

KESSA Newsletter

March 2009

Volume 2, Issue 1

A Newsletter of the Kenya Scholars and Studies Association



A portion of the participants at the Inaugural KESSA conference at Bowling Green State University, August 1-2, 2008

Executive Council

Dr. Kefa Otiso -
President

Dr. Maurice Amutabi -
Vice President

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

Inside this Issue

President's Message 1

First KESSA
Conference 2

2009 KESSA
Conference 2

Member Achievements
3

Upcoming Events &
Deadlines 3

KESSA Membership 4

Message from the President

Greetings. The KESSA executive is pleased to send you this issue of the KESSA newsletter. In it you will see highlights of our accomplishments in the past year, including our successful inaugural conference. The conference attracted over 50 participants from the U.S. and Canada. Among the distinguished conference participants were Dr. Jendayi Frazer, the immediate past Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and H.E. Peter Ogego, Kenya's Ambassador to the United States. Among other things, conference participants deliberated on how best to mobilize and facilitate the participation of Kenyans in Diaspora in the country's development. Specific recommendations are contained in the conference report that we released at the end of the conference.

Judging by the number of

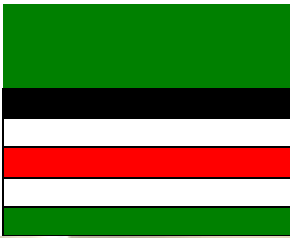
abstract submissions received so far from Kenya, Sweden, U.K., the U.S. and Canada, it is clear that this year's conference is off to an excellent start. Please send yours in by April 20, 2009. Plans are also underway to launch a scholarly journal. We're working on a more robust website. Please visit us at www.kessa.org/. When fully functional, the website will greatly ease our operations. In short, we are well on our way to becoming a premier scholarly association.

I congratulate all those featured in the *Member Accomplishments* section and invite you to keep us posted of your successes. We love to celebrate with you.

KESSA operations are primarily funded by members and well wishers

like you. If you have not done so already, please renew your 2009 KESSA membership. *KESSA membership dues are tax-deductible*. I also wish to acknowledge and thank Bowling Green State University (BGSU) for its institutional support in the past year. I specifically wish to thank the university's Office of the President, College of Arts & Sciences, School of Earth, Society & Environment, the Africana Studies Program, and the International Studies Program for their financial support. I also wish to thank the rest of the executive team for a job well done. It is a pleasure to work with you all.

Please help publicize the upcoming conference and we look forward to seeing you all in Bowling Green in August. Thanks.
Dr. Kefa Otiso



First KESSA Conference

The Kenya Scholars & Studies Association (KESSA) held its inaugural conference at Bowling Green State University (BGSU) on August 1-2, 2008. The theme of the conference was ***The Future of Kenya***. The conference sought to explore Kenya's future options following its near descent into civil war due to the disputed December 2007 presidential elections. Dr. Simon Morgan-Russell, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at BGSU welcomed the audience to campus. In addition to various paper presentations, the conference welcomed a keynote address from Dr. Jendayi Frazer, Assistant Secretary of State for

African Affairs. Peter Ogego, Kenya's ambassador to the United States, also attended and addressed the audience.



Dean Simon Morgan-Russell

The conference, which had an audience of more than 50, featured more than 15 presentations. A topic which featured prominently in the two-day conference was constitutional reform in Kenya. Addressing this issue, Shadrack Nasong'o called for a broad-based, inclusive constitutional engineering with a binding social contract between the State and the civil society.

Emphasizing the government's commitment to open dialogue with Kenyans in the Diaspora, Ambassador Peter Ogego also urged the Kenyan Diaspora to get involved in Kenya's socioeconomic development by making



Ambassador Peter Ogego meaningful investments.



Shadrack Nasong'o

The conference ended on a high note with a call for the Kenyan Diaspora to:

- 1) get more involved in championing the country's long-term interests;
- 2) take the lead in forging a national identity that can help heal the nation from the December 2007 conflict and;
- 3) become more organized for professional collaboration.

More information and pictures from the conference can be found on our website at:

<http://kessa.org/>

sessions. The deadline for abstract submission is **April 20, 2009**. Abstracts will be accepted without the registration fee but the fees, (whose deadline is May 1, 2009) are mandatory for conference participation.



Dr. Kefa Otiso (L), KESSA President, confers a service award on Dr. Jendayi Frazer (R), U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs.



Dr. Francis Koti, KESSA Secretary (L) confers a service award on H.E. Peter Ogego (R).



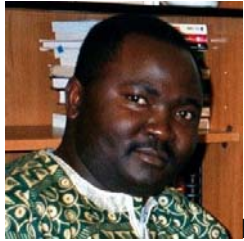
From left to right, Kefa Otiso, Mary Otiso, Patrick Dikirr, Lisa Aubrey, Amb. Ogego (in necktie) and Esmond Onsomu on a tour of Northwest Ohio at the end of the inaugural KESSA Conference.

2009 Kessa Conference

The Second (2009) KESSA Annual Conference will be held **on July 31-August 1, 2009** at Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio, USA. The 2009 conference presents us with an exciting opportunity to build on the

success of the Inaugural (2008) KESSA Conference. The theme of this year's conference is Perspectives on Kenya's Development in the 21st Century. KESSA is currently accepting abstracts and organized

Member Achievements



Maurice Amutabi is an Assistant Professor in the Department of History at Central Washington University, Ellensburg, WA. Dr. Amutabi was the recipient of the 2008 *College of Arts and Humanities Faculty Research Award* from Central Washington University. Dr. Amutabi is also the author of *Because of Honor*, a novel, and co-author (with M. Oketch - below) of *Perspectives on Lifelong Learning in Africa: The Distant Future*. New York: Springer, 2008.



Moses Oketch is a Senior Lecturer in Educational Planning in the Institute of Education at the University of London, UK. Dr. Oketch is co-publisher with M. Amutabi (above)



Francis Koti is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography at the University of North Alabama, Florence, AL. Dr. Francis Koti was the recipient of the 2008 *Eleanor Gauder Excellence in Teaching Award* of the University of North Alabama, Florence, AL.



Bernard Manyibe recently obtained a PhD in Leadership Studies from Bowling Green State University. He is the author of *College Student Leadership Development*. 2008 (VDM Verlag Dr. Mueller e.K.) ISBN: 3836460149. It is available from Amazon and other booksellers. Dr. Manyibe is currently President of The Youth Vision International (www.theyouthvisioninternational.org/).



Robert Maxon is a Professor in the Department of History at West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV. Dr. Maxon was named winner of the *Outstanding Teacher Award* for the Eberly College of Arts & Sciences and a *WVU Outstanding Teacher* at the university level. The main reason for the awards is successful work with doctoral students. Some of you know that the great majority of the dissertations he supervises have to do with some aspect of Kenya history. As a matter of fact, by the end of 2008, Dr. Maxon had graduated a record fifteen Kenyan history-related PhD's.



Shadrack Nasong'o is an Assistant Professor of International Studies, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN. Dr. Nasong'o is the author of a new book: Nasong'o, S. 2008. *The African Search for Stable Forms of Statehood: Essays in Political Criticism*. New York: The Edwin Mellen Press. ISBN: 13: 978-0-7734-5327-4; 10: 0-77345237-0.



Celia Nyamweru is a Professor in the Department of Anthropology at St. Lawrence University, Canton, NY. Dr. Nyamweru (with M. Sheridan-below) are the authors of: Nyamweru, C. and M. Sheridan. 2008. *African Sacred Groves*. James Currey (Oxford, UK) and Ohio University Press. ISBN: 978-0-8214-1788-1; ISBN: 978-0-8214-1789-8. The book contains over ten case studies of African sacred forests, covering all areas of the continent from Madagascar to Morocco and Kenya and Uganda to Sierra Leone.



Michael Sheridan is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Middlebury College, VT. Dr. Sheridan is co-publisher with C. Nyamweru – (above).



Kefa Otiso is an Associate Professor of Geography at Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH. During the 2008 Jamhuri Day celebrations, The Republic of Kenya, through H.E. President Mwai Kibaki, awarded Dr. Otiso the Moran of the Order of the Golden Heart award. H.E. Peter Ogego, the Kenyan Ambassador to the United States, will confer the award on Dr. Otiso at a special ceremony on the Bowling Green State University campus in April 2009.

In the Next Issue

We wish to continue this service to all members through recognition of accomplishments that merit mention. These include, but are not limited to: promotions, honors and awards, new books, new discoveries and other achievements that warrant recognition. Please provide sufficient information including: name, designation, affiliation, address, website, email, and full description of achievement. Please note that you can nominate other Kessa members for whose accomplishment details you know well, and deem correct to the best of your knowledge.

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President's Message 1

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Conference 2

2009 KESSA
Conference

2

Member Achievements
3

Up Coming Events &
Deadlines 3

KESSA Membeship 4

**KESSA Contact
Information**

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Studies Association**
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Bowling Green OH, 43403
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Email: kmotiso@bgsu.edu

KESSA Membership

KESSA Website

The Kenya Scholars and Studies Association is pleased to announce that it has established a new website. Please visit us at:

<http://kessa.org/>

Here you will find more information about us, see upcoming events, or even get an opportunity to blog. Enjoy.

KESSA Journal

An effort to establish a journal for the association is at an advanced stage. Members will be notified when the journal is launched.

Upcoming Events and Deadlines

March 21-27, 2009 – Association of American Geographers Annual Conference, Las Vegas, NV.

April 20, 2009 – 2009

KESSA Conference Abstract Submission Deadline

May 1, 2009 – 2009 KESSA Conference Registration and Payment Deadline

November 19-22, 2009 - African Studies Association Conference, New Orleans, LA

Ps. please feel free to notify us of any events that you may want to see posted in our newsletter.

Kenya Scholars and Studies Association (KESSA)

Membership Application Form

1. Name (Mr. Ms. Mrs. Dr. Prof.): _____
2. Mailing Address: _____
3. Telephone: _____ Email _____
4. Institutional Affiliation: _____
5. Discipline or Major Academic Area of interest: _____
6. Research Interests: _____

Annual Membership Dues:

Regular Member (circle one): US\$50 Students: US\$25

Honorary Member: Honorary Members shall consist of distinguished individuals upon whom the Association wishes to confer membership. Nomination for honorary membership shall be made by the KESSA Executive Council and shall incur no membership fees.

IMPORTANT: New members, please attach your payment to this form. All others just send payment. Please make checks payable to **Kenya Scholars and Studies Association (KESSA)** and mail to:

Kenya Scholars and Studies Association

c/o Department of Geography, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH 43403.

Ps. Questions and/or comments regarding information in this newsletter and any entries you would like included in our next issue should be addressed directly to Dr. Francis Koti at fkoti@una.edu. Thank you.