



Information Brochure / Invitation



AHRA



Standing Against *Poverty*

Highlight: Symposium, Art Exhibition and Charity Work

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National Gallery of Art

Standing Against Poverty

Campaign Against Poverty and Hunger in Nigeria

Introduction

In September 2000, Nigeria was among the 189 members states of United Nations that adopted the declaration for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals include: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender quality and empowering women; reduction of child mortality, improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development. The declaration sets 2015 as a target day for attaining the goals.

However, there is a clear indication that two third of the goals have not been met, especially in Nigeria. This year, 2007 is the midway point of the fifteen years deadline. The question therefore, is has Nigeria achieved progress in the realisation of the MDGs?

The United Nations' 2007 Millennium Development Goals Report aptly directs attention to the level of progress made in the attempt to realise the goals. It declares that the greatest proportions of children going hungry continue to be found in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Poor progress in these regions means that it is unlikely that the global target will be met. If current trends continue, the world will miss the 2015 target by 30 million children, essentially robbing them of full potential.

Nevertheless, the report also poignantly exposes that although; there have been some improvement in MDGs target areas; but the poverty gap ratio in sub-Saharan Africa remains the highest in the world. This means that the poor in the region are the most economically disadvantaged in the world.

The realisation of MDGs in 2015 in Nigeria is doubtful. This is due to the poverty level in the country. Malachy Ezema wrote in Guardian Wednesday, January 1, 2003 (page 19) that in Nigeria poverty is endemic and increasing with over two thirds of the population living below poverty line of one dollar per day equivalent ... This means that 80 Million Nigerians are poor and is the third largest of poor in the world after China and India ... Gideon Oladipo corroborates this exposition when he opined in Guardian, Monday January 20, 2003 (page 75) that poverty is therefore the indirect cause of our problem ... responsible for most other vices in our society: People steal, defraud and even commit armed robbery to satisfy their needs and their greed.

It is in the regard of the above that the programme, titled Standing Against Poverty is being organised. The statement made by Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of United Nations, also propels it. Ban said while prefacing the MDGs - 2007 Report that there is a clear need for political leaders to take urgent and concerted action, or many millions of people will not realize the basic promises of the MDGs in their lives.

Aims/Objectives

As mentioned earlier, the programme is designed to eloquently respond to the Global Call for Action Against Poverty (GCAP) with aims to: (i) showcasing in visual forms the realities of abject poverty in Nigerian society; (ii) drawing attention and urging the government and the entire public to re-launch concerted actions in the fight for poverty eradication, so as to attain the MDGs in 2015; and (iii) marking the 2007 International Day for the eradication of poverty, which is 17th October.

The Event at a Glance

The event is expected to run for nine days, starting from 12th October 2007 with a symposium and the opening of art exhibition, which will be held on the 12th October with a symposium and art exhibition. The symposium will be held at The British Council: 20, Thompson Avenue, Ikoyi Lagos, starting from 10:00am, while the exhibition will be declared open at the United Nations' Information Centre (UNIC): 17 Alfred Rewane Road (formerly Kingsway Road) Ikoyi Lagos, Starting from 2:00pm. The exhibition will run till 20th October.

A charity walk against poverty and hunger will be staged, starting from Ikeja (Awolowo-under Bridge) to Lagos State Government Secretariat-where a letter, which will contain a communique that will be drawn from the symposium will be delivered to the Governor of Lagos State, Babatunde Raji Fashola (SAN) for onward delivery to President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, The President of Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The topics to be delivered in the symposium session and speakers include: Abject Poverty: The Economic Solution (Prof. Chukwuma Soludo, the Governor, Central Bank of Nigeria CBN), The Global Approach to Poverty Eradication (Shola Oshunkeye, a reputable journalist and 2006, CNN Journalist of the Year), Poverty Eradication: The Role of the Government and the People (Dr. Reuben Abati, a social critic and Chairman, Editorial Board, Guardian Newspapers), Humanitarian Approach to Poverty Eradication (Dr. Shambavhi Golpakrishna, lecturer and President for African Refugee in Nigeria - MAREN), The Consequences of Poverty in Nigerian Society (Sylvester S. Ekaba, an experienced administrator and writer) and Corruption: The Floodgate to Poverty (Mr. Dayo Olorunyomi, the Chief of Staff, Economic and Financial Crime Commission, EFCC). Mr. Otiye Igbuzor (the Country Director, Actionaid International, Nigeria) and Amb. Segun Olusola mni OFR (Founder/Patron African Refugee Foundation) will deliver the Key Note Address, while the Governor of Lagos State will grace the occasion as Special Guest of Honour.

Organisers' Profile

Human Rights Information Network is a National Network of Non Governmental Organisations, Community Based Organisations and Civil Societies Groups dedicated to sharing ideas, experiences and resources to promote broad access to and effective use of knowledge and information as tools of promoting research and work in the fields of human rights, human development, socio-economic and political rights, gender and child rights, environment and consumer rights and rights to information (FoI). Founded in 1997, the

HuRINet is supported by the British Council (BC) and The United Nations Information Center (UNIC). Presently, the network has Organisational membership strength of more than 20 (20) organisations; it is run by a Management Committee.

Charity Care Network is a Non Governmental and Non profit making Organisation. It parades professionals from different walks of life with a primary focus on the plight of the destitute in Nigerian society. It has been in existence since 2000 with many charity works including drilling of boreholes to provide portable drinking water, provision of handouts such as food stuffs and other needs to some destitute homes nationwide, organising social activities for the inmates of destitute homes during festive periods; and organizing exhibitions so as to raise funds for the execution of projects to alleviate the plight of destitute.

The Advocate for Human Rights Through Arts AHRA is a Non Governmental and Non profit making Organisation founded in 2003 with the sole aim of using arts works as instrument of advocacy for human rights education, promotion, and protection in Nigeria. Its activities involve art exhibition and workshops, performing and performance art, seminar/symposium, etc. It has contributed to the campaign for penal and prison reform in Nigeria; and advocate for the expunging of Holding Charge in Nigerian statutory books, etc

One Nation Earth Ambassadors is a community based, non-profit making civil society developmental organization for concerned people, who are not comfortable with the present state of affairs in the world (our country) thus are desirous of a positive change. It is a youth-led forum for right-thinking, like-minded people who have resolved to take proactive action towards promoting the United Nations ideals, building world peace and uniting the world's diverse cultures, hence our motto: Uniting The World's People And Culture

The Exhibiting Artists and Their Works

Seven contemporary Nigerian artists will be showcasing their visual artistic works in the exhibition segment of the programme. These artists have been using their art works as means of redressing pungent issues in the Nigerian society. They are Uba Washington Chukwuemeka, Oladesu Johnson Olarinde, Vera Nwaokokoh, Susan Omagu, Nwankwo Peter, Nathaniel Momoh and Jelili Olorunfunmi Atiku.

Their works, which include drawings, paintings, photographs, printing and installation sculpture are executed in various media such as oil, acrylic, charcoal and pencil, ink, papier-mâché, mixed-media and found objects like shoes, fabric, etc.

You are cordially invited

Washington Uba
washdread@yahoo.com
08055001829

Jelili Olorunfunmi Atiku
atikuolorunfunmi@yahoo.com
08023155408

Charles Ogbonnaya Mba
mbacharlesom@yahoo.com
08065100088, 01-4171665



Cardiac Arrest, 2007, Photograph, 40cm x 50cm

Washington Chukwuemeka UBA, a prolific photo-artist who adopts camera's lens as a mirror for social and political critics. He is the founder and Co-coordinator of Charity Care Network Initiative. He holds a Bachelors Degree (B.Tech) in Production Technology from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State.

He started his works of charity from his youth days in the University where he was the Director of Charity, Madonna Mercy Family International (a Catholic Church Charity Group).

Washington has participated in many exhibitions including Dawning Dreams (2006), organised by Committee for Relevant Art (CORA), Blooming Talents, organised by Transcorp Hilton in 2006, Destitute in the Land of Plenty, Media Presentation / Photo Exhibition held at the National Theatre, 2007, etc. His present artistic direction premises on expressing the plight of destitute in Nigeria. The titles of his work in the show are MDG 7 1/2, The Web, Cardiac Arrest, Untitled, Reflection, Water Naa Water and dein.



Impoverished in a Blessed Land, 2000, Ink on Paper, 40cm x 50cm

Vera NWAOKOKOH, a female Nigerian creative artist, who holds a Master of Fine Arts Degree from the University of Benin Art School. A National Youth Service Corps Award winner, she has risen to become an Amazon within the female art community in Nigeria.

Vera's use of native art forms in the contemporary world to fight all negative norms in etching prints, has earned her a salutary place in Nigeria art space. She has exhibited widely in Lagos, Abuja, Benin, Port Harcourt among other places. These include the Nigeria / China Friendly Association (NICAF) Exhibition in 1996, International Women's Day Celebration, March 2000; National Female Artists Association (NAFA) Exhibitions in 2000, 2002 and 2004 (held at Abuja, Lagos and Port Harcourt respectively), etc.

She is presently the Keeper and Head of Station of the National Gallery of Art, Lagos; and also the Assistant Chief Curator, Federal Ministry of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation. Vera's works in this present show shall include etching prints and paintings. She will be exhibiting paintings, titled as Impoverished in a Blessed Land (Ink on Paper), etc.



The Flight Age, 2007, Oil on Canvass, 61cm x 76.3cm



Johnson Olarinde OLADESU, a lecturer at Olabisi Onabanjo University. He teaches painting and drawing. Olarinde was trained at Ahmadu Bello University as a painter and holds B.A and MFA degrees in Fine Arts from the same University. Arts as healing is his current focus in his art forms.

He is a member of Nogh Nogh Art Movement in Nigeria and Ibogun Group of Artists. Johnson has had several exhibitions to his credit; these include Butterflies (held at Kashim Ibrahim Library, ABU in 2000) CHOGM Exhibition (held at Commonwealth People Market, Abuja, 2004), Dualism (staged at the National Museum, Onikan Lagos in 2004), etc. Among his works to be exhibited are Hajia (drawing), The State of the Nation, The Flight Age (Oil on Canvass) and Polygamous (Oil on Canvass).



Patches, 2007, Mixed Media, 40cm x 50cm



Susan Ogeyi OMAGU, a female Nigerian mixed-media abstract expressionist painter, who bagged B.A (Hon) Fine Art in 1995 from Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. She had a two months residency program in Berlin in 2005 where she worked with artists of diverse specialization at Tachele, an off-scene cultural centre. Susan experiments with a wide range of materials from newspapers, lines, text, symbols etc. For her, it is exciting and fascinating to bring to use, materials otherwise considered as waste. Her paintings are picturesque of social concern, often expressed in minimalist forms. Her paintings are picturesque of social concern, often expressed in minimalist forms. Her works have been shown severally within and outside Nigeria. Among these are Expectations (2005), Echoes of Hercules (held at Abuja, 2005), Minimalism (held at Goethe Institution, Lagos, 2007), etc.

She is presently a Curator with National Gallery of Art in Abuja. She will be exhibiting such titled works as Expectation (Acrylic on Canvas), Patches (Mixed Media), Freedom (Acrylic on Canvas) and Encased (Acrylic on Canvas).