

**AFRICAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE
ON SCIENCE CENTRES AND MUSEUMS
LUSAKA (ZAMBIA), 10–14 JANUARY, 2006,**

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES: 8 COUNTRIES (INCLUDING 5 MEMBER COUNTRIES, 1 INDUSTRY NETWORK MEMBER OF THE CENTRE AND 2 NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES)

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 25 SCIENTISTS AND SENIOR EXPERTS FROM 8 COUNTRIES

Science is a part of our culture and society, and science centres and science museums provide a distinctive networking between the community, the school and the home giving them a unique role in the educational infrastructure. In view of the immense importance attached by the NAM S&T Centre to science centres and science museums in the society and development, an international workshop was organised by the Centre focusing on 'The Role of Science Centres in Development Strategies' in Kolkata, India during Nov-Dec 2002. At the conclusion of this workshop a Kolkata Declaration was adopted, emphasising on holding a general workshop on science centers for all developing countries once every alternate year and a regional workshop during the intervening period. In pursuance thereof, the Centre in partnership with the Maloka Science Centre of Colombia organised the 1st Knowledge Fest and 2nd International Forum and Workshop on 'Culture of Science, Technology and Innovation in Society' in Bogotá, Colombia during March 24-26, 2004 as a regional workshop for the Latin American and Caribbean countries. Subsequently, the Centre held an international workshop on the theme 'The Changing role of Science Centres and Museums in Developing Countries' on October 20-22, 2004 in Hanoi in collaboration with the Center for Regional Research & Development (CRD), Ministry of Science & Technology of Vietnam.

With the approval of its Governing Council, the NAM S&T Centre, jointly with the National Science Centre, Zambia, organised the African Regional Conference on 'Enhanced Role of Science Centres and Museums in Developmental Strategies' at Lusaka during 10-14 January 2006. The workshop was, among others, aimed at proposing strategies for the formulation and application of programmes and projects for the development of a culture of science, technology and innovation, bringing together the science popularisation experts and museologists to share their knowledge and ideas about the role of science centres and museums in development strategies and the benefits to society, and sustainable development by better exploitation of science centres and museums through communication and media.

Mr. Gaston Chola, Deputy Minister of Education of Zambia inaugurated the workshop after the opening remarks from Prof. Arun P. Kulshreshtha, Director, NAM S&T Centre, Mr. Michelo D. B. Hakasenke, Director, Teacher Education and Specialised Services and Mr. Festus Hang'andu Mungo, Chief Education Officer - Specialised Services of Zambia of the Ministry of Education, Zambia.

Twenty five scientists and senior experts from 8 countries, which included Angola [Mr. Emmanuel Jeronimo Jaime João Chitende, Angolan Embassy in Zambia], Botswana [Mrs. Gloria Tiny Seitei, Senior Communications Officer, Botswana Technology Centre, Gaborone], India [Dr. Tapan K. Ganguly, Director, Science City, Kolkata and Dr. Abhay Kothari, Manthan, Ahmedabad], Japan [Mr. Hideo Nakano, Senior Volunteer, JICA], Pakistan [Dr. Mrs. Alia Bano Munshi, Principal Scientific Officer, PCSIR Complex, Karachi], South Africa [Dr. Richard Waller, Greenhouse Management Services, Johannesburg and Mr. Alfred Tsipa, President SAASTEC and Manager, Unizul Science Centre, Empangeni], Sri Lanka [Mr. Arumahennadige Piyasiri, Mechanical Engineer, National Engineering Research and Development Centre, Ja-ela] and Zambia [Mr. John S. Muyangana, Principal Education Officer, Mrs. Hilda L. Nyemba, Mr. Donald K. Mwaba and Mr. James M. Chongo, Senior Education Officer and other officials of the National Science Centre. Mr. George S. Mudenda, Director, Lusaka National Museum; and Mr. Lloyd S. Thole from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Vocational Training (MSTV) also attended the regional conference. They presented status papers on the activities related to the science centres and museums in their countries.

Dr. Paul Zambezi, Permanent Secretary, MSTV, who is also the Focal Point person for the NAM S&T Centre in Zambia, gave a talk at the end of the technical sessions. Visits were organised to the National Science Centre (NSC) of Zambia and the Lusaka Museum. The visit at the NSC highlighted among other projects the development of the Science Park where, so far, three exhibits are in place. The other aspect of the NSC showed the effort they are making in promoting the teaching of science and technology subjects by the production of various teaching aids.

The concluding session was devoted to the discussion on preparing recommendations for the governments of the developing countries and use by the relevant agencies, after which the Certificates of Participation were awarded to the participants by Mr. M. D. B. Hakasenke, Director, Teacher Education and Specialised Services of Zambia. The final recommendations are appended to this report.

The foreign participants also took this opportunity to visit the magnificent Victoria Falls at Livingstone situated about 500 km south of Lusaka bordering with Zimbabwe and the Science Museum in Livingstone town.

LUSAKA RECOMMENDATIONS

An international regional conference on Science Centres and Museums was organised in Lusaka, Zambia from 10-14 January 2006 with an objective of bringing together science popularization experts and museologists to share knowledge and ideas about the role of science centres and museums in development strategies and the benefits of society. The participants in the conference included the experts and museologists from Angola, Botswana, India, Japan, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Zambia. The conference emphasised the need to equip our people with scientific learning and thinking skills.

The deliberations of the conference ended with the following recommendations:

- Realising that science centers and museums are very strong vehicle for popularization of science among the common people and are very useful tool for supplementing curriculum teaching in science in schools and colleges, the participants recommended that every African country which does not have a science centre or a museum in the country may seriously consider the establishment of such institutions, and in doing so, may seek the assistance of other countries that have already succeeded in this direction.
- There is urgent need for an initiative to explore a potentially expanded role for science centres and museums so that they can effectively play their role in development strategies of each country.
- The participants urged the Governments of all the developing countries to strengthen their commitment to the reinforcement of science and museums through increased funding and support.
- It was proposed that subject to its internal formalities, SAASTEC from Southern Africa may join the NAM S&T Centre as its S&T-Industry member.
- It was proposed that SAASTEC investigate cooperation strategies with the appropriate organisations in India, which has the largest network of science centres in the NAM countries.
- There is need to upgrade the National Science Centre of Zambia to a fully-fledged entity, which will help in spreading science popularization within the country.
- Local and international partnerships among individual institutions should be promoted through networking and further there is need to extend this to other centres and institutions.
- It is recommended that science centres and museums, which have private partnerships, are allowed to be legally structured to afford tax relief to private sector benefactors.
- The next international conference on science centres and museums may be organised by the NAM S&T Centre in association with a competent agency once again in an African country, or a country in the Middle Eastern / Arab regions.