The African Public Libraries Network

Presented by Gertrude Kayaga Mulindwa
Director – National Library of Uganda
Introduction

The first African Public Libraries Summit was held in Johannesburg – 19\textsuperscript{th} – 21\textsuperscript{st} September 2012 under the theme “Informing Africa, Developing Africa.”
Participants

- Drawn from across all regions of Africa.
- They included public library leaders, policy makers, and other key stakeholders.
- Delegates from outside Africa invited to showcase positive developments in their regions.
Participation (Cont...)  

• 52 countries, 44 of them African countries were represented.  
• Also represented were the economic groupings of the African Union Commission, the East African Community, SADC Parliamentary Forum as well as UNECA and UNESCO.
Discussions included:

- Challenges faced by the public libraries in Africa.
- The achievements and innovations of public libraries in Africa and around the world.
- Opportunities that exist for the growth of public libraries.
- The need to further network.
Summit Outcomes

• Participants agreed on the following:
  • Each country to develop a national policy on public libraries/connecting library policy to national development.
  • Creation of public and community libraries as a catalysts for development.
Summit outcomes

- Building partnerships within the community as well as on a national and at international level.
- The importance of use of ICTs for development.
Summit outcomes

A communiqué with two major tasks was signed by all the African countries present.

The communiqué

Participants committed themselves to:

• Renewed focus on strengthening the ability of libraries to contribute to development agendas.
• Formation of a Public Library Network, for the public library community to continue with the networking and knowledge sharing initiated at the Summit.
The network

The network would enable African public librarians to speak with one voice and push forward for the placement of public libraries firmly on the development agenda.
**The African Public Libraries Network**

- A draft of the structure of the network was drawn up and circulated.
- Participants felt that it was better to start the networking immediately through on-line discussions and then build on that.
The Network

- A listserv has been formed to create opportunity for online discussions.
- Invitations to subscribe were sent out to library directors and librarians who attended APLS. There is a need to accept the invitation to subscribe.
The network

For others wishing to join, send an e-mail to gkmulindwa@nlu.go.ug to receive an invitation to subscribe.
The network

- Need to further discuss the format and structure of the network.
- Need to bring up topics of interest for discussion by all.
Way forward

Need to create a e-repository which celebrates the successes of the various public and community libraries across Africa.
Way forward

• Create a website for the network – Kenya National Library Service has offered to create and host it.

• Create the structures needed for full operation of the African Public Libraries Network.
The African Public Libraries Network is being officially launched today!!