Africa Rising:
Realising Africa’s Potential as a Global Publishing Leader in the 21st Century

Report
Day One Introduction

The second International Publishers Association (IPA) Africa seminar — ‘Africa Rising: Realising Africa’s Potential as a Global Publishing Leader in the 21st Century — was jointly organised by the IPA and the Kenya Publishers Association. It was held over two days at the stylish Movenpick Hotel and Residences in Nairobi, Kenya.
Glitz, Glamour and Gravitas

With more than 200 delegates from some 40 countries, the event was the largest gathering of publishers, editors, writers, educators and industry stakeholders the African continent has seen — surpassing even the first IPA Africa seminar in Lagos. Among the guests, was the intellectual heavyweight 81-year-old Ngugi wa Thiong’o and his original publisher — the ‘father of African publishing’ — Dr Henry Chakava.

There was all the glitz and glamour of the Oscars as publishers, editors, writers and stakeholders photographed in front of walls bearing the names of the event sponsors. To everyone’s surprise, the standard lanyard straps were replaced with unique African beaded necklaces — adding a unique touch to the seminar and a feel of a united publishing tribe.
Exhibition Space

The exhibition space was a smart new addition to this year’s event. The halls were bustling with life as international and local exhibitors shared their ideas, stories and products to investors, business people and visitors alike.

One of the stands was run by Prestige Books who had an impressive selection of the latest fiction books coming out of Africa.
Welcome Speeches

The chair of the Kenya Publishers Association, Lawrence Njagi, gave the first opening address in which he raised a subject that would run throughout the seminar: the importance of indigenous languages.

“It is worrying that some of our African languages today are faced with possible extinction, chiefly due to the onslaught of English and other western languages” he said. “Our African children risk the threat of losing their identity as a result of the uncritical embrace of foreign languages...This is an issue we as publishers need to look at critically. It is only through publication and subsequent teaching in schools that these African languages will stay alive...Kenya, in the constitution that was promulgated in 2010, recognises the need to promote local languages, which includes publication. Our publishers now have admirable catalogues of books published in local languages.”

He praised the Kenyan government for making strides towards attaining the desired ratio of one book per pupil and said that he was pleased that publishing in Kenya was now 90% locally owned.
A Minute’s Applause

Hugo Setzer, president of the IPA, spoke next about the positive future of African publishers and the role they can play in driving quality education across the continent. He talked about how publishing ecosystems need balance “between access [and] negotiating balance between the different people in the value chain. Weakening copyright through exceptions and limitations to improve access is a short-term solution like destroying the dam to release the water in the reservoir. A flood of access followed by drought as no new books can be written and published”.

He also spoke about the freedom to publish, the other pillar of the IPA’s work, alongside copyright. He said that this year’s laureate is Egyptian publisher Khaled Lutfi who currently is sentenced to five years in prison for publishing a book. He asked delegates to take a minute to think about fellow publisher Khaled and other publishers around the world. “Could I ask you to join me in a round of applause for Khaled Lutfi to demonstrate our support for him and for all those publishers bravely publishing works in challenging circumstances”. It was a moving moment.
Masterclass from a Legend

The final welcome address was given by the celebrated Kenyan writer, activist and thinker Ngugi wa Thiong’o who — at the age of 81 — has lost none of his intellectual vigour. He was even able to perform a couple of nimble dance steps on the stage which delegates loved. His talk: ‘African Languages: the New Frontier in Publishing’ was part personal memoir, part polemic, part indictment of colonialism and part university lecture. Everyone agreed it was a privilege to hear.

His address spoke of the importance of native tongues, its rightful place in the region, and its equal importance to the English that has dominated for so long. It was a thought provoking, powerful speech that will surely be included in a future collection of his essays. He discussed the history of English language publishing in Africa. He argued that while the arrival of houses like Heinemann Africa made African writers and African writing well-known globally, it had the opposite effect at home: “African writers and African writing had visibility in the world and invisibility in the continent”.

The speech was full of quotable passages: “The eclipse of African languages as valid vehicles of intellectual and literary production, with the African elite and the government’s accepting the abnormality as the desirable normality, is not purely the product of the dominance of the Europe-based or even Africa-based publishing enterprise” he said. “It was the result of colonial project: years and years of a conscious program of denigration of African languages”.

He believes “monolingualism is the carbon monoxide of cultures; multilingualism the oxygen of cultures”; He voiced his dream like this: “What we want, what we desire is a grand global conversation between and among languages”.

He believes publishers can play a big role in what he calls “the grand conversation among languages and cultures” and concluded: “Let us dare to dream; let us open this vast market and the incredible magic and music in African languages and all other marginalised languages of the earth. Invest, nurture, then harvest”.

A Keynote to Remember

The opening keynote speech was given by Colonel Retired Cyrus Aguna who stood as a representative for the president of Kenya. His aura of confidence and positivity was a reflection of what “Africa Rising” truly meant. He opened his speech by highlighting the importance of books:

“I am particularly pleased because like all of you, books have had a defining role on my personal and professional life. It is impossible to imagine what kind of people we would have become without books... Publishing is a critical service to our society that allows readers to access information and ideas for growth and development”.

During his speech he also discussed all the promising plans the Kenyan government has in the field of education including the programmes set to empower children through education:

“As government, it is our desire to ensure that every child has access to universal education. To achieve this, efforts are being made to have every child issued their own text books and be taught digital and print (mixed) resources. This means through this government initiative, there is a potential market for publishers. I therefore urge publishers to invest in the right teaching and learning resources...

I want to assure you that we are committed to supporting Kenyan publishers. For instance in the last three years we have commissioned and procured millions of books that were used in our primary and secondary schools. We will continue to engage publishers in future because this is only way we can grow our local capacity and at the same time ensure sustainable supply of learning and teaching materials for our schools. We expect to learn from you from the discussions to know how we can support our own publishers and to hear how we can play our roles in Africa and beyond”.

The Colonel’s conclusion left all the attendees, including publishers and authors feeling uplifted and encouraged by what is to come.
Publishing Ecosystem Talk
Anna Bertmar Khan – Senior Technical Advisor, Dubai Cares (Sweden)

Anna Bertmar Khan began her talk by reciting passages from the Swedish children’s classic Pippi Longstocking in Swedish — which no one could understand. That was her point: Many children in Africa cannot understand English; they need to be taught in their own languages. She presented research to show how children learn better in their native tongues.

Publishing Ecosystem Talk
Peter Tabichi – Math and Physics Teacher, Keriko Secondary School, Winner of Global Teacher Prize 2019 (Kenya)

Peter Tabichi, who is also a Franciscan friar, addressed the conference in robes the colour of Kenyan mud declaring positively: “Africa is a continent bursting with promise. We can make a positive impact locally and globally with grit and determination.”

It was a positive message that was well-received.
Panel Discussion One
Textbook Policies: Reaching the Goal of a Textbook for Every Child in Africa

This session discussed the scarcity of learning materials in African schools and the issues it causes for the region. Albert Nsengiyumva, Executive Secretary at the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (Rwanda), said that by supporting their local publishing industry, governments can achieve better educational outcomes.

It was moderated by Brian Wafawarowa, who said: “Next to a well prepared teacher, the textbook is the next best tool for teaching and learning of pupils.”

Moderator: Brian Wafawarowa – Director, Lefa Publishing and Research Services; Chair, IPA Inclusive Publishing and Literacy Committee (South Africa)

Panellists
• Dr Julius Jwan – CEO and Director, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (Kenya)
• Albert Nsengiyumva – Executive Secretary, Association for the Development of Education in Africa (Rwanda)
• Fatou Sy – Secretary General, Senegalese Publishers Association (Senegal)
• Richard Crabbe – Textbooks Consultant (Ghana)
Overview on the General History of Africa

Abdul Rahman Lamin, the programme specialist at the UNESCO Office of Nairobi, spoke about UNESCO’s ambitious publishing project the General History of Africa that began in 1964 (making it one of the longest publishing projects in the world). It is now complete and encompassed in eight volumes. In UNESCO’s own words, it ‘reconstructs Africa’s history, freeing it from racial prejudices ensuing from slave trade and colonisation, and promoting an African perspective’.
Panel Discussion Two  
Copyright Protection and the Threat of Piracy

Mr. Edward Sigei kicked off the second panel discussion highlighting the rise of piracy of digital and printed books as well as possible scalable solutions for the same. Earlier on, in his keynote address, Lawrence Njagi had estimated that African publishers are losing up to 30% of their gross revenue to piracy “which is killing everyone in the supply chain”.

Wider education about copyright was discussed with Dr Maha Bakhiet, who claimed that both government policy makers and the wider reading public needed information about copyright.

**Moderator:** José Borghino – Secretary General, International Publishers Association (Australia)

**Panellists**

- **Dr Maha Bakhiet** – Director, Intellectual Property and Competitiveness Department, League of Arab States (Sudan)
- **Dora Susan Salamba-Makwinja** – Executive Director, Copyright Society of Malawi (Malawi)
- **Keitseng Nkah Monyatsi** – Copyright Administrator, Companies and Intellectual Property Authority, Ministry of Trade and Industry of Botswana (Botswana)
- **Edward Sigei** – Executive Director, Kenya Copyright Board (Kenya)
The Ghanaian educator and activist, Deborah Ahenkorah, talked about her mentorship programme for young African writers that she has established with celebrated UK children’s book editor Sarah Odedina. Ahenkorah is on a mission to take African authors to the world and the pair are using their many publishing contacts around the world to give new African writers a platform. They may also consider using sub-agents in the US and UK.

Ahenkorah is also passionate about diversity in children’s literature and believes it is vitally important for children to see themselves in the books they are reading.
Panel Discussion Three
Developing Africa’s Next Generation of Publishers, Writers and Artists

The African publishing industry generates approximately $1 billion in revenue, according to estimates by the Nigerian Publishers Association (NPA), and exports $173 million in print books, according to the UN Comtrade database. The NPA believes sales growth is around 5% per year across the continent whose population is 1.2bn. Where will the next generation of industry leaders come from?

Writer and journalist Dr Peter Kimani, author of Dance of the Jacaranda which was a New York Times Notable Book, asked some difficult rhetorical questions at the session: “Who is telling Africa’s story?” he wanted to know. “New York publishers? London publishers? It is very frustrating.” He observed that he received recognition overseas before African publishers became interested.

Dawn Makena summed up the change in attitude that is needed: “If you want to hide money from an African, put it in a book... that is a shame and that has got to change”.

**Moderator:** Maimouna Jallow – Writer, Journalist, Media Trainer, and Editor at Re-Imagined Storytelling Festival (Kenya)

**Panellists**
- Dr Peter Kimani – Author, Journalist (Kenya)
- Thabiso Mahlape – Publisher, BlackBird Books (South Africa)
- Abdulrahman ‘Abu Amirah’ Ndegwa – Author; Founder, Hekaya Initiative (Kenya)
- Dawn Makena – CEO, Storymoja Africa (Kenya)
Publishing Ecosystem Talk
Giacomo D’Angelo – CEO, StreetLib (Italy)

StreetLib is the publishing facilitator and global gateway distributor of ebooks, audiobooks, and pod-books for publishers big and small founded in Italy in 2006 by digital entrepreneur Giacomo D’Angelo. His talk touched on ‘the internet of money’, Bitcoin, as well as new payment systems such as SureRemit.

He explained: “SureRemit uses the blockchain and the Remit token (RMT) to facilitate global payments, allowing StreetLib authors and publishers worldwide to be paid instantly with negligible fees, even if they have no bank account and no access to Paypal.”

This session was a compelling vision of tomorrow and how the world of financial technology can help move the industry forward.
Panel Discussion Four
Digital Transformation and Disruption in African Publishing

At the session on digital disruption, the Nigerian twins Chidi and Chika Nwaogu talked about their digital content distribution platform, Publiseer. It is tailored for African creatives and enables independent African writers and musicians — typically from low-income communities — to distribute, promote, protect, and monetise their creative works. It allows creatives to receive their royalties via local bank payments with no transaction fee, thus making monetisation convenient and risk-free.

Dorcas Wepukhulu of the South Africa Institute for Distance Education said:

“If publishers look at tech as a tool to help people who have been excluded from reading they will see technology is a must — it is unavoidable and necessary”. She also asked if only publishers could embrace technology as a way to reach new bottom-of-the-pyramid readers.

Moderator: Okechukwu Ofili – Chief Executive Officer, Okadabooks.com (Nigeria)

Panellists
• Gersy Ifeanyi Ejimofo – Founder, Digitalback Books (UK)
• Harry Hare – Chairman, CIO East Africa (Kenya)
• Chidi Nwaogu – Founder, Publiseer (Nigeria)
• Chika Nwaogu – Founder, Publiseer (Nigeria)
• Dorcas Wepukhulu – Coordinator, African Storybook, South African Institute for Distance Education (Kenya)
Panel Discussion Five
The Growing Threat of Self-Censorship

Moderated by Kristenn Einarsson, this was one of the most well-attended sessions.

Censorship isn’t just a top down threat, according to Dr Tom Odhiambo: “It isn’t coming from governments necessarily, it’s being driven by ordinary citizens” he said, with twitter often magnifying and distorting dissent. “When we have published titles that people are uncomfortable with, students in the classroom are asking why such books are published and they talk about ‘literary purity’”.

Gill Moodie spoke of the extraordinary lengths it went to publish its exposé of Jacob Zuma, The President’s Keeper with codenames — it was called The Peacock’s Keeper — shredded manuscripts and communication only via Whatsapp. Khanya Mncwabe said publishers should be pragmatic and form alliances to combat government interference; Dr Odhimabo observed: “The silence of the majority gives censorship the opportunity to win”.

The session ended with these poignant words from Sihem Bensedrine, president of Tunisia’s Truth and Dignity Commission: “The book is the place where memory is stored, and every book censored is a memory lost”

Moderator: Kristenn Einarsson – Managing Director, Norwegian Publishers Association, Chair, IPA FTP Committee (Norway)

Panellists
• Sihem Bensedrine – President, Truth and Dignity Commission of Tunisia (Tunisia)
• Khanya Mncwabe – Centre Coordinator, PEN South Africa (South Africa)
• Gado Mwampembwa – Cartoonist (Tanzania)
• Dr Tom Odhiambo – Lecturer of Literature, University of Nairobi (Kenya)
• Gill Moodie – Commissioning Editor, NB Publishers (South Africa)
Fireside Chat

Sylvie Forbin (France), the deputy director general of Copyright and Creative Industries Sector at the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), reminded delegates that the Berne Convention on copyright is “the oldest and most important copyright treaty administered by WIPO”, and she reiterated WIPO’s duty to protect the treaty and the support it gives to creative industries.
Networking Dinner and Show
Ahmed Al Amri – Chairman, Sharjah Book Authority (UAE)

Before the dinner and evening’s entertainment, Ahmed Al Amri, the chairman of the Sharjah Book Authority, brought delegates up to speed with the latest developments at the emirate’s state-of-the-art free publishing zone whose number of publisher clients increases every month. Recent exciting news includes the agreement with Ingram to open a printing facility at the complex.

The evening’s entertainment was very special — a multi-lingual presentation of Africa’s most translated short story by Thiongo: ‘The Upright Revolution’. It is an allegorical fable about how the parts of the body work together to enable man to walk on two legs. The moral of the tale is simple, but no less powerful for it: we are better together than apart, we have to work together to achieve the best results and, in the light of the seminar, cooperation and coordinated action, backed by supportive government policy, will take the African publishing industry forward.
Day Two Welcome Address
Bodour Al Qasimi – Vice President, International Publishers Association (UAE)

After thrilling the delegates with some expert Swahili, Bodour Al Qasimi, vice president of the IPA, gave a thought-provoking address that tackled the misrepresentation of Africa over the years. She said Africa was “one of the most widely misunderstood regions in the world and also one of the most under-represented regions in global literature and culture”.

Although there is a new wave of African writers and artists who are making noise, “they are fighting an unfair battle against established notions of cultural superiority”. She said that more people like Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie were needed. “This is why we encourage all the African publishers attending with us today to do whatever it takes to support African authors to tell Africa’s story. Because if you don’t tell your story enough, someone else is going to tell it on your behalf.”

She added crucially: “You will not walk alone”.

She concluded by pledging support for African publishers from the IPA, which includes its deal with the philanthropic body Dubai Cares providing $800,000 over four years to expand the IPA’s programmes in Africa in education and publishing.
Publishing Ecosystem Talk

Wanjiru Koinange and Angela Wachuka – Co-founders, Book Bunk (Kenya)

One of the most watchable presentations — thanks to the high quality video on two screens and the passion of the presenters — was given by campaigners Wanjiru Koinange and Angela Wachuka, co-founders of Book Bunk. This is the non-profit that is renovating Nairobi’s colonial era McMillan Library, and two libraries in the city’s suburbs, into the 21st century.
Panel Discussion Six
Creating the Readers of the Future

The second day saw South Africa novelist Zukiswa Wanner call for more stories to be available in local languages. Ideas from the floor included a nationwide campaign for reading fiction, the use of widely-promoted suggested reading lists every year, and publishers stepping up to the plate as cultural ambassadors.

Joan Mwachi-Amolo believes governments have a responsibility to create “enabling parents” and wondered whether “the curriculum is killing the reading spirit, [by] being too exam-focused. The environment is not supportive of a reading culture — it needs government action”.

Moderator: Lawrence Njagi – Chair, Kenya Publishers Association (Kenya)

Panellists
- Joan Mwachi-Amolo – Regional Director, East Africa, Worldreader (Kenya)
- Will Clurman – Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer, eKitabu (Kenya)
- John Mwazemba – General Manager, Oxford University Press East Africa (Kenya)
- Zukiswa Wanner – Journalist, Novelist (South Africa)
Publishing Ecosystem Talk

Dr Henry Chakava – Chairman, East African Education Publishers (Kenya)

The address by Dr Henry Chakava was well-received. He reiterated the call for more publishing in indigenous languages — a theme of the entire seminar. Described as the “father of African publishing”, Chakava was the former student of Thiong’o at the University of Nairobi and went on to become his publisher at Heinemann Africa.
Panel Discussion Seven
Lost Tongues: The Struggle to Preserve Indigenous African Languages

In his keynote address on day one, Lawrence Njagi had noted that of the 6,500 languages spoken in the world, 1,500 to 2,000 have their home in Africa. “But 60% of these are slowly dying” he said. “We have a duty to document and protect them.”

Dr Anthony Kila said: “Translation is the key to finding solutions. It’s not about ‘Soyinka or Shakespeare’ but ‘Soyinka and Shakespeare’”.

For Dr Kimani Njogu, the “solution would be to have an African Languages Association, meeting regularly and working to enhance each other’s work in indigenous languages”.

Earlier in the seminar, Ngugi wa Thiong’o — who was listening intently during this session — had said that “Languages are like musical instruments, each of them has its unique musicality and different instruments are needed to make music. We don’t say let’s silence other instruments to privilege piano. An orchestra is made when all instruments play together”. He said that “writers in African languages are there, but publishers in African languages are lacking”. However, he suggested that change is coming.

Moderator: Wanjeri Gakuru – Managing Editor, Jalada (Kenya)

Panellists
• Petina Gappah – Author, Lawyer (Zimbabwe)
• Kiarie Kamau – Managing Director, Chief Executive Officer, East African Educational Publishers (Kenya)
• Dr Anthony Kila – Director, Centre for International Advanced and Professional Studies (Nigeria)
• Dr Kimani Njogu – Associate Professor, Kiswahili and African Languages and Director of Twaweza Communications and Africa Health and Development International (AHADI) (Kenya)
• Elinor Sisulu – Executive Director, Puku Children’s Literature Foundation (South Africa)
Publishing Ecosystem Talk

André Breedt – Director, Nielsen Book Research International (UK)

André Breedt explained how its operation works and touched on the benefits, the way data helps publishers and retailers plan their activities, and how it also helps publishers make their case to governments.

He talked about the benefits of having centralised metadata and accurate sales information which helps stakeholders manage the supply chain and ultimately benefits publishers and consumers. The challenge Nielsen faces is the buy in from parts of the African book trade and the willingness to share information that is required. Which is why his presence at the seminar was so useful, meeting publishers in the breaks and putting a human face on data collection.
Panel Discussion Eight
Data Innovation: Developing Data and Statistical Capabilities to Support the Publishing and Creative Industries

Moderated by Samuel Kolawole, this session looked at the importance of data as a way of giving publishers solid evidence about how different books are performing. In the west, at publishers like HarperCollins, this can mean live monitoring of ebook pricing and being reactive to fast-moving trends. Africa is making the first steps but has a way to go as yet.

Moderator: Samuel Kolawole – Chair, African Publishers Network (Nigeria)

Panellists
- Isabelle Kassi Fofana – President, Akwaba Culture Association (Ivory Coast)
- Monica Aba Brew-Hammond – Senior Lecturer, Department of Publishing Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (Ghana)
- Dr Pali Lehohla – Former Statistician General, Former Head of Statistics South Africa (South Africa)
Update on the Lagos Action Plan

The final afternoon saw an update on the Lagos Action Plan which was developed following the first IPA Africa seminar last year. Put together by the IPA, with the Nigerian Publishers Association and the Kenya Publishers Association, the Lagos Action Plan outlines five “transformation goals”: enhancing stakeholder collaboration and coordination; advancing innovative solution to longstanding challenges; making Africa’s copyright framework fit for the digital era; leveraging data for advocacy and digital transformation; and promoting diversity and inclusiveness in global publishing.

The all male panel expressed their awareness at the lack of diversity in the panel and have vowed to change this moving forward.

Discussion leader: Gbadega Adedapo – President, Nigerian Publishers Association (Nigeria)

Participation from:
- Lawrence Njagi – Chair, Kenya Publishers Association (Kenya)
- Samuel Kolawole – Chair, African Publishers Network (Nigeria)
- John O. Asein – Director General, Nigerian Copyright Commission (Nigeria)
- Ernest Oppong – Acting Executive Director, African Publishers Network (Ghana)
- Anges Félix Ndakpri – President, Ivory Coast Publishers Association (Ivory Coast)
- Brian Wafawarowa – Director, Lefa Publishing and Research Services; Chair, IPA Inclusive Publishing and Literacy Committee (South Africa)
Copyright Workshop

The workshop was moderated by Kiarie Kamau, the managing director and CEO of East African Educational Publishers. It saw Michael Healy, executive director of International Relations, Copyright Clearance Centre, and other copyright experts talk about the importance of copyright and how it protects both artists and publishers alike.

Moderator: Kiarie Kamau – Managing Director and CEO, East African Educational Publishers (Kenya)

Participation from:
• Michael Healy – Executive Director, International Relations, Copyright Clearance Center (UK)
• Dr Marisella Ouma – Head of Legal Services at Central Bank of Kenya and a former Executive Director of the Kenya Copyright Board (Kenya)
• Carole Croella – Senior Counsellor, Copyright Law Division, WIPO (France)
• Maxwell Wahome – Managing Director, Longhorn Publishers (Kenya)
Presentation of Certificates, Gala Dinner and Show

The presentation of certificates was a gloriously protracted affair. It reached a splendid climax when all the executives from the IPA and the heads of the Nigerian and Kenyan publishers associations reappeared from a side room dressed like Masai Mara tribesmen.

Delegates were then treated to a high energy performance by the Sarakasi dance troupe who span, tumbled and somersaulted across the stage. ‘Sarakasi’ means ‘circus’ and this performance had all the thrills and energy of the big top!

Finally, before the gala dinner, Hendrik Du Preez, the regional manager of East Africa sponsorship at Emirates Airlines, drew a comparison between how books take readers on journeys just as their splendid Airbus 380s do.

The evening ended with cool Afro-smooth sounds performed by Kenya’s Gogosimo Band.
Alongside the seminar, IPA hosted a mini art exhibition to promote and celebrate African talent. The exhibition gave seminar guests an exclusive sneak peak opportunity of the ‘Read. Write. Create. Africa’ photography collection by Omar Victor Diop; the collection was created to celebrate books and Africa’s rich heritage, culture, and languages.

During the seminar, Omar Victor showcased five of his pieces in the main hall for all visitors to enjoy. The full collection will be revealed in September at the Xposure exhibition in Sharjah as part of the Sharjah World Book Capital 2019 celebrations.
Conclusion

The two day event ended with an optional safari tour where guests had the opportunity to watch the Big Five in their natural habitat.

Perhaps one of the best results of the seminar was the opportunity for African publishers to feel part of the international publishing community. As Thabiso Mahlape, publisher of South Africa’s BlackBird Books puts it: “I always thought that publishing was something for foreigners. Our white counterparts don’t need the confidence to publish, but our young black people do”.

But we should end as we began, with the words of Ngugi wa Thiong’o, who finished his address like this: “What we want, what we desire is a grand global conversation between and among languages. That is among all the marginalised languages of the earth and between the hitherto marginalising and marginalised. With that vision the now dominant languages can help in the visibility of writers of the world without making them invisible in their own languages and cultures. Thus they can enable conversation among languages without disabling the intellectuals from their languages and cultures... I believe that the publisher can play a big role in the grand conversation among languages and cultures”.

“Let us dare to dream; let us open this vast market and the incredible magic and music in African languages and all other marginalised languages of the earth. Invest, nurture, then harvest.”

The feeling is that Africa is rising, is beginning to tell its story in its many mother tongues in addition to English and that its own ‘upright revolution’ is taking shape. It is ready to invest, nurture and then harvest — and the International Publishers Association Africa seminars are pleased to be part of this evolving story.
The Sponsors

There were numerous opportunities for the sponsors’ names to be mentioned during the seminar in addition to visibility on stage and on branded walls in reception. Thanks are due to the following:

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Media Coverage

The Nairobi seminar received widespread regional and global coverage across social and traditional media. Here’s a capture of just a few engaging articles and posts:
Beyond Nairobi

As we wrap up two successful regional seminars in Africa, you may be wondering – what’s next? We’re happy to announce that the next IPA Africa Seminar will be

Marrakesh, Morocco
December 2020

If you would like to get involved, become a sponsor, or stay up to date with this event and other upcoming seminars, contact us at

info@iparegionalseminars.com