

Note: This short report about the International Publishers Association Regional Seminar in Nairobi in June 2019 – and those hosted by ADEA that followed it – will appear as an Addendum to a paper by Hans M. Zell entitled “Publishing in Africa: Where Are We Now? An Update for 2019”, a pre-print version of which was uploaded on Academia.edu

https://www.academia.edu/39210555/Publishing_in_Africa_Where_Are_We_Now_An_Update_for_2019.

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The IPA and ADEA meetings in Nairobi, June 2019

The **IPA Regional Seminar ‘Africa Rising: Realising Africa’s Potential as a Global Publishing Leader in the 21st Century’**, held in Nairobi, Kenya, in June 2019, has been mentioned a number of times in this paper, but took place some weeks after the pre-print version of the article was published. It seems appropriate, therefore, to add an Addendum to provide some more details about this meeting and its outcomes, quoting from passages in some of the welcoming addresses, as well as providing links to a number of articles and reports which have appeared about the meeting (as at June/early July 2019).

The two-day seminar took place from 14-15 June and attracted a very large number of participants, reportedly some 600 attendees from over 50 countries. Main sponsors of the meeting included Dubai-based EMAAR Properties, Emirates Airlines, Sharjah Publishing City, Flynas Airlines, Nielsen Book, LuLu Group International, Quarterfold Interact, and the Copyright Clearance Center; as well as others such as the Emirates Publishers Association, Sharjah Word Book Capital, the Bologna Children’s Book Fair, the Association of American Publishers, the Frankfurt Book Fair, the (UK) Publishers Association, Austin Macauley Publishers, the London Book Fair, and Elsevier.

There were apparently no African sponsors other than the Kenya Publishers Association, who were the co-hosts of the Seminar, and the Nairobi-based market research agency Insight Wells Research Ltd, who recently announced publication of an *African Publishers Survey 2019*, on its Facebook pages, described as the “first” comprehensive report on the state of publishers in Africa (which it is *not*), and that the findings were to be disseminated during the IPA meeting.

The Seminar was structured in the form of a number of panels, where experts on specific aspects of the book industry were introduced by a moderator and thereafter shared their experiences with the assembled delegates, followed by a discussion. There was a total of eight panels:

- Textbook Policies: Reaching the Goal of a Textbook for Every Child in Africa
- Copyright Protection and the Threat of Piracy
- Developing Africa’s Next Generation of Publishers, Writers, and Artists
- Digital Transformation and Disruption in African Publishing
- The Growing Threat of Self-Censorship

- Creating the Readers of the Future
- Lost Tongues: The Struggle to Preserve Indigenous African Languages
- Data Innovation: Developing Data and Statistical Capabilities to Support the Publishing and Creative Industries

One puzzling aspect was the absence of a panel on publishing education and training, and the whole critical issue of capacity and skills building, although some conversations reportedly took place on the sidelines of the meeting. Surely it deserved a higher billing. Among other areas that would have merited panels and discussion, but which did not apparently feature, include the whole field of research and documentation about the African book industries, and the book sector generally.

Another surprise was that, among panels and discussions about digital transformation on the one hand, and the mainstreaming of African books in the global market place on the other, there was no presence of African Books Collective Ltd (ABC) at the Seminar. In both these areas ABC has made a major contribution over the years. It is the leading worldwide marketing and distribution outlet for African-published books. Founded, owned, and governed by a group of African publishers, ABC is currently distributing over 150 autonomous and independent African publishers. It has made available 2000+ titles digitally for more than a hundred African publishers, through platforms all over the world.

The celebrated Kenyan novelist, scholar and playwright Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o delivered the opening keynote speech at the conference, describing African publishing as "the new frontier", while veteran Kenyan publisher Henry Chakava gave one of the 'Publishing Ecosystem Talks'.

In a welcoming address at the Nairobi summit, Kenya Publishers Association Chair Lawrence Njagi promised delegates that tangible and positive action would follow the Seminar:

It is also good to reiterate that these IPA seminars are not mere talk shops. There is a commitment to put all the wonderful ideas, presented here, into practice. That explains why we shall have a complete session to deliberate on the process of implementing the ideas and suggestions that were presented last year in Lagos. The same will happen to all the ideas that will be brought in here.

IPA Vice-President Bodour Al Qasimi has been the driving force behind the development of the Africa Seminar series, which started in 2018 with a seminar in Lagos. In her opening address on the second day of the Nairobi event she urged

all the African publishers attending with us today, to do whatever it takes to support African authors, to tell Africa's story. Because if you don't tell your story enough, someone else is going to tell it on your behalf. And this is one of the reasons we're here in this seminar series today. We understand there are challenges facing African publishers. We realize that each African country has a unique set of challenges in publishing, and we know that the journey of transformation is long and arduous. But we are here to tell you that you will not walk it

alone. Through IPA's Africa Seminar series, which we started last year in Lagos, we aim to give you momentum. We want to help you seize all the opportunities of cultural globalization and publishing digitization to gain presence in the mainstream global culture.

She added

... We want to also support you in developing home-grown solutions to challenge and change unnecessary government regulations, create more readers, and access global markets. It's a two-way collaboration. Everyone is equally responsible about the outcome. And as the African publishing sector progresses, everyone is going to be a winner.

During her address Bodour Al Qasimi also announced that the IPA had just signed a new accord with Dubai Cares (the United Arab Emirates educational and philanthropic organization) amounting to US\$800,000 over four years, to assist and expand the IPA's programmes in Africa in education and publishing, and "to support literacy, book access, indigenous publishing, and library restoration." Kenya and Morocco have been chosen to be the initial focus countries.

Prior to the start of the Seminar, representatives of forty African publishers' associations gathered for the signing of a Memoranda of Understanding with the African Publishers Network (APNET) and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) to formalise the IPA's commitment to the region. The MoUs pledge collaboration between all parties to advance common industry goals, the adoption and implementation of national and reading policies, and to facilitate dialogue and collaboration between the actors in the publishing industry. The signings were reportedly accompanied by detailed discussions of concrete actions of support and collaboration that could be implemented rapidly. The Memoranda of Understanding confirmed the three organisations' commitment to strengthening the IPA's regional seminars further, as well as developing campaigns around education and literacy. An IPA news release stated

Straight after the signing, the three organisations took advantage of the presence of the heads of 40 African publishers' associations to set out the first steps of the newly formalised partnerships.

Following the IPA summit, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), under the auspices of its Books and Learning Materials section and with the support of the Global Book Alliance and USAID, organized a High-Level Regional Workshop on National Book and Reading Policies in Africa from 17-19 June. According to an ADEA press statement following the workshop, ADEA and USAID

signed an agreement to support a Continental Framework for National Book and Reading Policies that participants had interrogated in round-table discussions and eventually adopted. The Framework provides a road map for African member countries to formulate National Book and Reading Policies that will enable each country to address the various challenges facing the book publishing industry, a key sector for the achievement of quality education for economic, social, cultural development.

On the issue of financing education and research, Dr. Beatrice Njenga, Head of the Education Division in the African Union's Human Resources, Science and Technology Department, said that the workers of today's global economy require a different set of skills and knowledge. She called for Africa to "reverse its marginalization in the world economy by investing in well-equipped libraries in schools, as well as in research and development."

The meeting also reported about progress of the 'Lagos Action Plan' – emerging from the IPA Seminar in Lagos in 2018 – which sets out five "transformation goals," including fostering more collaborative partnerships, updating copyright protection for the digital age, and expanding diversity and inclusion in publishing.

There have thus far (as at June/early July 2019) been a number of short reports about these meetings, published in a number of newsletters, trade media, and blogs as set out below. Hopefully more substantive reports will follow soon, together with a full record of the proceedings. Initial accounts about the Seminar would seem to indicate that it was judged to have been a considerable success, not least the opportunities for networking among Seminar participants. *The New Publishing Standard*, writing in their newly launched bi-weekly newsletter *Publish Africa*, hailed it as a Seminar that "will undoubtedly go down in history as one of the most important events in global publishing in this decade."

However, not everyone was endorsing the event quite so enthusiastically, and there was a lively exchange of views about the merits, or otherwise, of conferences and meetings of this nature on the Facebook Book Publishing in Africa group. Some seasoned observers of the African book industries expressed a measure of scepticism that anything practical would emerge from these kind of meetings; as well as voicing frustration that earlier meetings of this nature, their subsequent resolutions or action plans, the implementation of these action plans, and promises of positive interventions at government level, have little to show for. Or that the promised engagement with government either never materialized, or was ineffective, and generated no real progress.

We may or may not share these views, but such a debate is to be welcomed, and robust conversations of this kind are essential.

One of the panellists in the session on 'Developing Africa's Next Generation of Publishers, Writers, and Artists' was the Kenyan journalist and author Peter Kimani. In an interview ahead of the IPA Seminar that appeared in *Publishing Perspectives* he asserts that the key characteristics of the Kenyan publishing scene is that it is very much geared toward school curricula, and that the bulk of the books published in Kenya are still school texts.

Lack of imagination on the part of publishers is hampering the development of a reading culture in Kenya and frustrating many young writers from pursuing careers in writing. ... Since the death of the Heinemann African Writers Series in 2002, there have been severe difficulties in the way African fiction travels within the continent and in diaspora.

He also called for a distributive network within the continent, and added

Even with the development of digital publishing, it will be a while before the continent and its people abandon the good old printed book.

This provoked a subsequent posting on the Facebook Book Publishing in Africa group (13 June 2019) by Henry Chakava, Chairman of East African Educational Publishers and nowadays often described as “the grandfather of African publishing”, who says

I have read Peter Kimani’s interview. I understand his frustration in getting a local publisher for his latest book. ... Peter should blame the Government of Kenya for the slow rate of reading habits. A government that gives away the publishing of its core textbooks (in this case USAID-RTI) can only be described as short sighted, and lacking in sustainability.

And finally: In his opening address to the assembled delegates on 14 June, the Cabinet Secretary at the Ministry of ICT in the Kenyan government, Mr Joe Mucheru, stated

Here in Kenya, I wish to inform you that the government has developed progressive policy and legislative frameworks to support investment and growth of our local publishers, particularly in education as we realise that publishers have a vital role to play if we are to achieve our policy objectives in education and literacy.

What he did *not* mention is that his government is still levelling a debilitating VAT tariff of 16% on books, imposed since September 2013 and, despite extensive lobbying by Kenyan publishers and its trade association, has still not been revoked. Does this amount to a “progressive policy”?

The next IPA Seminar will be hosted in Marrakesh, Morocco, in 2020.

Some IPA Nairobi Seminar/ADEA Workshop documents and reports

(published and freely accessible as at June/early July 2019)

IPA documents and news releases:

International Publishers Association/Kenya Publishers Association. Seminar Program. Nairobi 14/15 June 2019.

http://kenyapublishers.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Nairobi_IPA_Program_FullBooklet_V22DigitalFINAL.pdf
The complete Seminar programme for the two-day meeting.

International Publishers in Nairobi to Celebrate African Publishing.

<https://mailchi.mp/internationalpublishers/international-publishers-in-nairobi-to-celebrate-african-publishing?e=8c647f4372> (Posted 12 June 2019)

Africa in Action – International Publishers Association Commits to Concrete Action.

<https://www.internationalpublishers.org/news/871-africa-in-action-international-publishers-association-commits-to-concrete-action> (Posted 13 June 2019)

IPA at WIPO Regional Seminar, Nairobi

<https://internationalpublishers.org/news/883-ipa-at-wipo-regional-seminar-nairobi> (Posted 03 July 2019)

International Publishers Association, Lagos Seminar, May 2018.

<https://vimeo.com/internationalpublishers>

Video recordings of the different panels, and opening and closing speeches, from the IPA Lagos Seminar in 2018 can be viewed on these pages.

Nairobi IPA Meeting Hashtag on Twitter.

<https://twitter.com/hashtag/IPANairobi2019?src=hash>

ADEA documents and news releases:

ADEA-Working Group on Books and Learning Materials **ADEA and USAID Organize a High Level Workshop on National Book and Reading Policies in Africa under the Global Book Alliance.**

http://www.adeanet.org/en/system/files/en_press_release_gba_nairobi_2019.pdf (Posted 14 June 2019)

ADEA-Working Group on Books and Learning Materials **ADEA, IPA and APNET Formalize their joint efforts on Publishing, Education and Literacy in Africa.**

<http://www.adeanet.org/en/news/adea-ipa-and-apnet-formalize-their-joint-efforts-on-publishing-education-and-literacy-in-africa> (Posted 18 June 2019)

ADEA-Working Group on Books and Learning Materials **ADEA and USAID/GBA Lead Participants to Validate the AU Continental Framework on Book and Reading Policies for Africa.**

http://www.adeanet.org/en/system/files/en_press_release_adea_gba_nairobi.pdf (Posted 25 June 2019)

Kenya Government documents

Speech by Mr. Joe Mucheru EGH, MBS, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of ICT During the International Publishers Association Seminar on Friday, June 14, 2019 at the Mövenpick Hotel, Nairobi

<http://www.ict.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Speech-By-Mr.-Joe-Mucheru-Egh-Mbs-Cabinet-Secretary-Ministry-Of-Ict-During-The-International-Publishers-Association-Seminar-On-Friday-June-14-2019-At-The-M%C3%B6venpick-Hotel-Nairobi.pdf>

Reports and news stories:

Anderson, Porter **International Publishers Association Partners with UAE's Dubai Cares on African Challenges.**

<https://publishingperspectives.com/2019/05/international-publishers-association-partners-with-uaes-dubai-cares-on-african-challenges/> (Posted 20 May 2019)

Anderson, Porter **Nigeria's Gbadega Adedapo: African Publishers' Lagos Action Plan**

<https://publishingperspectives.com/2019/06/nigeria-gbadega-adedapo-african-publishers-lagos-action-plan-ipa-nairobi-2019-seminar/> (Posted 03 June 2019)

An interview with the President of the Nigerian Publishers Association, the co-hosts of the 2018 IPA Lagos Seminar, about the Lagos Action Plan “meant to be a reference point for a great reformation in the African book industry and also to serve as the foundation on which other seminars can build their plans for progressive and consistent action.”

Anderson, Porter **Kenya's Peter Kimani: When African Publishers 'Lack Imagination'**

https://publishingperspectives.com/2019/06/kenyas-peter-kimani-when-african-publishers-lack-imagination/?fbclid=IwAR1S3sPVoErdPa_-AcG3fjd3K1RRcTEGADRt_GBvr2_MttpwflLhyGGF5E0 (Posted 11 June 2019)

Anderson, Porter **Kenya Publishers Association's Lawrence Njagi at Nairobi: 'African Languages'**

<https://publishingperspectives.com/2019/06/kenya-publishers-associations-lawrence-njagi-at-nairobi-ipa-nairobi-2019-seminar/> (Posted 14 June 2019)

Welcoming address by the Chair of the Kenya Publishers Association at the first plenary session of the seminar. (See extracts above)

Anderson, Porter **IPA's Hugo Setzer to Africa's Publishers at Nairobi: 'We Need You'**.

<https://publishingperspectives.com/2019/06/hugo-setzer-to-africas-publishers-at-nairobi-we-need-you-ipa-nairobi-2019-seminar/> (Posted 14 June 2019)

Extracts from the opening address of the seminar by IPA President Hugo Setzer.

Anderson, Porter **Bodour Al Qasimi to IPA's Africa Seminar: 'Everyone Is Equally Responsible'**

<https://publishingperspectives.com/2019/06/bodour-al-qasimi-address-africa-program-ipa-nairobi-2019-seminar/> (Posted 15 June 2019)

The opening address by IPA vice-president Bodour Al Qasimi on the second day of the seminar. (See extracts above.)

Anderson, Porter **Brian Wafawarowa on 'Africa Rising': Inclusive Publishing and Literacy.**

<https://publishingperspectives.com/2019/06/africa-rising-day-two-indigenous-languages-copyright-youth-action-ipa-nairobi-2019-seminar/> (Posted 15 June 2019)

An interview with Brian Wafawarowa, former President of the Publishers Association of South Africa, who says publishing in Africa has "has made huge strides", but today faces some major challenges, which could well reverse those gains, namely that governments across the continent are "enacting new policies that are often detrimental to the book sector. These policies include copyright amendment programs and severe restrictions on approved books for schools. ... Many countries are looking into reducing the number of titles approved for education to as little as one and others are contemplating state publishing."

Anderson, Porter **Marrakesh Named Host of 2020 IPA African Publishing Seminar.**

<https://publishingperspectives.com/2019/06/marrakesh-named-host-2020-africa-seminar-amid-new-cooperative-agreements-ipa-nairobi-2019-seminar/> (Posted 15 June 2019)

Anderson, Porter **'Women at the Forefront': Three Interviews from PublisHer at Nairobi.**

<https://publishingperspectives.com/2019/07/publisher-women-event-africa-markets-ipa-nairobi-2019-seminar/> (Posted 08 July 2019)

Chakava, Henry **My Lifelong Involvement in African Indigenous Languages.**

<https://www.eastafricanpublishers.com/the-chairmans-paper/>

This is another/earlier version of Henry Chakava's 'Publishing Ecosystem Talk' presented at the IPA Nairobi Seminar.

Copyright Clearance Center Beyond the Book **The Fight to Improve Publishing in Africa. Transcript: Africa Rising.**

<https://beyondthebookcast.com/transcripts/africa-rising/> (Posted 10 June 2019)

Podcast and transcript of an interview with Lawrence Njagi, President of the Kenya Publishers Association, who co-hosted the Nairobi Seminar.

Dubai Cares **Dubai Cares and International Publishers Association Forge Partnership to Support the Future of African Publishing.**

<http://www.dubaicare.ae/en/news/media-library/news-releases/dubai-cares-and-international-publishers-association-forge-partnership-to-support-the-future-of-afri.html> (Posted 20 May 2019)

EditAfrica

<http://www.editafrica.com/fr/>

A full report (and podcast) about the IPA Seminar will appear on the EditAfrica pages shortly.

Facebook – Book Publishing in Africa Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/233568780016434/>

Discussion forum.

Healy, Michael **African Publishers Explore Copyright at Africa Rising Summit.**

<http://www.copyright.com/blog/african-publishers-explore-copyright-at-africa-rising-summit/?fbclid=IwAR2i7KNkz9eh2nWoW4moMD029tcc6FT7BuENSlfzTSUX3OkUMHyPMpLg> (Posted 27 June 2019)

Insight Wells Research Ltd. **African Publishers Survey 2019.**

<http://www.insightwells.co.ke/>

Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/Insight-Wells-Research-Limited-757216188008328/?tn-str=k*F
(Contrary to a posting on this Facebook page, this report is *not* actually published yet)

Kagunda, Shingai/Prestige Bookshop **The Future of Publishing is African.**

<https://prestigebookshop.com/the-future-of-publishing-is-african/> (Posted 28 June 2019)

Murua, James **International Publishers Association Nairobi Seminar: PublisHer Forum.**

http://www.jamesmurua.com/international-publishers-association-nairobi-seminar-publisherforum/?fbclid=IwAR3caVCD2DrB4dabO_oOLzbp7aRhmVTTnjekuLA9uto2DZQ75FaJtvILsLY (Posted 20 June 2019)

Murua, James **International Publishers Association Nairobi Seminar 2019 Panels.**

http://www.jamesmurua.com/international-publishers-association-nairobi-seminar-2019-panels/?fbclid=IwAR13tS1aiyu6asaaqqGrearrZYdJDJd7wiSgEGXSjMnHgiWBCUxQ68Cb6_c
(Posted 20 June 2019)

Murua, James **International Publishers Association Seminar for Marrakesh, Morocco in 2020.**

<http://www.jamesmurua.com/international-publishers-association-seminar-for-marrakesh-morocco-in-2020/>
(Posted 21 June 2019)

Murua, James **A Snapshot of the International Publishers Association Seminar in Nairobi in June 2019.**

<https://www.jamesmurua.com/a-snapshot-of-the-international-publishers-association-seminar-in-nairobi-in-june-2019/> (Posted 25 June 2019)

Nawotka, Ed **The Fight to Improve Publishing in Africa.**

https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/international/trade-shows/article/80532-the-fight-to-improve-publishing-in-africa.html?fbclid=IwAR3eHHQhyB1OzdSBSk0k8wNE7bMRI4xhaBPgNC7RCpz_ASrdIW0l--WdixI (Posted 21 June 2019)

A version of this article also appeared in the 06/24/2019 issue of *Publishers Weekly* under the headline: IPA Focuses on Improving Publishing in Africa.

New Publishing Standard - Publish Africa Newsletter.

<https://mailchi.mp/dca868480d6f/streetlib-publish-africa-newsletter-1?e=075ffd321e>

Publishing Perspectives – Special Issue: Africa Rising.

<https://publishingperspectives.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Publishing-Perspectives-Magazine-African-Publishing-June-2019-Magazine.pdf>

Special issue on African publishing to coincide with the IPA Seminar in Nairobi. “Experts at IPA’s second seminar on African publishing discuss opportunities and issues in the book business.”

Wanner, Zukiswa **Discard the Odd and Publish in Africa.**

<https://mg.co.za/article/2019-06-21-00-discard-the-odd-and-publish-in-africa> (Posted 21 June 2019)

Kenya based South African writer Zukiswa Wanner says “there were times during the seminar that I was downright sceptical, and yet there were moments too of immense hope.”

