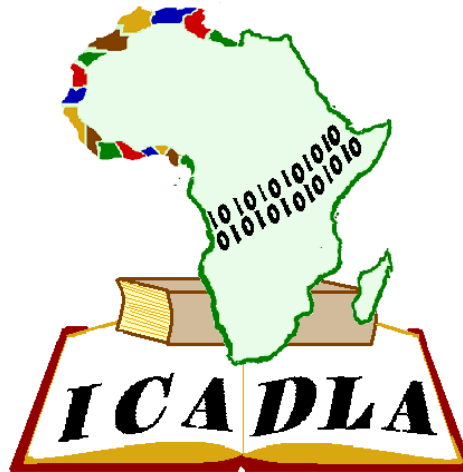


First International Conference on African Digital Libraries and Archives
(ICADLA-1)

1 – 3 July 2009

United Nations Conference Centre
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



Communiqué

Summary and Recommendations

The summary and recommendations are captured in the following communiqué, presented at the conclusion of the First International Conference on African Digital Libraries and Archives (ICADLA-1), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1st-3rd July 2009

August 2009
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Addis Ababa Communiqué on Putting libraries on the African development agenda, developing policies and strategies for Africa's digital future and the digitization of African Heritage.

We, the 200 participants, comprising librarians, archivists, curators, information specialists, programme managers, professors, economists, scientists, documentalists, and various other professionals from universities, non-governmental organizations, United Nations bodies, international and national governmental organizations in Africa and elsewhere, gathered under the auspices of the First International Conference on African Digital Libraries and Archives (ICADLA-I) in the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to deliberate on putting knowledge and libraries on the African development agenda and to develop a framework for fast-tracking the development of policies and strategies for the digitization of African knowledge and heritage, hereby

state that:

1. Libraries are central to the development and advancement of knowledge societies and knowledge-based economies. Without effective libraries in all places they should be found, development would be hampered inevitably.
2. Libraries and archives provide access to information and knowledge, which empowers people and communities to take charge of their lives and make their contributions to the shaping of their country's future.
3. Africa's future prosperity and enjoyment of freedoms depend on access to and utilization of diverse information and knowledge, including indigenous knowledge.
4. The digital divide and knowledge gaps adversely affecting Africa can be closed only through resolute endogenous efforts of individuals, governments and communities in African countries, and the requisite concerted efforts must be exerted to stem the continuing marginalization of Africa within the global arena because of knowledge gap.
5. The vast number of African think-tanks and knowledge centres generate useful knowledge resources which are inaccessible to the policy makers and the ordinary person, un-systematized and un-preserved. Consequently, policy makers are not optimally making use of the available knowledge to improve policymaking, and productive activities are not based on sound knowledge.
6. Research shows the positive role of indigenous knowledge in the formulation and implementation of sustainable development policies and projects in developing countries, however indigenous knowledge is not properly documented and

communicated to better inform policy makers and program implementers in African countries.

7. The ongoing knowledge drain due to lack of proper local preservation, organization and dissemination of African scholarship and heritage represents a greater brain drain from Africa than the one due to migration of skilled persons.
8. Africa suffers from inadequate skills and training in the new digital technologies and resource management.
9. African countries have not put enough emphasis on deepening of knowledge and capacity required for the achievement of development strategies they promulgate, including NEPAD. They have not allocated enough resources to the development, accumulation and dissemination of the requisite knowledge to be developed in schools, universities, research centres, public administrations, and industrial and commercial concerns.
10. African leaders do not seem to recognize the central role that knowledge institutions (libraries, archives, communication outfits) play in the development process; hence, they have neither closed the knowledge gap nor built knowledge economies.
11. Most countries developing national information policies have not achieved good balance between the development of physical infrastructure, knowledge infrastructure, and information management institutions. Without this balance, critical information collection, transfer, access and utilization cannot take place.
12. Libraries are central to the development and advancement of knowledge societies and knowledge-based economies. Without effective libraries in all places they should be found, development would be hampered inevitably.
13. Libraries and archives provide access to information and knowledge, which empowers people and communities to take charge of their lives and make their contributions to the shaping of their country's future.
14. Africa's future prosperity and enjoyment of freedoms depend on access to and utilization of diverse information and knowledge, including indigenous knowledge.
15. The digital divide and knowledge gaps adversely affecting Africa can be closed only through resolute endogenous efforts of individuals, governments and communities in African countries, and the requisite concerted efforts must be exerted to stem the continuing marginalization of Africa within the global arena because of knowledge gap.
16. The vast number of African think-tanks and knowledge centres generate useful knowledge resources which are inaccessible to the policy makers and the ordinary

person, un-systematized and un-preserved. Consequently, policy makers are not optimally making use of the available knowledge to improve policymaking, and productive activities are not based on sound knowledge.

17. Research shows the positive role of indigenous knowledge in the formulation and implementation of sustainable development policies and projects in developing countries, however indigenous knowledge is not properly documented and communicated to better inform policy makers and program implementers in African countries.
18. The ongoing knowledge drain due to lack of proper local preservation, organization and dissemination of African scholarship and heritage represents a greater brain drain from Africa than the one due to migration of skilled persons.
19. Africa suffers from inadequate skills and training in the new digital technologies and resource management.
20. African countries have not put enough emphasis on deepening of knowledge and capacity required for the achievement of development strategies they promulgate, including NEPAD. They have not allocated enough resources to the development, accumulation and dissemination of the requisite knowledge to be developed in schools, universities, research centres, public administrations, and industrial and commercial concerns.
21. African leaders do not seem to recognize the central role that knowledge institutions (libraries, archives, communication outfits) play in the development process; hence, they have neither closed the knowledge gap nor built knowledge economies.
22. Most countries developing national information policies have not achieved good balance between the development of physical infrastructure, knowledge infrastructure, and information management institutions. Without this balance, critical information collection, transfer, access and utilization cannot take place.

We therefore recommend that:

1. African countries should develop longitudinal and horizontal programmes of digital and physical local content preservation, organization and dissemination to advance African research agendas and educational strategies.
2. An African Digital Library and Archives Programme be established under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in partnership with the African Union's NEPAD Agency, Africa Development Bank (AfDB), and other capable development, research and technical institutions, to provide technical and advisory support to country digital knowledge initiatives and digitization programmes. This

Programme will spearhead the formulation of comprehensive policy and strategic frameworks and road maps for the digital libraries and archives on the continent.

3. Countries and communities should fund libraries and archives (digital and physical) as the core of their national knowledge systems.
4. The development of institutional, local and regional integrated open access information repositories should be made priority projects and programmes in Africa. Good practices for this exist in other regions, and should be adopted at all levels of implementation.
5. Knowledge sharing across borders in all digital library development and related technologies should be promoted. Emerging centres of excellence in the region could be used for capacity building in this area.
6. The NEPAD agency of the African Union, the regional economic communities and the UN agencies should play a central role in assisting African countries to build effective knowledge services institutions as a means to development knowledge economies.
7. The popularizing, internationalizing and integration of indigenous knowledge into the mainstream knowledge and industrial sectors should be embarked upon at all levels as a means of preserving the rich heritage of Africa as expressed in arts, agriculture, medicine, music, and crafts. Digitalization activities should include this category of knowledge.
8. The established regional networks such as the African Virtual Library and Information Network (AVLIN) constitute the central node in the development of a continental framework for digital information sharing and capacity building given their strategic positions and their existing structures.
9. Countries should establish national knowledge management governance structures as components of national knowledge systems, such as exists in emerging knowledge-centric countries such as India and Singapore.
10. The enabling policy and strategic environment be established for digitalization and virtualization through appropriate legislation and policies, including safeguarding of the right to access to information, preservation and performance of national heritage, the protection of intellectual property rights (IPR), protection of the privacy of the individual, and attention to the special needs of all sections of the community.
11. Governments and institutions should ensure the provision of sustainable infrastructure and funding for digitization, preservation, management and dissemination of information.

12. Countrywide programmes of the expansion and deepening of literacy in its multifarious forms should embarked upon as a basis for the development of information-consciousness and informed societies.
13. Development partners and donors should be mindful of the importance of knowledge and capacity in absorption of aid and therefore should mainstream knowledge and the development and support of libraries as *sine qua non* to effective development cooperation and collaboration at local, national, and regional levels.
14. The creation of awareness and opportunities for learning is important for the effective utilization of donor-funded access to digital resources such as those eiFLnet, International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publication (INASP), WHO, UNEP and FAO.
15. Librarians and related information managers and professionals should be supported develop digitization skills, build relevant managerial capacity, and keep abreast with advancement in areas of client-oriented web technology, open source software and open standards that enable the effective use of digital libraries and archives.
16. Countries, communities and institutions should carry out audits of existing digital initiatives, including digitization projects, high-value materials and “materials at risk” (documents, audio and visual) in order to adequately prioritize the development and preservation content.
17. Country and international programmes should be established to speed up digitization of analogue collections of the continent for their wider use, including materials from all cultural institutions (archives, museums, music archives, audiovisual archives); provide online access to the collections to enable maximum use of the resource; adequately preserve and store the resources to ensure that future generations can access the digital material and to prevent precious content being lost; and encourage the building of digital repositories of scientific and socio-economic information for knowledge sharing and transfer.
18. Suitable business models for digitization should be such that ensures appropriate levels of investments in digitization, preservation, dissemination, as well as in the underlying technologies. Business models may include public-private collaboration, and may allow appropriate level of commercialization.
19. Countries should embark on innovation in intellectual capital legislation, which may include the introduction of digital legal deposits to stem loss of digital content, as well as open access licensing to encourage wider creative use of content, commercialization and new forms of performance.