Editorial


In this Issue, we cover the official launch of the hosting of the 10th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage as well our Office’s participation in the Results-Based Management, Project Programming and Financial Management Workshop held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Other activities covered include the Regional Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Consultative Workshop; Annual Review of the Education and Training Sector Meeting; OpenWater symposium and workshops; Dialogue on ESA Ministerial Commitment; the 2015 Quality Education Platform and Regional workshop on literacy; and Investigative journalism workshop for community radio journalists in Cape Town.

Our Reflection of the Month is on intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and explores what ICH is all about. This quite useful as Namibia intensifies preparations to host the 10th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The Invitee of the month is the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) Representative to Namibia, Dr. Ahmadu Babagana. He shares some of the key interventions of FAO in Namibia.

We thank you for your usual constructive feedback. Send your comments to c.mapfumo@unesco.org.

Enjoy reading!

Dr. Jean-Pierre Ilboudo
Head of Office & UNESCO Representative to Namibia

Namibia’s hosting of the 10th Session Intergovernmental Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage officially launched

The Hosting of the 10th session of the Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) was officially launched by the Minister of Education, Arts and Culture, Honourable Katrina Hanse-Himarwa.

Delivering her key note address, the Honourable Minister called upon all Namibians to support the bold decision taken by the country to host this international meeting.

“The occasion will also require that we as Namibians join hands to make this event successful, by warmly welcoming our guests, as well as contributing to the event. Therefore, we are humbly appealing to you, particularly the corporate sector, to come on board to make the event memorable, by pledging support through financial or in kind sponsorships or donations”, she said.

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Similarly, the Minister proudly announced the Intangible Cultural Heritage elements currently inscribed on the National Inventory of Namibia and these include:

- **Okuruuo** (Holy fire) – Omaheke Region
- **Sa-i** (Traditional perfume) – Hardap Region
- **Kalafo ya kulumwa noha** (Treatment for snakes bites) – Zambezi Region
- **Tama - lxun** (Wild melon dance game) – Otjozondjupa Region
- **Litembu** (Passages rite for girls) – Kavango East Rituals in the Aandonga Traditional homestead – Oshikoto Region
- **#Hau-ons** (Damara traditional house) – Erongo Region
- **Oshiuuthi sho Magongo** (Marula festival) – Omusati Region
- **!Narares tsi sâi/gaugu** (harvesting and preparing !Nara fruits) – Topnaars (#Aonin) – Erongo
- **Ozombanda zotjihimba zombazu** (Processing Himba clothing out animal skin – Kunene Region
- **Senbahe /kheman** (Damara Traditional wedding) - #Aodaman – Kunene Region
- **So-/oai** (traditional Medicine) – Swaartboois – Fransfontein – Karas Region.

At the same occasion, UNESCO Windhoek Head of Office and UNESCO Representative to Namibia, Dr. Jean Pierre Ilboudo gave a thorough background on the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, its importance and related governing mechanisms.

Dr. Ilboudo described Intangible Cultural Heritage “as uses, representations, expressions, knowledge and techniques that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals, recognise as an integral part of their cultural heritage”.

He further noted that Intangible Cultural Heritage is found in forms such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and traditional craftsmanship knowledge and techniques.

Namibia’s hosting of the 10th Session Intergovernmental Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage officially launched

The 10th Session itself is set to take place from 30 November 2015 to 04 December 2015 at the Windhoek Country Club and Resort. Namibia will be the second African country to host the IGC Sessions after Kenya, which hosted the 5th Session in 2010. This session will examine 45 files; which include nominations for the Urgent Safeguarding List or the Representative List, proposals for the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices and requests for International Assistance.

**Further information on the agenda for the meeting will be made available at [http://www.ichngoforum.org/](http://www.ichngoforum.org/).**
UNESCO Windhoek participated in a five day training workshop organised by the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP) and the Bureau for Financial Management (BFM) on Results-Based Management, Project Programming and Financial Management. The workshop took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 14-18 September 2015. It targeted UNESCO Head of Offices, Programme officers and Administrative officers from western, eastern and southern African regions.

Specific objectives of the workshop were:

- Translating the Results-Based Management (RBM) theory into practice when programming,
- Build a common understanding on the core principles, notions and concepts of RBM and how these are applied when programming, and
- Financial Management Training on extra budgetary projects with key focus on the Medium-Term Strategy (C/4), the Programme and Budget (C/5) and the work plans.
- Resource mobilization.

The training articulated the importance for UNESCO to continue its efforts to improve results-based monitoring and reporting in order to better articulate, communicate and demonstrate progress and results achieved.

Monitoring progress towards expected results serves a dual purpose. It informs management on the assessment of the implementation both at C/5 and Workplan level and it also informs reporting on progress achieved towards the attainment of expected results to concerned stakeholders, including internal management of the Organization, Governing Bodies and the Donors.

It was highlighted during the workshop that it is important to ensure adequate monitoring of the implementation of the C/5 and of all Workplans. Responsible officers were thus encouraged to aim at evidence-based result-oriented monitoring and reporting.

About 30 UNESCO staff from the African region participated in the workshop. UNESCO Windhoek Office was represented by the Head of Office, the Administrative Officer and the National Professional Officer for Education.
Dialogue on Eastern and Southern Africa Ministerial Commitment held in Zambezi and Kavango regions

Dialogues on Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Sexual and Reproductive Health for young people were conducted on the 1st and 3rd September in Zambezi and Kavango regions.

The dialogues were part of the series of meetings that are planned for all the regions in Namibia with the aim of orienting regional management teams on the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) commitment.

The meetings brought together 37 participants representing key stakeholders from government, civil society including young people and youth-led serving organizations and development partners. The participants were sensitized on the targets of the commitment to enable them to understand how they can contribute to attainment of the Commitment targets.

In both meetings it was noted that young people are the future for each nations hence a need to address challenges facing them. Furthermore, the importance of education in addressing issues/challenges faced by young people was emphasized. The participants were encouraged to come up with clear recommendations which should translate in action plans on how best to expand and strengthen delivery of young people’s programmes both in schools and out of school in all the regions.

The need for government, especially, MOEAC and MOHSS, Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare; Ministry of Sports, Youth and National Services and Civil Society Originations, including youth led organizations and other stakeholders to work together to ensure Youth and National Services and Civil Society Originations, including youth led organizations and other stakeholders to work together to ensure Comprehensive Sexuality Education and adequate Sexual Reproductive Health Services for young people was noted.

Key health and education indicators for young people in the ESA region including Namibia were shared. The targets of the commitment were also presented. Ohangwena region shared an example of best practice in the coordination of Young People’s programmes at regional level and demonstrated how their activities contribute to the ESA ministerial targets. Based on the Ohangwena case study, Zambezi and Kavango regions agreed on way forward/action plans on how to strengthen CSE and SRH programmes for young people in their respective regions.

The meetings culminated into the drafting of regional operational plan on coordination of young peoples activities.

The ESA commitment was signed by the 20 Ministers of Health and Education from the 21 countries in Easter and Southern Africa as part of recommitting their support for young people’s Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Sexual and Reproductive Health.
Namibia prepares for the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development

The Regional ESD Consultative workshop took place from 31 August 2015 to 1 September 2015 at the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA) in Harare, Zimbabwe.

The regional consultation was organised by UNESCO ROSA in collaboration with the Swedish International Centre of Education for Sustainable Development (SWEDESD) and The Southern African Development Community, Regional Environmental Education Programme (SADC REEP).

46 participants from 10 countries namely Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe together with eight resource people from UNESCO, SWEDESD and SADC REEP deliberated on issues pertaining to ESD in the region and beyond in light of UNESCO’s Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD which succeeded the UN Decade of ESD.

The participants were drawn from the nine countries under UNESCO Harare and Mauritius, who received a special invitation to the workshop. The representatives of the countries presented best practices, challenges and proposed action points in ESD in their countries, based on the results of the national consultations that were held in preparation for the regional consultation.

The main objective of the two-day consultation was to share best practices and challenges in ESD in the region and shape the way forward in implementing ESD by developing a regional strategy for the GAP on ESD.

Five priority action areas of the GAP on ESD which include: advancing policy; integrating sustainability practices into education and training environments (whole-institution approaches); increasing the capacity of educators and trainers; empowering and mobilising youth, and encouraging local communities and municipal authorities to develop community-based ESD programmes formed the basis for discussion and reflection during the consultation.

Welcoming participants on behalf of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development, Ambassador M. Mapuranga, Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO Secretary-General Ms. Margaret Chiramba said the workshop was a very important one as it was a platform to chart the action plan for the region in Education for sustainable Development (ESD).

The Director and Representative of UNESCO ROSA, Professor Hubert Gijzen delivered the keynote speech and said that the end of the UN Decade of ESD does not mean the work on ESD is over, on the contrary, ESD needs to be significantly stepped up globally, regionally and at country level via the Global Action Programme.

Professor Gijzen emphasised the need for change in mind-sets and attitudes and rethinking of unsustainable consumption and production patterns. He said that the transition towards a ‘green economy’ requires that we educate and train the human resources and prepare society at large for a sustainable future.

Articulating the important position of ESD in the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Prof Gijzen said the post 2015 agenda provides an opportunity to elevate ESD to be fully integrated into the sustainable development agenda and into the educational systems.

The Director of Planning and Development in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture in Namibia, Ms. Adelheid Awases, who led the Namibian team emphasised on the pivotal role which ESD plays in the overall efforts towards sustainable development in Namibia and the region. She said the GAP on ESD is well in line with Namibia’s vision 2030 and that there is need for commitment at all levels in order to achieve sustainability and education for all citizens.

Ms. Awases said Namibia’s vision 2030 stipulates that sustainability is cross-cutting and it allows all sectors to develop sector-specific interventions for ESD. She further stressed that there is limited linkages with global priorities in the region and that participation at the international level is not strong.

ESD best practices and case studies in Namibia such as the Mobile learning course in ESD for out-of-school youth were showcased together with various other successful initiatives in other countries in the region.

A team of key stakeholders from government, civil society in Namibia and UNESCO Windhoek Office were among those who participated.
UNESCO Windhoek National Office in collaboration with the UNESCO Harare Regional Office for Southern Africa; the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture; the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation; and the Faculty of Education of the University of Namibia are organizing the 2015 Quality Education Platform from 5 October 2015 to 9 October 2015 in Windhoek, Namibia.

The post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda commits all members of the international community to an ambitious universal vision of heightened human dignity, gender equality, reduced inequality, safe and peaceful societies and the protection of the planet. The education goal of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting life-long learning opportunities for all is embedded in this broad vision.

A focus on quality education, improved teaching and learning, is an umbrella for multiple facets. It underscores the importance of investing in teachers, instructional materials, curriculum development, effective pedagogy, teaching in mother languages, and using appropriate technology, among others. Quality education fosters creativity and knowledge, and ensures the acquisition of the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy as well as analytical, problem-solving and other high-level cognitive, interpersonal and social skills. It also develops the skills, values and attitudes that enable citizens to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, make informed decisions, and respond to local and global challenges.

Quality education is a public good and a fundamental human right, the key to achieving full employment and poverty eradication. Considering the important role of education as a main driver of development, UNESCO, the Namibian Government and UNAM are determined to bring the Namibian Education community together to discuss aspects pertinent to quality education.

The 2015 Quality Education Platform consists of the Southern Africa Regional Workshop on Literacy (5-6 October 2015) and the National Quality Education Platform (7-9 October 2015).

Overall, the Southern Africa region has high youth and adult literacy rates ranging well above 70%. In spite of this very positive situation, the region does face some challenges in literacy. While these vary from country to country, they share similar challenges.

In collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa the countries in the region will be brought together to share lessons learnt as well as to collectively reflect on perspectives for the future.

For the first two days, the Namibian Education community will be joined by participants from each of the countries in the Southern Africa region, representing the stakeholders on literacy at their national level, as well as selected resource persons from other African countries and other organizations.

The Namibian Education community will continue deliberations on quality education during the rest of the week (7-9 October 2015). The National Platform will focus on different subthemes pertinent to quality. These subthemes include learning through the mother languages, quality early learning, educators’ professional development and the integration of ICTs and technology in teaching and learning.

The objective is for the Namibian Education community to come to a shared understanding related to quality education, while committing ourselves to progress and achievements, in the framework of the post-2015 education agenda and the goals set out for 2030. The organizing partners hope to strengthen the conception of a community of practice that finds strength in unity and is a clear vehicle of acceleration towards the provision of high quality education in Namibia.
Namibia holds Annual Review of the Education and Training Sector

The Annual Review of the Education and Training Sector was organized by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) from 15 to 17 September 2015.

The main objective of the annual review was to assess progress made and challenges faced by the Education and Training Sector during 2014/15 financial year in order to collectively pave the way forward.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, Ms Sanet L. Steenkamp delivered the opening remarks on behalf of Hon. Katrina Hanse Himarwa, the Minister of Education, Arts and Culture and emphasised on the value of the decentralisation process that is taking place in Namibia’s education and training sector.

The Permanent Secretary hailed the involvement of development partners including UN agencies such as UNESCO and UNICEF in the quest to educate every Namibian. She said the involvement of development partners shows that “we have committed friends in the education sector”.

Government’s plans to transfer Early Childhood Development (ECD) to MoEAC were included in the PS’s remarks. She also stated that the government is committed to advancing education in Namibia, a commitment that is visible considering the fact that more than 20% of the national budget went to education.

In light of the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNESCO Windhoek Office co-presented a session on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) with Ms Adelheid Awases, the Director of Planning and Development. The presentation which was drawn from the results of the National Consultation on ESD held in May this year outlined the best practices in ESD that were recorded during the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) 2005-2014 as well as gaps, challenges and recommendations from the various stakeholders who were consulted.

UNESCO’s presentation was also meant to shed more light on the importance of ESD in the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD and education in general in Namibia’s efforts towards a sustainable future for all, reaching the targets of the SDGs and the achievement of the country’s vision 2030.

Emphasis was placed on SDG 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all), Target 7 which proposes that by 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.

In addition to ESD, UNESCO’s work towards quality education in Namibia through the Chinese Funds in Trust (CFIT) project was applauded during the review. References to the different components of the project were made in a number of presentations and discussions. The project’s major achievements were showcased together with many other achievements that were recorded in the education and training sector.

A host of presentations from different educational institutions, government departments that are involved in education and other stakeholders created an environment where the participants could deliberate on the fundamental issues pertaining to education in Namibia throughout the 3 days of the review.
Two training workshops took place before the Open-Water 2015 symposium, in the framework of the HOPE Initiative. The first one was the QSWAT / QGIS Interface for Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT) training on 14-15, September 2015. Twenty-four (5 females and 19 males) participants from nine nationalities attended the Capacity training workshop which was about 1 day of theory.

The course was designed to introduce new users to the model, review necessary and optional inputs, and familiarize the user with the QGIS interfaces. It was assumed that attendees have a working knowledge of QGIS. The workshop did not review basic concepts on QGIS usage prior to covering the SWAT/QGIS interface.

The second workshop, entitled “AquaCrop training”, took place on 15 September, 2015. To disseminate the use of AquaCrop, a workshop on “Capacity Development for Farm Management Strategies to Improve Crop-Water Productivity using AquaCrop” have been planned as a joint initiative of UNESCO-IHE and UNESCO, in collaboration with local partners (e.g. ILRI campus, IWMI in Addis).

The objective of the workshops is to train participants from various regions in Africa in the practical applications of AquaCrop, in order to improve their skills in strategic management toward increasing crop water productivity in rainfed and irrigated production systems.

The Soil & Water Assessment Tool (SWAT) is a river basin scale model developed to quantifies the impact of land management practices in large, complex watersheds. SWAT is a public domain model actively supported by the USDA Agricultural ResearchService at the Grassland, Soil and Water Research Laboratory in Temple, Texas, USA.

It is a hydrology model with the following components: weather, surface runoff, return flow, percolation, evapo-transpiration, transmission losses, pond and reservoir storage, crop growth and irrigation, groundwater flow, reach routing, nutrient and pesticide loading, and water transfer.

SWAT can be considered a watershed hydrological transport model. This model is used worldwide and is continuously under development. As of July 2012, more than 1000 peer-reviewed articles have been published that document its various applications.

What is Intangible Cultural Heritage?

As Namibia launched the hosting of the 10th session of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage and began rolling out a public media campaign, particularly using the public broadcaster’ local languages radio stations, it is imperative that the concept of Intangible Cultural Heritage is widely understood in Namibia.

The Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage was passed by the UNESCO General Conference held in 2003. The convention entered into force in 2006, after thirtieth instruments of ratification by UNESCO Member States. As of 2015, 163 states have ratified the convention. At that time, the international community recognised the need to raise awareness about cultural manifestations and expressions that until then had no legal or programmatic framework to protect them.

Along with other international instruments that protect cultural heritage – such as the Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage – the 2003 Convention is aimed at safeguarding the uses, representations, expressions, knowledge and techniques that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals, recognise as an integral part of their cultural heritage. This intangible heritage is found in forms such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and traditional craftsmanship knowledge and techniques.

This definition, which is provided in Article 2 of the Convention, also comprises the instruments, goods, objects of art and cultural spaces inherent to intangible cultural heritage. This conceptualisation was discussed in the lengthy negotiations and discussions that served as the basis for the Convention.

Article 16 of the 2003 Convention grants authority to the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage to compile a Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, aimed at better understanding the intangible cultural heritage around the world.

The purposes of this Convention include:
(a) to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage;
(b) to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned;
(c) to raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof;
(d) to provide for international cooperation and assistance.

Intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with

and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.

ICH is manifested inter alia in the following domains:
(a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
(b) performing arts;
(c) social practices, rituals and festive events;
(d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
(e) traditional craftsmanship.

While fragile, intangible cultural heritage is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalization. An understanding of the intangible cultural heritage of different communities helps with intercultural dialogue, and encourages mutual respect for other ways of life. The importance of intangible cultural heritage is not the cultural manifestation itself but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next. The social and economic value of this transmission of knowledge is relevant for minority groups and for mainstream social groups within a State, and is as important for developing States as for developed ones.

Intangible cultural heritage is the emblem of the spiritual culture of the many different peoples of the world, and at the same time, is an important legacy shared by all of mankind. There has been active discussion in the global community on recognition and respect for the diversity of culture in this age of globalization.

In particular, the importance of preserving and promoting the intangible cultural heritage that comprises the roots of each people's cultural identity has especially been gaining attention around the world. Intangible cultural heritage cannot be recovered once it has been lost. In Africa there is a saying that when an elder dies, a library burns. In recent years, due to the aging of practitioners and the lack of successors for their arts and crafts, a great amount of Intangible Cultural Heritage is facing the danger of extinction. Urgent steps must be taken to preserve and promote intangible heritage.
As part of his familiarization tour, the UNESCO Windhoek Head of Office embarked on a mission to visit Namibia’s first World Heritage Site, Twyfelfontein or /Ui-/aes in local vernacular language. The visit took place from 15 to 22 May 2015 and included stop overs at the following National Heritage Sites: Organ pipes; Burnt Mountain; and the Petrified Forest. Upon arrival at the Twyfelfontein Lodge, visitors are treated to a refreshing welcome drink and taken to their rooms. Namibian visitors are given a special reduced rate; well on par with the notion of promoting local tourism and giving Namibians an opportunity to appreciate the natural, cultural and historic beauty and heritage the country is blessed with.

A day at Twyfelfontein starts with a tour guided visit to the historic rock engravings and paintings and associated Late Stone Age material culture dating between 6000 and 2000 years. Twyfelfontein or /Ui-/aes has one of the largest concentrations of petroglyphs, i.e. rock engravings in Africa. The site also includes six paint elephant, ostrich and giraffe, as well as drawings of human and animal footprints rock shelters with motifs of human figures in red ochre. The objects excavated from two sections, date from the Late Stone Age. The site forms a coherent, extensive and high-quality record of ritual practices relating to hunter-gatherer communities in this part of southern Africa over at least 2,000 years, and eloquently illustrates the links between the ritual and economic practices of hunter-gatherers.

Depending on the visitor’s wish, other sites can also be viewed within the surroundings of Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site. The UNESCO team, consisting of the Head of Office and Representative to Namibia, Dr. Jean Pierre Ilboudo and the National professional Officer for Culture Mr. Boyson Ngondo were fortunate enough to visit other sites compliments of the Twyfelfontein Lodge. The beautiful organ pipes are a fascinating geological formation located near Twyfelfontein. Strikingly rich rusty colors are portrayed in long columns resembling those of a church organ, some rising up to 5m high. Thought to be the result of the Gondwanaland breakup, fractures and cracks were formed as the dolomite columns cooled through the process of columnar jointing approximately 120 million years ago.

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Just a short walk from the Organ Pipes is a small inselberg named the Burnt Mountain, proclaimed a national monument on 15 September 1956. The reason for its name is best evident in the early mornings and late evenings when the rays of the sun seem to set the mountain ablaze. Rich red colours mixed with shades of black and purple are quite strikingly caused by Manganese coated clay molecules. During the day, however, the inselberg is just a normal black color as if the morning fire has burnt it to ashes.

Once upon a time all the world’s continents were part of one very big continent – the Pangaea. This huge continent was first divided into two, Laurasia in the north and Gondwana in the south. Gondwana later separated into what is today South America and Africa (and Antarctica, Australia and the Arabian Peninsula). If you look on the map you can still see how well Africa and South America would fit as two giant jigsaw-puzzle pieces. When Gondwana still was “one piece” the area of Twyfelfontein was a big lake. Later on (125 million years ago) the lake dried out and then Gondwana started separating. In conjunction with this, very hot magma was pushed up to the surface. It came in contact with old organic material from the time when the area was a lake. The organic material was burned and vaporized and the rest of this process is what is today called “the burnt mountain”.

To conclude the visit, the Petrified forest located some 40 kilometres west of the Namibian town of Khorixas, on the C39 road, was a great stop point. The forest is a deposit of large tree trunks that have "turned to stone" through a process of diagenesis. The site was declared a National Monument on 1 March 1950.

It is believed that the trees were swept downstream by a large flood and covered by alluvial sands. Deprived of air, the organic matter could not rot and decay, but instead, over millions of years, underwent silicification, whereby each cell is individually fossilised and the appearance, if not the colour, of wood is retained.

Dr. Ilboudo said of his visit, “I was amazed by the beauty of the sites we have visited so far. I was particularly impressed by the different geological and volcanic formations at the mountains. Although these formations are purely scientific, I believe that this is a marvelous gift from God for Namibia. We need to promote these sites through tourism and we specifically need to create awareness of these significant historic sites and encourage Namibians to visit them and appreciate and share this gift”.

Petrified forest at Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site
Community reporters urged to conduct more investigative journalism

Journalists and news correspondents from three South African community radios were urged to conduct more investigative journalism to ensure that members of public get to know the truth about what is happening in their communities.

Speaking during an Investigative Journalism Workshop held in Cape Town, South Africa for Bush Radio, Radio Atlantis and Valley FM from 7-11 September 2015, presenters from various Non-Governmental Organisations said community reporters should unearth the truth that is normally hidden by people in positions of authority.

Speakers from Corruption Watch, Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG), Open Democracy Advice Centre (ODAC) and Black Sash said journalists should fulfil their watchdog role and expose corruption, wrongdoing, impropriety, criminality, failures of officials, systems, policies, abuse of power, wasteful spending, injustice and misery, and uneven relationships.

The Organisations also pledged to work closely with the community radio so that members of the public are made aware of everything that affects them.

From the Corruption Watch presentation, it became clear that community radios can partner with Corruption to expose wrong-doings in society. Participants were also apprised of the level of corruption in South Africa, trends and implications for ordinary citizens.

The presentation by the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) showed participants how to get information from Parliament and how the members of parliament are performing from the websites: https://pmg.org.za/ and http://www.pa.org.za/.

Open Democracy Advice Centre (ODAC) informed journalists about the laws that govern access to information in South Africa and how to work with whistle-blowers. On the other hand, Black Sash shared with participants on how to do advocacy on service delivery issues and how community radios can partner with NGOs and civil society groups.

The training workshop also equipped journalists and correspondents with an understanding of investigative journalism and how it differs to and complements conventional news reporting. It also introduced participants to basic skills, knowledge and attitude required in doing investigative journalism. Participants also explored different methods and tools that they can be use in investigative journalism.

Media ethics and laws that impact on investigative journalism were also discussed. Importantly, it was emphasised that journalists should always strive to seek the truth and report it knowing that their loyalty is always to the citizens. Journalists were encouraged to act independently, transparently, minimising harm and being accountable in the discharge of their duties.

Participants expressed satisfaction with the training describing it as an eye opener.

The workshops were organised within the framework of the UNESCO/SIDA project, “Empowering local radios with ICTs. The project seeks to strengthen local radios to produce quality and locally relevant content among other things.
Our invitee of the month is the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) Representative to Namibia, Dr. Ahmadu Babagana. UNESCO Windhoek Newsletter team (UW) interviewed Dr. Babagana (AB) and here are some extracts of the conversation.

UW: Thank you for agreeing to be our Invitee of the month. As the Representative of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) in Namibia, what are FAO’s core mandates?

AB: Answer: The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is an intergovernmental organization with 194 Member Nations, two associate members and one member organization, the European Union. We are mandated to support members in their efforts to ensure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food. We can help by supporting policies and political commitments that promote food security and good nutrition and by making sure that up-to-date information about hunger and malnutrition challenges and solutions are available and accessible. FAO creates and shares critical information about food, agriculture and natural resources in the form of global public goods.

UW: What are the key achievements of FAO in Namibia?

AB: FAO has a long history in Namibia. We have been here since Independence with some landmark accomplishments when it comes to providing technical support to agricultural development. One of the success stories for FAO in Namibia is the technical support given to the Date production project. The Date production project is one of our first technical cooperation programs that have now become a success story in the sense that Namibia now exports Dates to many countries especially in the Maghreb and the Middle East. We supported the country in the formulation of many projects and programs to develop agriculture, water, forestry and the fisheries sectors.

Firstly, we have succeeded in strengthening the capacity of the sectorial staff in addressing the challenges facing agriculture production in Namibia. Secondly, we have succeeded in training farmers to adapt to challenges facing agriculture in Namibia. In addition, FAO has also succeeded by providing training to a number of farmers over the years with the aim of helping to eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. We established various technical cooperation programs over the years to make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more sustainable, reduce poverty and to increase resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises.

FAO has also been using the South – South Cooperation (SSC) programme in supporting Namibia. South – South Cooperation is an effective and efficient means to achieving a world without hunger.
Countries of the global south exchanging development solutions will strongly contribute to the accomplishment of food security, poverty reduction and sustainable management of natural resources. SSC is the mutual sharing and exchange of key development solutions – knowledge, experiences and good practices, policies, technology know-how, and resources between and among countries in the global south.

Since 1996, FAO has been facilitating SSC and Triangular Cooperation and has fielded over 1 800 experts and technicians in more than 50 countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Near East. Through SSC FAO brought experts and technicians from China and Vietnam to support the development of agriculture and fisheries sectors in Namibia.

UW: What is the new policy of FAO regarding food security and the fight against hunger?

AB: As time changes we also change our business model, the way we used to operate 10-15 years ago is no longer sustainable. There has been some kind of reorientation of the way we do business in FAO. To meet the demands posed by major global trends in agricultural development and challenges faced by member nations, FAO has identified key priorities on which it is best placed to intervene. A comprehensive review of the Organization’s comparative advantages was undertaken which enabled strategic objectives to be set, representing the main areas of work on which FAO will concentrate its efforts in striving to achieve its vision and global goals. These five years strategic objectives are focusing on what we think can make a difference on the ground and we created some specific coordination offices for each of this strategic objective based in our headquarters. Leaders of different strategic objectives can now link directly with us in the countries in ensuring that we give the best value for money, in terms of identifying the priorities of the member country. So far this new ways of doing business in FAO is very promising, it has so far generated excellent results, very encouraging and we hope to see more changes in the course of the years ahead.

UW: You are the Focal Point of UNCT on Emergencies, what are some of the pressing emergencies in Namibia?

AB: Each year, many people especially farmers who depend on the production, marketing and consumption of crops, livestock, fish, forests and other natural resources are confronted by disasters and crises. They can strike suddenly - like an earthquake - or unfold slowly - like drought-flood cycles. They can occur as a single event, one can trigger another, or multiple events can converge and interact simultaneously with cascading and magnified effects. These emergencies threaten the production of, and access to, food at local, national and, at times, regional and global levels. The UN agencies help prevent and mitigate risks and crises and support Namibia in preparing and responding to disasters.

Issues like drought, floods, and outbreaks of highly contagious or infectious diseases such as Cholera and Foot and Mouth Disease are becoming more and more prevalent in Namibia. The emergency related work of the various UN agencies in the country is coordinated through a thematic working group. We convene regularly to discuss how best we can support the government in addressing some of these emergencies and our latest effort is in supporting the government deal with the current drought situation. We have also helped during the cholera outbreak.

FAO is helping the government build resilience of the vulnerable communities particularly in the Northern part of the country. We support the vulnerable communities in...
dealing with emergencies like the drought, making sure that they have access to the basic agricultural inputs like fertilizers, seeds and access to the emergency food relief program. We also work with the Directorate of Disaster Risk Management in developing capacity of government staff, farmers and the vulnerable communities in addressing drought and becoming more resilient to the impacts of drought and related emergency crises.

UW: The President of the Republic of Namibia has declared war on poverty and called upon all development partners to help his government in this fight. What is FAO doing to fight poverty in Namibia?

AB: I must start by commending the government for declaring total war on poverty; this is very timely. Poverty reduction has become a major policy goal for developing country governments and the international community. If you look at the number of poor people in Namibia bearing in mind the higher middle income status, I see the figures as being unacceptably high. So it is very timely that the government has seen this and has declared total war on poverty.

The UN country team under the overall coordination of the Residence Coordinator, we are well positioned, and very committed to support the government in addressing the issue of poverty. As you may be aware, almost 80 percent of the world’s extreme poor live in rural areas where most are dependent on agriculture. Agriculture is the single largest employer in the world and agricultural growth in low-income has been shown to be at least twice as effective as growth in other sectors in reducing hunger and poverty.

If you want to address poverty, the most logical approach is to go through agriculture because that is a sector that employs majority of the poor people. In Namibia, agriculture is one of the sectors that the government has given priority in dealing with this issue and we stand very committed in supporting the government to come up with impact generating programs and projects, formulate and design projects that will support the poor people and eradicate poverty.

UW: FAO is known for tackling issues related to Agriculture, can you explain to our readers why forestry, fishery and animal health are as important as agriculture?

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AB: These sectors of forestry, fisheries and animal health and production they are all within the sector of agriculture, they are all part and parcel of agriculture. People try to underpin the scope of the sectors but generally speaking they are part and parcel of agriculture, they are part of the food production systems, they all constitute production systems in addressing food insecurity. In Namibia, Forestry is under the Ministry of Agriculture while Fisheries is a separate Ministry entirely dedicated to the sector. The same argument applies to Animal health, Animal production, they are all part of agriculture in the way we see it in FAO.

UW: Sustainable Development Goals have been developed and adopted, which are some of the Goals that your Organization will be prioritizing in Namibia?

AB: FAO and its expertise and resources are well positioned to support Namibia in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of which at least 14 out of the 17 are related to FAO’s work. The first and second goals - “No Poverty” and “Zero Hunger” alongside FAO’s strategic objectives, “Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition” and “Reduce rural poverty” are fitting examples as possible areas of priority for Namibia.

FAO is one of the UN Agencies that facilitated the consultative processes that lead to the formulation of these goals. FAO has also been closely associated with the MDGs, 70 developing countries out of 120 countries that FAO monitored for the attainment of the millennium development goals achieved the hunger target. In Namibia, the priorities for FAO will be focusing on goals number 1, 2 and 3 which are directly related to many of the issues being raised by the government in addressing poverty and hunger.

Priorities for FAO in Namibia are in line with the government priorities as encapsulated in the National Development Plan (NDP4) and we shall endeavor to be concentrating on the relevant SDGs that deal with eradication of poverty, elimination of hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity issues.

UW: What do you think are the opportunities for UNESCO and FAO to work together in Namibia?

I think there are good potentials for collaboration between the two agencies especially in the area of capacity development. Designing programs on development of capacities, dissemination of extension messages, messages that are meant for the farmers, for example messages on sustainable use of natural resources like water, soil as well use of agricultural implements and equipment etc. These areas for capacity development, UNESCO and FAO can work together and develop a joint program of action. FAO can also collaborate with UNESCO in Dissemination of messages through the radio programs and publications. We have the farmer field schools initiative as one possible area where UNESCO and FAO can support farmers in Namibia.

UW: You already alluded to South to South cooperation earlier on, can you just share with us your experiences, we understand FAO is doing very well in terms of fostering South to South cooperation and what do you think other agencies can also do to strengthen South to South cooperation?

AB: As indicated earlier, South-South Cooperation is the mutual sharing and exchange of development solutions - knowledge, experiences and good practices, policies, technology and resources - between and among countries in the global South. It is a Triangular Cooperation that involves partnerships between two or more developing countries along with a third partner, typically a traditional resource partner and/or multilateral organization.
South-South Cooperation (SSC) is playing a greater role than ever before in tackling food insecurity. Global demand for southern development solutions that have been tested and proven effective is at an all-time high. SSC is a cost-effective means to share development solutions and enhance capacities. FAO plays a major role in facilitating South-South and Triangular Cooperation to achieve food security, poverty reduction and sustainable agriculture. Its efforts focus on:

- facilitating the exchange and sharing of development solutions, providing practical guidance and support to ensure high quality knowledge sharing (short-, medium- and long-term exchanges, learning routes, study tours and training);
- fostering knowledge management and networks, connecting South-South solution providers with seekers (supply and demand), scaling up knowledge sharing and enhancing two-way learning among a wide range of southern actors;
- facilitating upstream policy support, including policy dialogue and knowledge sharing among policymakers; and
- fostering an enabling environment, mobilizing broader partnerships and resources and raising the visibility of the value of SSC.

South to South Cooperation is currently being implemented in Namibia for transfer of skills not sufficiently available in Namibia in terms of rice production, soil management, sustainable use of water and irrigation. FAO facilitated the bringing into Namibia of Chinese as well as Vietnamese Experts and Technicians to help build and strengthen capacities of the workers in the relevant sectors. This enable the effective transfer of best agricultural practices and improved techniques such as sustainable use of water resources, innovative irrigation schemes, plant breeding, servicing of agricultural equipment and so on. So it is an important tool that has worked very well in supporting developing countries.

The Triangular partnership arrangement of the SSC ensures sustainability of skills transfer where one partner is the recipient like for example in the case of the SSC which is currently operational and FAO is managing between China, Namibia. One partner is the recipient in this case Namibia and the donor is China who is bringing in the expert and FAO is the Coordination Agency ensuring that skills transfer are done in accordance with international norms and standards. FAO makes sure that the project is technically feasible, implementable and could add value and improve the livelihoods of the people. We have got experts and technicians from Vietnam supporting the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources in the development of Aquaculture under financial support from Spain.

Currently these two SSC programmes are going on very well and have succeeded in training a number of Namibians, taking Namibians out on study tours to Vietnam and China to see and exchange experiences and lessons between countries. It is a very good way of supporting developing countries. The specific project with China is to boost rice production and strengthen the capacities of Veterinary Services and promote animal health and production in the northern communal areas of Namibia.
Vietnamese working at the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources are training and designing Aquaculture projects, introduction of techniques in construction of fish ponds, fish breeding and management, formulation of fish feeds and feeding.

**UW:** Can you tell us a bit about your professional career and how ended up in Namibia?

**AB:** I started my career in my home country Nigeria after graduation nearly 30 years ago. I started my career as a lecturer at the university. Trained as a Veterinarian, I specialized in Veterinary Medicine and taught at various levels in Universities in Nigeria and also at the Samora Machel School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zambia in Lusaka. I have also worked in Botswana as Senior Veterinary Officer in the Ministry of Agriculture; I was in charge of trans-boundary livestock diseases control, prevention and Surveillance. Prior to joining FAO in 2008 as Country Representative to The Republic of The Gambia, I was the Director of Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

**UW:** Tell us about your parents and siblings. Did they have any influence in who you are today?

**AB:** I grew up in a typical Nigerian village which is not different from most African rural set up, we are many in the family and our parents tried their best to get us educated. Our parents had a lot of influence on us to make sure we become responsible adults and they invested a lot of their time and energy.

**UW:** How do you balance your demanding work and the family?

**AB:** Well, I take things easy with the seriousness they deserve; I am always forward looking and think positive and constructive! Due to my academic background as a Veterinarian, I am a very practical person enjoy working in the field, supporting livestock farmers, running after livestock especially in monitoring and supervision of vaccination of Cattle against Trans-boundary Diseases like Foot and Mouth Disease, supporting farmers and advising on veterinary issues so as you can imagine, I am a very practical oriented person. Besides, I am also a family person with four children, enjoy sports a lot!
Invitee of the month: Dr. Ahmadu Babagana

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AB: This is a big challenge because for FAO, Namibia is a very important country in the sense that there is of work for FAO in this country. We usually leave the offices very late and sometimes work over weekends!

We are trying to make sure it does not affect our families adversely but the key thing is that the work of FAO is very relevant here in Namibia and we try to meet the expectations of the Organization. We are currently working closely with our government counterparts in particular the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry in organizing the 35TH observance of of the World Food Day on 16 October 2015, which this year will commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

We are organizing activities designed to promote understanding and awareness of food security issues and the drive to end hunger in our lifetime.

The theme for World Food Day 2015 “Social protection and Agriculture: breaking the cycle of rural poverty”, has been chosen to draw global attention to the role social protection plays in eradicating hunger and poverty when it is prioritized in development agendas. This year’s event will be commemorated in Okakarara – Otjozondjupa Region.