Experience AFRICA Rising

9th Annual Spring Forum 2012

AFRICAN STUDENTS ORGANIZATION presents AFRICA Rising

The role of intellectuals?

Venue: Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology
400 North Mathews Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801, USA
- North entrance, Room 589E -

Date: APRIL 21, 2012

Morning Session 9am-12pm
Lunch will be served

Early Afternoon Session 12:30pm-3:30pm
SDEP Panel Discussion

Late Afternoon Session 3pm-5pm

Key Talks:
- Paul T. Zelaz (UCLA Marriage)
- Tom Rossell (UIC and SDEP)
- Teresa Barnes (UIC)
- Emmanuel Nsiri (UIC and SDEP)
- Mary Thompson (University of South Carolina)
- Ana Sane (Howard University, Washington DC)

Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Admission: Free

Featuring:
- Student Presentations
- Panel Session
- Climate change, food and resource policy discussion
- Invited Speakers
The African Students Organization (ASO) is a registered student organization at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Our goals are to:

1. Unite African Students with a goal of raising their political consciousness and providing progressive leadership on issues relating to Africa.
2. Provide student members with an environment conducive to successful completion of their academic objectives.
3. Create and identify opportunities for members from the African continent and members of African descent in the Diaspora to understand each other and their different backgrounds, and enhance awareness about African issues, culture and values.
4. Help incoming African students settle and adjust to studying in the UIUC community and to give them material and moral support in pursuing their educational goals.
5. Provide a forum for discussion and debate of matters of special interest to African unity and development.
6. Build networks, forge links and cooperation with other African student organizations from other institutions.
7. Promote racial, gender, ethnic, political and economic equity, and build unity and solidarity especially with African Americans and other Third World peoples and organizations.

OUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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THE ASO FORUM

ASO organizes annual forums aimed at promoting campus awareness and activism on matters regarding the African continent and Diaspora. These forums provide students, faculty, and staff with an opportunity to showcase new research ideas in a professional and open environment. Our hope is that our forum will support creative debates, broaden knowledge, inspire innovations, suggest solutions to Africa’s problems and foster professional networking. So far, we have successfully hosted eight forums and have collaborated with departments such as the Center for African Studies (CAS) and the Department of Linguistics; and associations such as the African Cultural Association (ACA), a registered student organization at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. For details on our previous forums, visit our webpage: https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/ro/www/AfricanStudentsOrganization/forum.html
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank this year’s keynote speaker, Prof. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and all our invited speakers, presenters and facilitators for being a part of this year’s forum.

Many thanks go to the Department heads and professors who supported our work: Prof. Maimouna Barro from the Center for African Studies, Prof. Ilesanmi Adesida from the College of Engineering, Prof. Eyamba Bokamba from the Department of Linguistics, Prof. Jesse Ribot from the Department of Geography and the Beckman Institute, and Dr. Emmanuel Nuesiri from the Department of Geography.

The 2012 ASO Spring Forum was made possible through the efforts of a committee of dedicated graduate students. In addition to the current ASO executive committee, we would like to acknowledge Imelda Moise, Ifeyinwe Oyenekwu, Anne Lutomia and Wang’ombe K. Gitonga from the Department of Education Policy, Mabinty Tarawallie from the Department of Social Work, Richard Beyogle from the Department of French, Parfait Gasana from the Department of Economics and Hapsatou Wane from the Department of Comparative World Literature.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the following organizations:
- Students Organization Resource Funds (SORF)
- Center for African Studies (CAS)
- Social Dimensions of Environmental Policy (SDEP)
- The Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology
- College of Engineering, Office of the Dean
- The Francophone Ministry, Champaign-Urbana
- M & B Auto
- Euro-Motors
- Walmart

Special thanks go to Ephantus J. Muturi and Pastor Guy Lombela for their support and also to Ebenezer Acquah for volunteering his graphic design services.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Beginning in 2006 (and re-introduced in 2011), the ASO officers created two awards to recognize members and friends who have distinguished themselves through dedication to the Organization and the Champaign-Urbana African community.

- **The Ibulaimu Kakoma Award for Individual Commitment and Leadership** in honor of our Patron and mentor, the late Prof. Ibulaimu Kakoma. This year it has been awarded to Kevin Gitonga. He is one of our faithful members and a past ASO executive who has invested tremendously into our organization and the African Community.

- **The ASO Award for Outstanding Community Service**. This year, it has been awarded to Anne Lutomia for her outstanding dedication to volunteering in the Champaign-Urbana community.
AFRICA RISING: THE ROLE OF INTELLECTUALS?

Africa’s long walk towards self-reliance has been a subject of on-going debate since the advent of political independence. African intellectuals within Africa itself and especially in the African Diaspora have been both the critics of past political practices in the continent and the recipients of such criticisms for their complicity in the mismanagement of state affairs. Others are criticized for their inaction in the face of deteriorating, instead of improving, socio-economic conditions; for biting criticisms of African intellectuals, see ‘African Intellectuals: Rethinking Politics, Language, Gender and Development’ (2005; Zed Books) edited by Thandika Mkandawire. Where do we as intellectuals in the diaspora stand in this defining debate?

This year’s African Students Organization's (ASO) forum aims to address this broad question by critically analyzing the current social, economic, educational and political developments concerning Africa and how they relate to the future growth and development of the continent. The theme is geared towards dialogue and focuses on the contribution of intellectuals and their participation in the African Renaissance. What is their current participation in promoting African development? What are the existing constraints (political, economic and others) to effective participation? What are the strategies in place to both address these constraints and also impact our future development?

Welcome!

Mbheki Seni Madela
Chair, ASO Forum Planning Committee
PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Opening and Welcome Address  09:00 - 09:15
Esther Eke – President, African Students Organization (ASO)
Maimouna Barro – Associate Director, Center for African Studies

Paper Session #1: Art and Politics   09:15 - 10:15
Facilitator: Richard Beyogle – Dept of French, UIUC

09:15 - 09:35 Rising from the dead: The potential of conscientious African Cinema from yesterday to tomorrow
Hapsatou Wane, Graduate Student
World Comparative Literature, UIUC

09:35 - 09:55 China Interest in Sub-Saharan Africa
Parfait Gasana, Graduate Student
Economics, UIUC

09:55 - 10:15 Visual Art as intellectual practice: African Artists and the politics of recognition
Allyson Purpura, Ph.D
Curator, Arts of Africa and its Diaspora, UIUC

Invited talks #1   10:15 - 11:15
Facilitator: Vukoni Lupa-Lasaga – Dept. of Library and Information Science, UIUC

10:15 – 10:45 Transcontinentalism in African Intellectual History
Teresa Barnes, Prof.
Gender & Women Studies and Dept. of History, UIUC

10:45 - 11:15 Illusions of Independence in Africa
Eyamba Bokamba, Prof.
Dept. of Linguistics, UIUC

* LUNCH BREAK    11:15 - 12:30
*Concurrent with booth displays

Invited talks #2
Social Dimensions of Environmental Policy Session   12:30 – 14:15
Facilitator: Imelda Moise – Dept. of Geography, UIUC

12:30 - 12:45 Theory and reality of land privatization in West Africa: The case of Côte d’Ivoire
Thomas J. Bassett, Prof.
Dept. of Geography, UIUC

12:45 - 13:00 A comprehensive analysis of the perils of climate change in Africa and suggestions on how to ameliorate them: An application of the law of change
Anta Sane, Graduate student
Dept. of Political Science, Howard University

13:00 - 13:15 The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its impact on economic development and land politics in Africa
Emmanuel Nuesiri, Ph.D
Post-doctoral Fellow, UIUC
13:15 - 13:30  *Seeing REDD+ as a project of environmental governance*
   Mary Thompson, Graduate Student
   Dept. of Geography, University of South Carolina

13:30 – 14:15  Q & A Panel discussion

**COFFEE BREAK**  14:15 - 14:30

**Paper Session #2: The African Diaspora**  14:30 - 15:30

*Facilitator: Ifeyinwa Onyenekwu – Education Policy, Organization and Leadership, UIUC*

14:30 - 14:50 *In Pursuit of the “Golden Fleece”: The Diasporization of African Students in the United States*
   Olanipekun Oladotun Laosebikan, Graduate student.
   Educational Policy Studies, UIUC

14:50 - 15:10 *The Ewe Diaspora and the Politics of Belonging at Home*
   Djifa Kothor, Graduate Student
   African Studies, UIUC

15:10 - 15:30 *International migration of African Nurses: Turning brain drain to brain gain and brain circulation*
   Anne N. Lutomia, Graduate Student
   Education Policy and Leadership - Human Resource Dev., UIUC

**Invited Talk #3**

**Keynote Address**  15:30 - 16:30

*The Resurgence of Africa: The analytical and intellectual challenges*
   Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, Prof.
   Dean of Bellarmine College of liberal Arts, Loyola Marymount University

**Vote of Thanks and Awards Presentations**  16:30 – 17:00
   Mbhekiseni Madela – Vice President (ASO) and Chair, Forum Planning Committee.

***DISPLAY BOOTHS***

- Booth 1: Engineers without Borders (EWB)
- Booth 2: Scientific Animations Without Borders (SAWBO)
- Booth 3: African Students Organization at UIUC
- Booth 4: Office of Volunteer Programs
- Booth 5: Center for African Studies
- Booth 6: Summer Institute for languages of the Muslim World (SILMW)
ABSTRACTS

Paper Session 1

Rising from the Dead: the Potential of Conscientious African Cinema from Yesterday to Tomorrow
HAPSATOU WANE
Graduate Student – World Comparative Literature

African cinema has been lately elegiacaHy celebrated by many of its own practitioners for problematic issues of production and reception. In addition, the numerical revolution was also presented as the deathblow delivered against African cinema. African filmmakers were accused of selling the “conscience of African cinema” to get their films funded. African cultural ministries along with the governments bailed on the African film industry and movie theaters were closed. One wonders then why African cinema was at the core of the FESMAN 2010 celebrating the Renaissance of Black Culture 50 years after the Independences if it is lying on its deathbed. In this paper, I will show that though facing many challenges, African cinema is still mapping itself in conversation with the social and political context of African countries. The African cinema engagé did not follow Ousmane Sembène into the grave. Documentary films such as Tahrir 2011, The good, the Bad and The Politician are inscribed in the tradition of a Conscientious African cinema where there is a covenant to depict a reality from within and participate in the social movement by offering a recorded account of its stages. With statements from African Filmmakers and a reading of some of their films, I will demonstrate that the potential of Conscientious African Cinema is set to reach its peak in the future. The numerical Revolution is offering new perspectives in terms of production and reception for African cinema making it more accessible to an African audience through the system of itinerant cinema more and more in vogue in African countries such as Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Morocco etc. By following the trails of Conscientious African Cinema from yesterday to tomorrow, I seek to re-establish that “what interests African filmmakers is exposing the problems confronting African people” to paraphrase Ousmane Sembène, the father of African cinema who has always considered African cinema as a political means.

China Interest in Sub-Saharan Africa
PARFAIT GASANA
Graduate Student – Economics

With the rise of China as a global superpower, the country’s focus on sub-Saharan Africa poses many challenges and opportunities. Contributing up to $100 billion on various projects, China has emerged as a leading trading partner on the continent. The Communist nation has reinforced strategic alliances with Sudan, Angola, and Nigeria among others to ensure adequate access to its growing demand of energy and natural resources. In exchange for access to coal, cobalt, and crude oil, China has built hydroelectric dams, power supply and transmission, roads, railways, pipelines, water supply, ports, and other infrastructure facilities for its host countries. Unlike Western involvement of unilateral power politics, China employs a non-interference, multi-lateral approach in its partnerships with African nations. However, criticisms highlight negative consequences: the flooding of cheap, Chinese goods into African markets that hurt domestic producers; the lack of cooperation with non-governmental civil society groups; and the acceptance of human rights violations and corruption. While the views are mixed, some feel the new alliance with the communist nation is yet another chapter of Africa’s cycle of dependency, while others feel the alliance may fill the vacuum of a Western world that no longer engages with Africa.
Visual Art as Intellectual Practice: African Artists and the Politics of Recognition
ALLYSON PURPURA, PhD
Curator, Arts of Africa and its Diasporas

How does a person come to be recognized as an “intellectual,” and by whom? Where does intellectual practice happen, in what form, and what are its consequences? Throughout Africa, the visual and expressive arts have long prompted critical engagements with structures of power and knowledge. Yet artists have been largely overlooked when considering the role of African intellectuals as agents of change in both local and global domains. Seeking to redress this oversight, this paper presents analytic portraits of several African artists whose art making constitutes a form of intellectual work that resists “capture” by more conventional, institutionalized sites of intellectual practice. Working both within and against structures that segregate, stratify and commodify domains of knowledge, artists, I will argue, are important actors in the production and critique of culture in their homelands, as well as abroad. More generally, the paper will address questions concerning the relationship between “intellectual” labor, identity, and constructions of “indigenous” or “authentic” knowledge. Finally, I will suggest that artworks can be viewed as products of African intellectual activity that possess critical agency in their own right, and can thus provoke dialogue quite apart from their makers.

Invited talks #1

Illusions of Independence in Africa
EYAMBA G. BOKAMBA, Prof.
Department of Linguistics, UIUC

It has become axiomatic that most African countries achieved their political independence in the 1960s, following on the footsteps of Libya (1951), Morocco (1956), Tunisia (1956), and Ghana (1957). But beyond the surface trappings of so-called political independence that presupposes sovereignty status, are African states truly independent? If so, in what respects; and if not, how is this the case? What is the evidence to substantiate the answers to these questions? This paper addresses these and related questions. It advances the simple and potentially controversial, at a superficial level of analysis, proposition that African states’ independences are illusory and nominal at best; and that the realities of these nations’ socio-economic development instantiate instead a state of permanent colonization that is characterized by colonial style of economic exploitation at a global scale, and by the manipulation of political decisions that effectively deny them their true independence. This inconvenient truth is documentable not only in Rodney’s (1974) incisive analysis of the underdevelopment of Africa by Europe, but also in several subsequent publications on the political economy of Africa (Ake 1981), and predatory economic practices in several African states (Braeckman 2003, Global Witness 2004, Kankwenda 2005, and Denault 2008). It is argued from such publications that much of Africa remains politically and economically colonized by the industrialized states; and that the only way out of this third form of colonization is for Africans to reclaim their enormous resources by envisioning strategically their self-development as emerging and industrialized nations elsewhere have done.
The Economist’ December 2011 edition was titled ‘Africa Rising’ and was dedicated to the strong economic growth that various countries in Africa are experiencing. This is in stark contrast to the May 2000 edition that painted Africa as 'The Hopeless Continent'. While this positive economic growth is to be applauded, we should not lose sight of its sometimes negative social and environmental cost on vulnerable people. This panel hosted by the Social Dimensions of Environmental Policy (SDEP) initiative of the Beckman Institute at UIUC discusses the effects of economic development, land tenure, and climate change policies on everyday people in Africa. The speakers for this panel include Prof. Thomas Bassett, Dr. Emmanuel Nuesiri, Mary Thompson (doctoral student) and Anta sane (doctoral student).

Theory and reality of land privatization in West Africa: The case of Côte d'Ivoire
THOMAS, J. BASSETT
Department of Geography and SDEP, UIUC

Outside of the former white settler colonies of eastern and southern Africa, most land in sub-Saharan Africa is managed through indigenous land rights systems. Land privatization and titling is rare. However, increasing numbers of national governments and aid donors view land titling and privatization as key to economic development and environmental conservation. The assumption is that land titling will provide security to resources users to invest in production and land improvements. This presentation examines the modernization model of tenure change, environmental conservation, and agricultural growth that informs these land-titling initiatives. Taking the case of Côte d’Ivoire, I examine the land registration process and assess its implications for the livelihoods of ordinary rural people. I focus in particular on the contradictions between the theory and reality of land titling showing that (1) economic development is not dependent on land titling; (2) clarifying boundaries can create land conflicts as well as reduce them; and (3) land titling increases the vulnerability of poor households, women, and mobile pastoralists whose resource access is greatly reduced by the privatization process. I suggest that these conflicts and heightened vulnerabilities are the outcome of the interplay of both indigenous and new legal land institutions, notably the politics and practices that sanction the redistribution of resources.

A Comprehensive Analysis of the Perils of Climate Change in Africa and Suggestions on How to Ameliorate Them: An Application of the Law of Change
ANTA SANE
Graduate student- Dept. of Political Science, Howard University

An Internet search of the words “climate change Africa” with the Google search engine yielded 23,900,000 results in 0.37 seconds. This is a clear indication that the issue is receiving a great deal of attention. Yet, a random examination of these entries reveals that these books, articles and reports focus on either one or a few aspects of the issue and, thus, not comprehensive. This paper seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of the problem. Employing the law of change as its theoretical postulate, the paper critically investigates the perils of climate change in Africa and offers suggestions on how they can be ameliorated. The data for this paper came from my field notes during visits to many countries across the African continent; and an extensive literature search on the topic in libraries and on the Internet. The substantive findings after the data analysis suggest that the climate change situation in Africa is perilous but that it could be ameliorated, if African and developed nations are to act very quickly and forthrightly. They also suggest that the consequences in Africa will find their way to the developed countries in many forms.
The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its impact on economic development and land politics in Africa
EMMANUEL, NUESIRI, Ph.D
Post-doctoral Fellow, Department of Geography and SDEP, UIUC

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is one outcome of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) also known as the Rio Summit. The convention gave birth to the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, which committed its signatories to reducing their emissions of greenhouse gases in order to mitigate the impact of climate change. The protocol which came into force in 2005 expires at the end of 2012, and would likely be replaced by a plethora of market based global climate mitigation initiatives. One such initiative is the ‘reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, conserving and enhancing forest carbon stocks, and sustainably managing forests’ (REDD+). This land use based climate change mitigation initiative as opposed to industry based initiatives, will lead to the enclosure of greater areas of forestlands in Africa in exchange for financial compensation from developed world. While governments in Africa are excited about REDD+ due to its revenue generating potential, civil society and local communities are worried that it would increase poverty and hardship for the most needy in Africa. Are these concerns mere smoke or are backed by substantive arguments? This presentation examines the claims and counter-claims on the impact of the UNFCCC REDD+ initiative on economic development and land politics in Africa.

Seeing REDD+ as a project of environmental governance
MARY THOMPSON
Graduate Student- Dept. of Geography, University of South Carolina

In this paper, we argue that REDD+ is more than an impartial container for the various tools and actors concerned with addressing anthropogenic climate change. Instead, even as it takes shape, REDD+ is already functioning as a form of governance, a particular framing of the problem of climate change and its solutions that validates and legitimizes specific tools, actors and solutions while marginalizing others. This framing raises important questions about how we might critically evaluate REDD+ programs and their associated tools and stakeholders in a manner that encourages the most effective and equitable pursuit of its goals. We bring the issue of governance under REDD+ to the fore through a focus on the objects to be governed, the tools of governance, and the forms of environmental, economic and social knowledge that are considered legitimate under this framework. We turn to the example of indigenous people’s participation in REDD+ to illustrate how this framework attempts to bring about environmental governance by aligning the interests of a wide range of stakeholders in this process to bring about desired environmental outcomes. This consideration is critical for the implementation of REDD+, for as we illustrate, this alignment has thus far been incomplete, suggesting an emerging crisis of governance within REDD+ that will compromise future project and policy goals, and thus the well-being of many stakeholders.
In Pursuit of the “Golden Fleece”: The Diasporization of African Students in the United States
OLANIPEKUN OLADOTUN LAOSEBIKAN
Graduate Student - Department of Educational Policy Studies

In this paper I offer a historical analysis of the African student brain drain to the United States from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. Drawing from historical narratives of African students, United States immigration and naturalization laws and Bureau of the Census data I argue for the significance of the African student presence and their pursuit of higher education in the United States as a valued resource in understanding the development of the larger contemporary African Diaspora in the United States. I also frame the need for new theoretical frameworks to study this population, acknowledging the limitations of Pan-Africanism and the Brain Drain in addressing comprehensively the historical significance of the pursuit of higher education as a major vehicle for African immigration prior to the United States Immigration Act of 1965.

The Ewe Diaspora and the Politics of Belonging at Home
DJIFA KOTHOR
Graduate Student – African Studies

This study is an examination of the ways in which the Ewe of Ghana and Togo fit into the context of the New African Diaspora in the United States. To do this, I will first provide a historical overview of the African Diaspora of the transatlantic slave trade and contemporary African diaspora of voluntary African professionals, émigrés, refugees seeking political asylum and economic opportunities in the United States. I will conclude with the history of the Ewe people of Ghana in terms of how the political, social and economic conditions in their countries led to their immigration to the United States.

International migration of African Nurses: Turning brain drain to brain gain and brain circulation
ANNE N. LUTOMIA
Graduate Student – Education Policy and Leadership, Human Resource Development

Globalization and the shortage of health care workers have led to the migration of health care workers from developing countries to developed countries causing brain drain and shortage of healthcare workers in their home countries. This work aims at adding to the existing research on international migration of African nurses. Brain drain, brain gain, and brain circulation are all possible consequences of international recruitment and nurse migration. Whereas Brain drain, is loss to the source country of vital skills, professional knowledge, and management capacity due to permanent migration, brain gain is experienced when migrants return to their home country and their skills and knowledge are put to use. Conversely, brain circulation is defined as the circular movement of skilled labor across nations. The objectives of this paper are first, to examine the barriers, push and pull factors in the migration of African nurses, (motives to migrate can be either incentives attracting people away, known as pull factors, or circumstances encouraging a person to leave, known as push factors), second, to establish the effects of migration and use existing data to illustrate where the nurses migrate to and the shifts in trends are is used, third to discuss the efforts that have been made internationally and by various African governments to curb the shortage of nurses and the migration of nurses. Lastly, make recommendations aimed at reversing the brain drain to brain gain or brain.

Keywords: international nurse migration, shortage, brain drain, brain gain, brain circulation
Still I Rise
You may write me down in history With your bitter, twisted lies, You may trod me in the very dirt But still, like dust, I'll rise.
Does my sassiness upset you? Why are you beset with gloom? 'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells Pumping in my living room.
Just like moons and like suns, With the certainty of tides, Just like hopes springing high, Still I'll rise.
Did you want to see me broken? Bowed head and lowered eyes? Shoulders falling down like teardrops. Weakened by my soulful cries.
Does my haughtiness offend you? Don't you take it awful hard 'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines Diggin' in my own back yard.
You may shoot me with your words, You may cut me with your eyes, You may kill me with your hatefulness, But still, like air, I'll rise.
Does my sexiness upset you? Does it come as a surprise That I dance like I've got diamonds At the meeting of my thighs?
Out of the huts of history's shame I rise Up from a past that's rooted in pain I rise I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide, Welling and swelling I bear in the tide. Leaving behind nights of terror and fear I rise Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear I rise Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave. I rise I rise I rise.
- Maya Angelou