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THE AGA KHAN AND PRIME MINISTER SIGN HISTORIC MOU AT NAIROBI NATIONAL MUSEUMS



His Highness the Aga Khan (3rd from left) and Prime Minister Hon.Raila Odinga accompanied by a team of Government delegates and key Museum officials at the Nairobi National Museums during the signing of the MOU to rehabilitate City Park

His Highness the Aga Khan and Prime Minister Hon.Raila Odinga witnessed the signing of an agreement to rehabilitate City Park on 29th November 2012 at the Nairobi National Museums Ecology Hall now renamed AgaKhan Hall. The agreement was reached after a two year negotiation over the possibility of returning the facility to its original use.

The project which will start in 2013 will include environmental improvements, landscape architectural conservation and creation of new facilities at the park. An amphitheatre, a swimming pool and a food court will also be built at the park to generate income.

The Aga Khan Trust is committed to investing in rehabilitation of cultural facilities that improve the lives of the poor. The trust is undertaking ten similar projects worldwide with Nairobi City Park being the second in East Africa after a similar one in Zanzibar.

Present during the signing of the agreement were Local Government Permanent Secretary Karega Mutahi and PS Ministry of Heritage Jacob Ole Miaron, Nairobi Town Clerk Tom Odongo, Mr. Luis Montreal for the Aga Khan Trust.

DIRECTOR GENERAL'S MESSAGE



As we come to the end of the year and usher in the festive season, I want to sincerely thank all our visitors and partners in enabling the National Museums of Kenya achieve its goal and mandate in preserving and promoting Kenya's rich heritage to Kenyans and the world. May I take this opportunity to welcome you all to the nearest Museum near you to sample our great activities being held around your community.

The National Museums of Kenya will also embark on introducing new tourism products into the market together with our partners in the industry. An example of this is the Monuments Tourist Circuit which we hope to unveil soon.

We also continue to promote art through various exhibitions and urge you to visit the Nairobi National Museum and Nairobi Gallery

I wish you all a Happy Holiday season and once again Karibuni! Welcome to our museums wherever the holiday season gets you

MUSEUM MARKS ITS 4TH SCIENCE ANNUAL EXPO



L-R: Hon. Wilfred Ombui Assistant Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Patrick Maundu of KENRIK Department, Dr. Mwachala Director Research & Collections and Dr. Ali Adan, section head Phytochemistry during the Science Expo.

National Museums of Kenya marked its 4th Science Expo on 16th & 17th November, 2012 at the Nairobi National Museums outside courtyard with the Assistant Minister for National Heritage and Culture Hon. Wilfred Ombui gracing the opening ceremony. The Science Expo preceded an event dubbed “Dinner with the Turkana Boy” on 8th November, 2012. The exhibit of the Turkana boy drew a lot of interest to the rest of the world and publicity for Kenya as the Cradle Mankind. A tour was organised for our stakeholders for the very first time to the vault where the original Turkana boy remains. During the 2012 London Olympic Games, a cast of the Turkana boy or commonly known as Nariokotome Boy (the most complete early human skeleton ever found) was exhibited at the Kenya London House as a key Brand for Kenya. The Turkana boy is 1.5 million years old.

A wide display of our science and research achievements during the Science Expo provided an opportune moment for the public to interact with our researchers on both open days. NMK has contributed to scientific advancement in Kenya through research, publications, education, exhibitions and acts as a leading forum for international Scientific Collaboration. The theme this year was “Our Heritage, Our Strength through time” which was in line with the current development agenda of our Nation and as captured in Vision 2030. The scope of research at NMK comprises a diverse array of fields including Palaeo-anthropology, Cultural, Zoological and Botanic studies. Two sub-themes were captured in the expo, namely; Unity in Diversity and Knowledge for posterity.

NMK has continued to earn itself unrivalled reputation as an international centre of excellence in heritage research and as a nation we have to realize that heritage research is a key ingredient to the realization of our country's vision 2030.

A LOOK AT NYERI MUSEUM



Above: Nyeri Museum

Nyeri Museum is housed National monument which was used as a “*Native law court*”. It was built in 1924 and started functioning in 1925. Its main objective was to deal with customary law cases, previously dealt with by clan elders in the villages. As these cases increased, one courtroom could not handle the volume and thus another hall was built.

Thus, the cases were divided among the two courts, with court one dealing with civil cases like pregnancy and debtor cases, and court two dealing with criminal cases like theft and murder.

The first law court is unique in the sense that the seats are inbuilt and concrete, with those on which the judges used to sit on being slightly raised, giving a sense of authority.

2012 LAMU CULTURAL FESTIVAL



Left: Donkey race - the most popular attraction during the Lamu festival



Right: Dhow racing during this year Lamu Cultural festival

As an annual event, Lamu Cultural festivities have become a permanent feature in Lamu's calendar. This year, Lamu Cultural festival took place on 15th - 18th November, 2012 and attracted thousands of visitors to Lamu, now a world heritage site. To make the festive days lively, the National Museums of Kenya in collaboration with local communities organized a number of entertaining activities and competitions alongside the religious events hosted by Riadhha Mosque.

The purpose of this festival is to promote the Swahili heritage and preserve the local culture of the islands. Founded in 2001. The festival is very popular and the agenda reflects the richness of Swahili culture.

The festival is organized by the Lamu Cultural promotion group.

MOMBASA CULTURAL FESTIVAL AND SWAHILI FAIR



Swahili men perform Twari la ndia dance during the Mombasa Cultural festival

The 5th RISSEA Mombasa Cultural Festival and Swahili fair embraced the city of Mombasa on 12th -16th December to highlight the talents of both artists and musicians from all over Kenya. The festival's highlight is a street parade complete with representatives from the city's many cultures and communities.

A main stage highlights local dancers and bands, while a second stage showcases traditional Kenyan dancing. There are many crafts here available for purchase and this is a festive time to visit the city.

This festival is well-known throughout Kenya and is known as one of the premier festivals in the entire country. Great costumes, amazing floats and lively music make this a fascinating event to be in town for if you really want to look at Kenyan culture and its modern day applications.

EXHIBITIONS

An Evening walk with Art

On 6th December, 2012 the Nairobi National Museums showcased for the first time the permanent art collection that boasts Contemporary art and traditional art spanning 100 years. An awarding ceremony also took place on the same day for a National art competition that was organized earlier in the year dubbed “*Experiencing Kenyan Heritage through art.*” Elsard Kigen took the overall prize and received a one-week all paid expenses trip to London to view various art galleries. The main sponsor of the exhibition was Absolut Vodka.

‘Layers’

This is a unique science-art exhibition by award winning Kenyan artists James Muriuki and Miriam Syowia Kyambi that took place on 9th December 2012 at the AgaKhan Hall.

Challenges of nationhood

This exhibition of stone sculptures by Art Piece Africa’s Naftali Mommanyi opened on 11th December, 2012 also featuring Samuel Njuguna, Willie Wamuti, Robert Njoroge and Daniel Kinyanjui. The exhibition ends 22nd January, 2013.

Varied Perceptions

An exhibition by Shake Makelele and photographs by David Mbiyu that showcased on 11th December, 2012 to end on January 22nd 2013.

4TH EDITION OF KWANI LITERARY FESTIVAL COMES TO NAIROBI NATIONAL MUSEUM

The ‘*Kwani Literary Festival*’ 2012 kicked off at the Nairobi National Museum Auditorium on 11th -15th December, 2012. The fourth edition saw writers, poets, literary academics and theorists come together. Notable writers present were Somali poet Hadraawi, London based Somali novelist Nadifa Mohamed, Sudanese –English novelist Jamal Mahjoub and Eritrean writer and historian Alemseged Tefsayi to share their work with writers from other parts of the continent.

Kenya’s Binyavanga Wainana graced our Auditorium in conversation with Kojo Laing and John Sibi Okumu interviewed John Githongo on his starring role in the book ‘*It’s our turn to eat.*’ The festival also graced Martin Kimani of CREAM in conversation about Narratives of Peace and Conflict. Other popular Kenyan novelists like Charles Mangua and David Maillu took the stage at the Ampitheatre talking about the Art of Popular Literature.

The Kwani Literary festival is a celebration of literature and its role in our lives.



The Right Hon. Prime Minister Raila Odinga and His Highness the AgaKhan look at the architectural plan meant for the restoration of city park at the Agakhan Hall, Nairobi National Museums



His Highness the AgaKhan and the Prime Minister, Hon. Raila Odinga after signing the M.O.U to restore



Kamoya Kimeu, one of the world most successful fossil hunters, he discovered Turkana boy poses with Mary Kimonye CEO Brand Kenya



Dr. Manthi explains to guests the intricacies involving the Turkana Boy as evidence pertaining to the Evolution of man. On display is the original remains of the Turkana Boy fossil. This was during the Dinner with the Turkana Boy on 8th November when doors were opened to the public to original remains of the Turkana boy at the vault.

CHRISTMAS PARTY AT THE CHILDREN MEETING PLACE



On 24th December 2012 the Botanic Gardens came alive with 200 children living in the slums and Nairobi streets celebrating Christmas. The Children serenaded what is referred to as The Children Meeting Place which is the tree at the Botanic Gardens.

The key guest speaker representing NMK Director, Dr. Idle Farah was Botanic Gardens Section Head Mr. William Wambugu. The Christmas party culminated with games, dance and face painting for the children.

About the The Children Meeting Place

The Children's Meeting Place at the NMK was inaugurated in April 2003 at the First Roots Meeting when mayors from Sweden and the Lake Victoria Region came together with indigenous people and dialogued with children from five nations. Dr. Farah, officially handed over the tree to the children of Kenya – as a place of meeting and dialogue. The Mother Tree of all Children's Meeting Places of the world is at the United Nations Nairobi, Gigiri and was inaugurated 2001. Leaders around the world congratulated children to have a place where their voices will be heard and respected. In his letter to the Opening Ceremony, Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations at that time said: – In Africa we always met under a tree to dialogue important issues and I'm happy this tradition is coming to the United Nations. Since then many mayors have chosen a tree close to their city/municipal hall to be a place where they meet, listen and dialogue the concerns of children.

Four years ago Globetree started to invite children who live in the slums and in the streets for a Christmas party. Last year the party was held at the Children's Meeting Place of Nairobi City Council which also is the Nairobi Christmas Tree. H.W. the Mayor of Nairobi officially handed over the tree to the children in October last year and the 24 December the Mayor personally participated in the party.



Above /clockwise: Mr. William Wambugu Section Head Botanic Gardens addresses Children at the Christmas party at The Children meeting place

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