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Volume 1, Issue 1

KESSA Newsletter

Executive Council

Dr. Kefa Otiso -
President
Dr. Maurice Amutabi -
Vice President

Dr. Francis Koti -
Secretary
Dr. Gichana Manyara -
Treasurer

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A Newsletter of the Kenya Scholars and Studies Association (KESSA)

Message from the President

Greetings! The Kenya Scholars and Studies Association (KESSA) executive is delighted to send you this inaugural KESSA newsletter. Through it we hope to keep you abreast of important organizational milestones.

What started as an idea in the summer of 2006 is on its way to being a vibrant academic association. In the past year, we have managed to get the organization registered as a non-profit scholarly association in the State of Ohio. Meanwhile, we have applied for and are awaiting federal tax-exempt approval.

The Kenya Scholars and Studies Association (KESSA) exists for the purpose of (1) Promoting scholarly, scientific and research work in or about Kenya in all scholarly disciplines and persuasions; (2) Promoting and facilitating cooperation through the exchange of ideas and meaningful dialogue among groups and/or persons engaged in scholarly, scientific, and research on Kenya; (3) Encouraging and

facilitating the dissemination of information, publications, and other scholarly works on Kenya and; (4) Organizing workshop panels, discussions, symposia, and conferences on Kenya.

The birth of KESSA is timely for two reasons. First, there is now a critical mass of Kenyan and non-Kenyan scholars who have a research interest in/on Kenya. Although many other forums of networking and collaboration exist, "there is no place quite like home".

KESSA would not be where it is without your support as members. For that I say, thank you. I'm also indebted to the hard work and dedication of the following people: The Interim executive that consists of Drs. Maurice Amutabi (Vice-president), Francis Koti (Secretary), and Gichana Manyara (Treasurer); Drs. Bosire Maragia and Teresa Francis for their legal input and ; Bowling Green State University for institutional support.

The second reason for the timely birth of KESSA is much more somber – the very real possibility that our beloved Kenya could unravel before our eyes unless the key protagonists put country above their personal interests. Like everybody else, I hope that the now "infamous" December 27, 2007 presidential elections would not be the beginning of the death of our motherland but of its rebirth. Let us commit to doing everything within our individual and organizational powers to ensure the rebirth of a more just, united, and stronger Kenya. Thank you and once again enjoy reading our Newsletter.

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Welcoming You as Founder Members

The Kenya Scholars and Studies Association (KESSA) wishes to thank and extend a warm welcome to all members – *Karibuni*. The paid-up membership of the association has increased significantly and we are excited about the growing volume of expression of interest in the association. You will be happy to know that all *bona fide* paid-up members by **March 31,**

2008 will receive a founder member's certificate. If you have not registered, why miss the opportunity?

The membership application form is separately attached. To register, please mail your duly-filled form directly to the President or the Treasurer. All the contact information is provided at the end of this newsletter.

Subscription to our online listserve has also increased significantly and we expect that number to continue growing. Please encourage your Kenyan friends and other scholars with interest in Kenya to join.

KESSA Listserve

KESSA listserv continues to be one of our most effective tools for communication and dialogue. The energy and enthusiasm has been terrific and members are encouraged to continue to contribute freely on issues and matters that foster KESSA objectives and ideals. To send information to all members in the listserv, please email it to:

KenyaStudiesAssociation@yahoogroups.com.

The KESSA executive would like to emphasize that communications on KESSA listserv should be respectful, professional, and informative. Contributions should (1) seek to benefit KESSA members from diverse academic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds and interests, (2) avoid personal attacks, and (3) be backed up with evidence to the extent possible. Please note that

all *forwarded* information needs to be so identified and the purpose clearly stated. Although disagreements are inevitable and expected, there is no need for contributions to be personal and or polemical. Attacks should be directed at ideas and arguments not people.

Please help us to keep the KESSA listserv a professional and respectful forum.

In the Next Issue

In future, we would like to include **member achievements** in this newsletter. This includes (but is not limited to) new books, major grants and initiatives, major awards, major appointments, and other achievements that

merit recognition. We encourage you to forward these to the secretary Dr. Francis Koti at: ftkoti@una.edu. Please provide complete information (and source if third party information). The next bulletin will be

out on April 15, 2008. *Please make sure that all the items you would like to see included in this section are received by the secretary by **March 15, 2008.***

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Activities to Date

Several important events have taken place since the inception of this association. These include:

August 2006 – Dr. Kefa Otiso compiles a list of known Kenyan scholars (faculty and graduate students) in the US and approaches them with a proposal to form an academic association for Kenyan scholars and other scholars with interest in Kenya. The proposal receives overwhelming support and soon after, an online listserv is established in *Yahoo* to facilitate communication and discussion on the proposed organization. The listserv soon grows into a discussion forum.

November 17, 2006 – At the annual meeting of the African Studies Association (ASA)

conference in San Francisco, CA, the idea of Kenya Scholars and Studies Association (KESSA) is formally tabled by Dr. Maurice Amutabi to a group of scholars, both Kenyan as well as those interested in Kenya. The informal advisory committee consisting of Dr. Maurice Amutabi, Dr. Francis Koti, Dr. Gichana Manyara and Dr. Kefa Otiso is asked to lead the association on an interim basis and to spearhead its registration.

March, 2007 – The interim leadership completes a draft constitution. The constitution stipulates the organizational structure including: name, purpose, membership, structure and composition, duties and responsibilities.

April 4, 2007: KESSA obtains Employer

Identification Number (EIN)

June 4, 2007: KESSA is registered as a nonprofit in the State of Ohio

August 21, 2007: Application for tax exempt status is submitted to the federal government (Status: Under consideration)

September 6, 2007: KESSA applies for affiliation with the ASA (Status pending).

October 19, 2007: ASA meeting in NYC. KESSA holds a meeting led by Dr. Amutabi. Draft constitution is tabled and ratified pending some amendments, KESSA solicits for membership dues, plans for inaugural KESSA conference, and a KESSA journal begin to take shape.

Upcoming Events and Deadlines

March 31, 2008 – Registration deadline for recognition as a KESSA founder member. Please pay your dues on time to avoid a last minute rush. All registered members by **March 31, 2008** will receive a founder member's certificate. Please send membership dues to the President or Treasurer using the attached form. Regular membership is \$50 and Students is \$25.

April 15, 2008 – The second volume of our Newsletter will be released. Please forward to us any important information you think should be included in our Newsletter. All items must be received by the Secretary by March 15, 2008.

July/August, 2008 – First inaugural KESSA Conference. The actual date and venue for this conference have not been

set. The venue and date will be relayed to all members shortly along with the request for abstracts.

November 13-16, 2008 – Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association (ASA) will be held in Chicago, IL.

Please let us know of any other upcoming events that may be of benefit to members and we will publish them in the next edition of this Newsletter.

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**Coming up in this
corner:**

[kessawebsite](http://kessawebsite.com)

KESSA Officials

Our interim officials are:

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Please feel free to contact
any of us on matters
pertaining to the
association.

Also in the pipeline

KESSA website – plans
are underway to develop a
website for the
association. Information
regarding this will be
communicated as soon as
the website is up and
running.

KESSA Journal – An
effort to establish a journal
for the association is at an
advanced stage. Members
will be notified via email or
any other KESSA forum
regarding this.

**First Inaugural KESSA
Conference** – The Interim
executive is at an
advanced stage in
securing a venue, setting
a date and determining a
theme for our first
inaugural conference.
Information regarding this
will be forthcoming.
Please check your emails
for request for abstracts.