some discussion of whether there should be an ABC in Africa and general agreement that this was not a practical proposition at present.

### *Finance*

If publishers' marketing and distribution problems are partly attributable to internal weaknesses the problem of finance is almost entirely outside their control. Commercial sources of credit are largely closed to publishers. No publisher's stock is accepted as collateral and few publishers are granted overdraft facilities. Interest rates of up to 40 per cent mean that even when those facilities are allowed, they become impossible to service. Gacheche Waruingi had had to rely on family and friends for loans to Phoenix Publishers when bank credit was unavailable. In general, though, private investment is extremely hard to come by. Aigboje Higo's experience was that the wealthy Nigerian middle class refused to support publishing (although they were quick to see the benefits of international competitive bidding).

Concessional credit to African publishing from the World Bank and other international and regional finance institutions has been consistently refused. World Bank insistence on international competitive bidding for major contracts, especially of educational textbooks, has meant the exclusion of all but the most well established indigenous publishers. APNET's delegation to the World Bank in 1993 had failed to produce a shift in policy away from foreign procurement towards active support to African publishers.

Means need to be found of getting round the World Bank, a task which Walter Bgoya likened to that of trying to embrace a baobab tree. Nigerian participants cited the encouraging case of the Bank's eventual capitulation on international competitive bidding in Nigeria. Diana Newton said it was important to see the Bank as a partner rather than a 'bad guy', especially in view of some recent changes in senior personnel, and that it was also worth considering approaches to the International Finance Corporation to support private sector development. Other participants felt that the 'bad guy' label was fully justified by their experience of trying to deal with the Bank. There was general agreement over the need to hold discussions with national governments in order to arm them in *their* discussions with the World Bank. It was also agreed that APNET should make a further approach to the Bank on behalf of publishers.

Regional development banks, which offer credit at rates of as low as 5 or 6 per cent to other industries, also need to be lobbied more vigorously by governments to provide similar support to the publishing industry.

Other possible ways of obtaining financial assistance were raised, one suggestion being that airlines could be asked to reduce freight costs when they had spare capacity.

*The Children's Book Project in Tanzania*

Buy-back schemes, whereby a donor agency purchases a proportion of a print-run for free distribution and simultaneously enables publishers to accumulate capital, constitute one avenue of financial support for publishing.

Elieshi Lema reported on the first five years of the Children's Book Project in Tanzania, an initiative financed by CODE (the Canadian Organisation for Development through Education) to enhance the publishing and distribution of children's books in indigenous languages. Manuscripts were selected by a committee which included teachers and librarians. Print runs were 5,000, with the project buying back 3,000 at a 35 per cent discount. The pricing mechanism for the 2,000 copies for sale on the open market was three times the unit cost of production.

The overall impact has been an increased number of children's books (over 100 titles), improved product quality and market awareness through a training component, and a substantial rise in the number of children's books publishers. However, the crude statistics of an increase from nine to 30 publishers in five years disguises the fact that only some publishers succeeded in selling their 2,000 copies and some, especially first-time publishers, proved less than serious about the enterprise. The aim of enabling publishers to continue without assistance after five years has not been realised because returns have been too low, due partly to insufficient outlets and partly to inadequate promotional activities.

The benefits of the scheme were firmly endorsed by Abdullah Saiwaad, one of its beneficiaries. As a former publishing manager (1985–90) of a company which produced no books, he saw the publication of 100 titles nationally as a substantial achievement. As a part-time independent publisher since 1990, he had been enabled by the project to produce seven titles in a single year and was encouraged in his long-term aim of becoming a full-time children's books publisher.

Some participants questioned the pricing formula, which had allowed only small profit margins, and several advocated more stringent selection criteria in order to support a smaller number of more serious publishers. Victor Nwankwo, who had participated in a recent evaluation of the project, said there was a need for the selection of manuscripts to be more directly driven

by demand within schools. Based on her experience of community publishing in Zimbabwe, Talent Nyathi thought that community needs were best addressed by allowing an adequate consultation period. Teachers' and parents' associations are often unable to respond swiftly when asked to select books and may need as long as three months to test out books in schools. Asking schools to provide a brief summary of their reasons for selecting particular titles is an important response mechanism.

Elieshi Lema's assessment was that the project had gone a long way towards achieving its cardinal aim of enabling publishers to produce children's books but that many lessons had been learnt in the first five years of operation. Paramount among these was the need for a holistic approach to the promotion of reading, and the future should be closely tied to readership campaigns undertaken in the schools by librarians.

It has been a process of throwing seeds into the field. Some will germinate, some will not. I think that is OK for the first stage.

*Victor Nwankwo*

Following the recent evaluation, elements of the project are to be amended. Proposals include: increasing the number of buy-back copies to 10,000; improving training facilities; tightening selection criteria; undertaking more market research; and developing mechanisms for ensuring the sustainability of the project, such as creating a publisher-financed seed fund with a percentage going to new initiatives. Various interest groups have been asked to come up with proposals to put before the donors in May (1996).

#### *The DHF loan guarantee programme in Kenya*

The unavailability of commercial credit at the time of 'Arusha I' was the reason that the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation undertook to set up a pilot loan guarantee scheme for publishers in Kenya. Olle Nordberg summarised the stages in the setting up of the programme—a feasibility study in 1995; a funding application to the Ford Foundation, leading to approval in 1988 of a grant of USD 265,000 for three years (the grant period has since been extended twice); the establishment of a secretariat and an Advisory Board chaired by Professor Thomas Odhiambo; and the signing of contracts with cooperating banks (in 1989 with Barclays, Kenya, and in 1994 with the Co-operative Bank of Kenya, to which the larger part of the guarantee was then moved). Eleven applicants have been accepted since 1989 and an evaluation of the programme is currently being carried out.

Some publishers have fared very well, and paid off the loan; three have defaulted. The over-riding problem has been the sharp rise in interest rates. There have also been some communication problems between the Advisory Board/DHF and banks, banks and publishers, banks' head offices and their branches, and to some extent between the DHF and the secretariat (which has been too busy to monitor and follow up as required).

Reports were presented by three beneficiaries of the scheme. Each had set out to obtain loans from very different starting points—one as a senior and long-serving employee of a transnational company, one as an experienced publisher in an indigenous firm, and one as a first-time publisher.

Henry Chakava applied to the programme in 1988 during the early stages of indigenisation of Heinemann Kenya (now East African Publishers Limited). Before this, he had been able to begin buying into the company only because an individual had stood as a personal guarantor of a bank loan and had also agreed to a moratorium when interest rates rose and repayment became difficult, and subsequently when as a director of the National Bank of Kenya he had been able to obtain a subsidised loan.

Gacheche Waruingi was refused a bank loan when in 1987 he tried to form Phoenix Publishers out of the ashes of the East African Publishing House (EAPH). A first application to the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation was unsuccessful. Following a second application, a loan guarantee was approved. Regular reports to the Foundation showed that Phoenix was faring well and that the loan and overdraft facility were crucial to this progress.

After two years the bank agreed to an enhanced overdraft facility but stipulated that the original loan be repaid within three years. The problems began with the hyperinflation that hit Kenya in 1993, when interest rates rose from 21 to 35 per cent in the course of the year. An attempt to alleviate the problems by transferring money from one account to another led to the bank complaining of 'hard-coring', a term used when there is insufficient movement in an account and an overdraft stays constantly close to the upper limit. Although the situation improved in 1994 and the loan was paid off in early 1995, ahead of schedule, the bank was unwilling to make further loans without either collateral or a guarantee, so the initial objective of establishing credibility had not been achieved.

To publish her first title in 1990, Serah Mwangi collaborated with a number of women friends who together provided USD 2,000 for publication costs. In 1991, she successfully applied to the loan guarantee programme. Even

with the guarantee, the bank was unwilling to allow her an overdraft facility since, in their view, the programme had a ‘bad record’ (although in those cases where publishers had defaulted, debts had been paid in full by the guarantors!). She had had to take out a loan and prove she could keep up repayments, before finally having an overdraft facility agreed—an eight-month delay which disrupted her publishing schedule. She too was accused of ‘hard coring’.

Christa Onyango (Barclays Kenya) and Alex Malla (Cooperative Bank of Kenya) admitted some unfairness on the part of the banks, explained partly by problems of communication between head office and branches and by the fact that some publishers had ‘gone underground’. They maintained that in addition to the provision of the guarantee, banks are entitled to ask customers for a business plan and to check the viability of projects. Administrators and beneficiaries of the programme pointed out that applicants have already been carefully vetted by the secretariat of the programme and by the Advisory Board, which includes bank representatives.

One interpretation of the experience to date is that there is inadequate understanding on both sides of the ways in which the other party operates. Bank representatives said that some publishers confused loans with grants, and expected special treatment because of the guarantee, while many participants said the banks simply ‘didn’t understand publishing’ and were unnecessarily distrustful of publishers. Alex Malla asked publishers to keep banks informed of likely fluctuations in business, and both bankers said they were prepared to offer advice on sound business management.

Suggestions included strengthening of the local secretariat, which could undertake not just monitoring but also training; more communication with and involvement of national publishing associations; and subsidised interest rates to beneficiaries of the scheme. Gacheche Waruingi advocated a subsidised flat rate of 10 per cent. Per Gedin reminded participants that the programme was set up on the basis of allowing no special dispensations for publishers but purely as a means of enabling them to obtain credit and do business like any other commercial enterprise.

Bank manuals on business management were felt to have too general a target readership to deal with publishers’ concerns. Diana Newton also suggested a booklet for bankers about publishing. The importance of continuing the dialogue was not in doubt.

The energy and professionalism of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in

their running of the scheme were warmly acknowledged. Sven Hamrell raised the question of replicability and of whether or not the programme should now be extended to other African countries. Some participants favoured fine-tuning in Kenya before introduction of the programme elsewhere. Elieshi Lema pointed out that resources tend to be taken to places where the publishing industry, and infrastructure generally, are more developed.

#### *Joint ventures*

Formal collaboration with foreign publishers or at the local level is one potential means of improving the flow of finance.

Diana Newton described the work of the International Publishing Partnership (IPP), a new initiative of the Canadian publishing industry and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) which provides administrative and informational support as well as finance for identifying and developing partnerships between publishers in Canada and the Third World. CIDA funding covers a maximum of two-thirds of the initiative's total costs, while the Canadian publishing industry contributes a minimum of one-third of total operating and programming costs.

With the long-term goal of developing sustainable publishing capacities in the South, IPP seeks to support partnerships based on mutual understanding, trust, a jointly creative approach to tasks and problems, and a sharing of costs and benefits. Activities envisaged include adaptations, translations, co-publishing, co-production, co-distribution, reciprocal distribution, rights sales, capital investment, and long-term joint ventures.

IPP manages two small funds. The Partnership Identification Fund covers part of the travel, accommodation and living expenses of a representative of a Canadian or a Southern publishing house to meet potential partners; the Partnership Support Fund is open to applications from new or existing partnerships to cover part of the cost of a specialised activity deemed essential to long-term viability. After less than a year in operation, IPP has funded 13 identification missions and supported six existing or new partnerships. It has also set up a resource centre for participating publishers, with an extensive collection of documents on publishing and other related sectors, and provides information kits (on a partial cost-recovery basis) on specific countries, focusing on the publishing industry and education system.

Walter Bgoya said he had come to recognise that despite the importance to publishers of individuality and independence there was practical wisdom in

the idea of exploring collaborative ventures on a local or regional basis, particularly as an avenue for presenting joint tenders to the World Bank and making joint applications to banks for credit facilities.

A recent and successful collaboration between Kenya and Uganda was described by Henry Chakava and Alex Bangirana. Fountain Publishers wanted to submit a tender to the World Bank for the publication of a textbook for Uganda's revised science syllabus, but had no course of their own. An existing textbook published by East African Educational Publishers to a large measure met the requirements of the new syllabus. After being advised that they stood a good chance of success on grounds of equity as well as other considerations, the two publishers adapted the course, with an important rather than a token input from Ugandan authors, and the course won the Bank tender. Costs and profits were split 50/50, and the book is selling very well.

Walter Bgoya outlined a draft framework for establishing equitable and mutually beneficial joint ventures. Salient points included the importance of assessing strengths and weaknesses, and identifying advantages and disadvantages on both sides, and the need to establish careful ground rules on division of editorial and financial responsibility and sharing of profits. The importance of compatibility, trust and professionalism are axiomatic in such ventures, which are best undertaken cautiously, on a project-by-project basis.

Victor Nwankwo stressed that any collaboration should give due consideration to the needs of each constituency and the relative strengths of the publishing industry in different countries. With these provisos, he saw distinct possibilities for joint ventures, including tripartite North-South-South arrangements. James Currey, whose list contains numerous co-publications, said it was important not to overcomplicate the process. Henry Chakava advocated moving in concentric circles, from national to regional to wider international joint ventures.

### *Other proposals*

There was strong support for a proposal made by Walter Bgoya that a conference of African writers and publishers should be organised with the aim of arriving at a 'New Deal' between the two professions and agreeing on common approaches to the task of enhancing the status of literature and publishing.

Per Wästberg proposed the establishment of an African Academy of Letters, comprised of eminent writers and humanist scholars, in order to enhance the role of culture in development and gain greater recognition and respect for

African culture in the rest of the world. It was agreed that the idea could be put on the agenda of the proposed conference of writers and publishers. Prior to this, Per Wästberg would collect and collate information about existing Academies in Africa and Europe. As a follow-up, a small group of eminent people of letters could be asked to study and make proposals on how such an Academy might be set up and financed.

In the final session of the seminar, the salient points of a draft summary conclusion document drawn up by the seminar directors were discussed and amended by the participants. The finalised Summary Conclusions follow after this Report.

# The Future of Indigenous Publishing in Africa

## Summary Conclusions

1. The second Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation seminar on publishing in Africa was held in Arusha, Tanzania, from 25 to 28 March 1996. This seminar, which gathered 30 participants from eight countries, including publishers, writers, librarians, academics and bankers, discussed the subject of publishing under the title 'The Future of Indigenous Publishing in Africa'. It was a follow-up to a seminar held at the same venue in 1984 under the title 'The Development of Autonomous Publishing Capacity in Africa'. The seminar had the rare privilege of having among its participants the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, His Excellency Benjamin William Mkapa, who not only made a key speech, but also exchanged ideas, views and comments with the participants one afternoon.

2. The seminar was co-directed by Walter Bgoya of Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, Dar es Salaam, Henry Chakava of East African Educational Publishers, Nairobi, and Per Gedin of Gedins Förlag, Stockholm. Discussions drew on a number of inputs by the participants but were centred on three papers produced by the three directors: 'The Development and Future of Indigenous Publishing in Africa: 12 Years after Arusha I' (Walter Bgoya); 'Book Marketing and Distribution: The Achilles Heel of African Publishing' (Henry Chakava); and 'A Real Cultural Revolution', primarily covering technological developments (Per Gedin). An important contribution was made by Ruth Makotsi and Lily Nyariki, whose book *Publishing and Book Trade in Kenya* (published by East African Educational Publishers) had been planned and written with the second Arusha seminar in mind and was launched on the first day of the seminar.

3. Achievements between the time of Arusha I and Arusha II were noted in the entrepreneurial activities of a larger number of trained African professionals, the establishment of the African Publishers' Network (APNET) and the African Books Collective (ABC), and the growth of National Publishers' Associations. It was also evident from other developments such as the establishment of the Bellagio Publishing Network, the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation Loan Guarantee Scheme in Kenya, the Children's Book Project in Tanzania, the Zimbabwe International Book Fair and the Pan-African Children's Book Fair in Nairobi that publishing in Africa had been given increasing attention in the 12 years between the two seminars.

4. Nevertheless, these notable achievements paled in view of the enormous economic problems faced by African countries, which were only just emerging from the crisis of the 1970s and 1980s. One manifestation of the African crisis has been in the educational field. Deterioration in education has been a result not only of the collapse of infrastructure; according to gen-

eral agreement by researchers in education, the non-availability of teaching materials—of which the book is the most critical—has had the most negative impact. The consequence of this is that children coming out of primary and secondary schools are ill-equipped for employment in the modern sector and hardly employable in any meaningful productive enterprise.

5. The rehabilitation of education in Africa, which implies first and foremost the provision of books and the training of teachers, is the only viable strategy for development, as other countries, notably in Southeast Asia, have shown. Therefore, industries that are related to educational development, in particular book publishing and book distribution, as well as the development and stocking of libraries, deserve to be prioritised as *strategic industries*. As such, they should be given all the resources necessary to enable them to play their important role in preparing Africa's children for a secure and dignified future.

6. The seminar called on African leaders and their governments to accord *strategic industry status* to publishing and related industries, and to include them in their development plans as key components. Seminar participants were gratified that the President of Tanzania, H.E. Benjamin William Mkapa, concurred with them on this vital point and promised to work with other Heads of State and Government in the sub-region and beyond, to build up an awareness of the primary role of books in the educational and cultural development of Africa.

7. It was observed that the absence of National Book Policies in African countries is a major hindrance to publishing. The seminar therefore called upon African governments to enact the necessary legislation in the form of National Book Policies including National Language Policies so as to deal more comprehensively with all issues related to books and publishing than is currently the case. Publishing in indigenous languages would be well served by the existence of effective language policies. In the same vein, low and declining literacy rates call for immediate remedial action, as literacy is the basic foundation of a literary culture. Publishing can only flourish where a high percentage of the population is literate and the reading habit is strong. A new impetus must therefore be given to literacy campaigns and the promotion of reading, and inexpensive and relevant books must be made easily available so as to strengthen and sustain this skill that is so difficult to acquire but so easy to lose. Publishers' Associations have an important role to play in coordinating the efforts of all other players in the book chain as well as in promoting research in all aspects of the book industry.

8. While observing that an increasing number of books have been produced by African publishers in the period between Arusha I and Arusha II, seminar participants noted with regret that books often did not reach those for whom they were published, because of problems of infrastructure—poor transport, a paucity or absence of bookshops and book distributors, high postal rates, and faulty communications in general. In addition, African publishers pay insufficient attention to the question of marketing, distribution, and providing information about their books. This is due partly to a lack of resources, but also reflects weaknesses in management: far too often, publishers think it is enough to produce the books and to place them in warehouses. Although some progress has been achieved, greater emphasis on promotion, marketing and distribution should emphatically be the next thrust of African publishers.

9. Working individually, under great financial constraints, many African publishers have not yet fully realised the benefits of cooperation in marketing and distribution. Individualism, which may be necessary from the point of view of creativity, has in this respect been a weakness which must be overcome.

10. The problem of finance is still African publishers' most intractable problem. The financial support schemes currently in place have made a modest but appreciable contribution to African publishers, but they have been rendered ineffective by high interest rates charged by African banks. Interest rates of up to 40 per cent have made facilities such as bank overdrafts almost impossible to operate. African publishers are often forced to spend a considerable amount of time on other income-generating activities to support their operations, and are thus left with less time to devote to the primary activity of publishing.

11. Seminar participants were in agreement that a major initiative should be launched to explore all possible ways of breaking the deadlock of African publishers' lack of finance, so as to expand publishing and develop truly professional publishing houses. In this regard, they called upon African governments to negotiate with the Bretton Woods institutions and the African Development Bank for long-term loans at concessionary rates to be made available to publishers. If such resources are made available, and their application closely monitored for maximum efficiency in utilisation and accountability, African publishers would in a relatively short time be able to raise their publishing standards to international levels. Only then would international competitive bidding for school textbooks be a realistic and fair method of providing the best books at the cheapest prices. As it is now,

international competitive bidding is almost synonymous with the exclusion of African publishers.

12. One important avenue for African publishers in need of capital is entering into cooperative arrangements with other local publishers or joint ventures with foreign publishing houses. In the latter case, it was proposed that the foreign publisher would contribute financial resources, and the African publisher would contribute local publishing know-how. Initially adopting a project-by-project approach, joint venture enterprises could gradually grow in strength and scope in such a way that both partners derive maximum benefit from the collaboration. However, it is imperative that partners wishing to enter into a joint venture establish in advance the compatibility of their missions and management style in order to avoid misunderstanding and failure. The need for partners to know one another and to be wholly professional in their relations was seen as the necessary adjunct to successful joint ventures.

13. The seminar observed that important technological developments in the printing industry may drastically alter current methods of book production and distribution. In particular, the opportunities offered by digital printing must be kept in view as these make small print run publishing viable in situations where markets are of limited size. This could be a most important development for publishing in indigenous African languages.

14. Seminar participants were unanimous that the time has come for a 'New Deal' between writers and publishers in Africa. Both players now understand enough about publishing to be able to place their relationship on ethical and professional grounds where they can fulfil their respective responsibilities and see themselves as inseparable partners in the process of creation of African literature. Towards that end, a conference of African writers and publishers should be organised as soon as practicable, with the aim of drawing up a charter to guide relations between the two professions. Above all, the seminar called upon writers and publishers in Africa to make a new commitment to the validation of African cultural values and to their defence against the onslaught of television and other media which threaten to turn the global village into a global cultural dustbin.

15. The seminar agreed that the time has come to enhance the role of culture in development and discussed a proposal for the establishment of an African Academy of Letters to consist of writers and humanist scholars of high standing. Representing themselves only, they would strengthen African cultural developments and also make African culture more visible to other parts of the world. It was suggested that this idea might be put on the agenda of

the proposed conference of African writers and publishers and that a nucleus of writers and humanist scholars might be asked to elaborate on the set-up, financing and tasks of such an Academy.

### **Participants**

Alex Bangirana (*Uganda*); Walter Bgoya (*Tanzania*); Henry Chakava (*Kenya*); James Currey (*United Kingdom*); Wendy Davies (*United Kingdom*); Per Gedin (*Sweden*); Sven Hamrell (*Sweden*); Aigboje Higo (*Nigeria*); Mary Jay (*United Kingdom*); Godwin Kaduma (*Tanzania*); Pelle Knutsson (*Sweden*); Elieshi Lema (*Tanzania*); Ruth Makotsi (*Kenya*); Alex Malla (*Kenya*); Theophilus E. Mlaki (*Tanzania*); M.M. Mulokozi (*Tanzania*); Barack Muluka (*Kenya*); Serah Mwangi (*Kenya*); Diana Newton (*Canada*); Olle Nordberg (*Sweden*); Victor Nwankwo (*Nigeria*); Lily K. Nyariki (*Kenya*); Talent Nyathi (*Zimbabwe*); C.A. Onyango (*Kenya*); Abdullah Saiwaad (*Tanzania*); Katherine Salah (*United Kingdom*); Anita Theorell (*Sweden*); Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba (*Zaire*); Gacheche Waruingi (*Kenya*); Per Wästberg (*Sweden*).