

**International Community of Banyakigezi
(ICOB) 15th Annual Convention & Annual
General Meeting Orlando, Florida, United
States of America**

4th – 7th August 2017



Introduction:

ICOB Florida hosted the 15th Annual International Community of Banyakigezi (ICOB) Convention. The Theme of the Convention was, **'Empowering the youth and Communities.**

Delegates from the USA, Canada, the UK and Uganda started arriving as early as Tuesday, Aug 1st 2017. Banyakigezi and friends were hosted at the Hilton Garden Inn Orlando at Seaworld in Orlando, Florida from August 4 to August 7, 2017.

Opening:

Registration took place in the hotel foyer and delegates were welcomed to Orlando by Ms. Lillian Bagazonzya, Ms. Innocent Byamugisha and Mr. Elvis Muhaabwa who provided delegates with packets of information on the programme for the next few days.

The deliberations started with an opening prayer at 9.30 am on August 4th led by Reverend Canon Benjamin Twinamaani, the Chief Organizer of this event. He introduced Mr. Darrell Williams, a representative of Mayor Buddy Dyer of the City of Orlando, who welcomed guests to the city. He also read a letter of welcome from Florida Senator Bill Nelson.

Delegates were notified that Ms. Kaitlyn Harris would be the Event Coordinator on behalf of the Hotel and Mr. Elvis Muhaabwa the event Time Keeper. The local organizing committee consisted of Camilla Twinamaani, Charles Forster and Mark Tushemereirwe.

The youth and children were invited to separate rooms, where events were to take place on the sidelines.

Frank Byamugisha, an outgoing Board Member took over from Reverend Benjamin Twinamaani, opening the floor for discussions, by introducing the programme.

Chapter Reports:

Presentations were made by representatives of:

Canada/Toronto Chapter: Peter Bikangaga;

UK Chapter: Beatrice Hamujuni;

USA Chapter: Leo Nkurunziza;

Uganda Chapter: Grace Mugabiirwe Mutebile

- Chapter members in Canada, UK and USA are coming together in the spirit of “okumanyana” organizing social gatherings and events;
- They are pursuing charity status for Chapters which are only community organizations in their jurisdictions;
- Organizational Assessment Capacity was being reviewed by members of the Uganda Chapter with their constitution being finalized. Challenges that remain include accountability, governance and resource mobilization;
- Lessons to be learned include how to manage local political influence and also the youth question in Uganda.

The State of ICOB:

Muniini Mulera, the President of ICOB, was introduced by the moderator Frank Byamugisha. He welcomed all the delegates to the Orlando Convention and reviewed the resolutions at the London 2016 convention and the actions that have been taken to move the ICOB agenda forward. These include:

1. Adopting Corporate Governance.
 - An organization assessment team, consisting of Henry Bagazonzya, Beatrice Hamujuni-Smith and Leonard Nkurunziza, was set up to review ICOB. Their report was presented at the convention by Mr. Henry Bagazonzya.

- Climus Financial Management and Professional Services LLC was contracted to audit the Organizations books.
 - A Bye-laws Review Committee was appointed to review ICOB's governing laws and propose amendments. Mr. Andrew Katarikawe made a presentation during the afternoon session.
2. Registration of ICOB Chapters as charities – The president wrote to chapter chairs to proceed with this process. USA is the only chapter currently registered as a charitable organization;
 3. Promote Unity and broad-based approach – A Kigezi day subcommittee was appointed to develop an action plan to cultivate a strategy that engages Banyakigezi at the grassroots. A report was submitted to the Executive Committee to be acted upon by November 2017.
 4. To maintain and strengthen the Kigezi Education Fund – An Information Communication Technology (ICT) Centre with 30 Local Area Network computers fully funded by ICOB was completed at Kizinga Technical School, Kabale District. This is the fifth ICOB project financed through the Kigezi Education Fund. The feasibility of instituting a Global Kigezi Fund should be explored.
 5. Executive Committee to develop and implement a strategy for enhanced fundraising strategies.
 6. The Board appointed Francis Runumi, Peter Ngategize and Emmanuel Turyamuhaki to develop a proposal for creation of a Kigezi Investment Forum.
 7. The board appointed Dr. Wilberforce Sabiiti of the University of St. Andrews, Scotland to develop a position paper on how ICOB can lobby the Government of Uganda (GOU) to develop education curriculum that is integrated with social and economic needs of Kigezi and Uganda in general.

8. The Board appointed a team to champion working with the leaders in Uganda/Kigezi to make use of homegrown and Diaspora talent to fill skills gaps in education and health services.
9. The Board appointed an ICOB Health sub-committee, led by Dr. Sheck K. Matsiko, to work with stakeholders to develop opportunities for ICOB/GOU partnership in health care.
10. Initiated the process of building a cultural museum in Kabale. The cultural heritage committee is yet to be appointed.
11. The Board appointed Global Cynergies, LLC to identify and negotiate contracts with convention hotels on behalf of ICOB.

Towards a new ICOB:

Report of the Organization assessment team presented by Mr. Henry Bagazonzya:

The ICOB board was tasked to ensure increased efficiency, productivity, transparency and accountability. He highlighted results of the survey which informed the actions that have been taken to move the ICOB agenda forward. The highlights included among others:

- Ownership of ICOB, including how to include the youth and retain their loyalty as the future of ICOB.
- The Kigezi Education Fund, and what direction it should take, whether it should be re-evaluated.
- Registration of Chapters as Charities.

Implementation of the ICOB 2016 resolutions should continue as the basis for a stronger and forward-looking organization, especially:

- Corporate governance – the byelaws were updated and voted on at this meeting.
- Charitable status – work in progress.
- Inclusive and broad based ICOB which should be active through the year.
- Strengthen KEF.

Leveraging the International Community:

Speaking in his personal capacity, His Excellency Dr. Adonia Ayebare, Uganda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, made a presentation on leveraging the international Community. He pointed out that Unity was the building block of a successful country. Over \$1 billion is received in Uganda annually through remittances from Diaspora Ugandans. The strength of the Diaspora cannot be underestimated. As a result a Diaspora desk was moved to a Section under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Bylaws review and amendments

The afternoon session included a report and recommendations from the Bylaws Review Committee, represented by Andrew Katarikawe. The main changes included Articles III – Membership. A decision was reached to give more time to the delegates to review and internalize the amendments. The Bylaws were presented again the next day and, after discussion, were approved.

Youth

Panel discussions were held with the following themes – 'A clash of cultures: Diaspora children and their African parents,' and 'Bridging generational gaps: Youth participation in ICOB.' These were moderated by Michelle Byamugisha, with the participants including Dora Ayebare (representing parents,) Namara Nkojo and Daniel Onyango representing Diaspora Children, while Claire Bagazonzya and Stella Kazibwe represented the youth in ICOB.



The evening ended with a Dinner and Dance which was targeted towards the youth in the Atlantis Ballroom.

Day 2

Morning Session:

Poverty alleviation in Kigezi

Town Hall meetings were held on the theme: 'Poverty Alleviation in Kigezi' with panels consisting of Mr. Henry Bagazonzya, Dr. Chris Baryomunsi, Ms. Beatrice Hamujuni, Dr. Judith Tukahirwa, Ms. Grace Mugabirwe Mutebile, Ms. Peninah Ngategize and Ms. Bridget Nkojo

Mr. Amos Asimwe gave a presentation on Water pollution and poverty, and a practical system for cleaning dirty water for consumption and domestic use.

The afternoon session:

Kigezi Education Fund

The achievements and future direction of the Kigezi Education Fund (KEF) were discussed by Dr. Frank Byamugisha. This was followed by Mr. Jackson Kaguri, who shared fundraising strategies that have worked for Nyaka Aids Foundation that could be adopted by ICOB.

A question and answer session was followed by preparation for Election of ICOB Board and Executive Committee. The delegates were presented with the following members who were standing for the following positions:

Vice-President – Ms. Judie Nkusi
Secretary – Ms. Carol Kemigisha
Treasurer – Ms. Dorothy Angole

Board Members

Mr. Leo Nkurunziza
Dr. James Kikira Mugisha
Dr. Peter Bikangaga
Ms. Beatrice Hamujuni
Ms. Peninah Ngategize

The Inspectors of elections selected to conduct the elections were Ms. Charity Karatikawe, Dr. Judith Tukahiirwa and Mr. Tusiime Ndyajunwoha.

Candidates introduced themselves and provided a statement as to why they were interested in the positions. The voting was to be completed during the Gala dinner later that evening.

Special Tribute to Prof. Gaston Ndyajunwoha

The afternoon session was concluded with ‘The spirit of ICOB: A special Tribute to founders and past leaders.’ Dr. Sarah Ndyajunwoha and Mr. Tusiime Ndyajunwoha gave a moving tribute to their father, one of the Banyakigezi who engaged in the early discussions and push that led to the founding of ICOB. Professor Ndyajunwoha died in 2001.

Later that evening, the Gala dinner and dance took place in the Atlantis Ballroom. Delegates were welcomed by the Kigezi 'Song of Praise' sung by Ms. Gloria Nshekanabo, the writer. Prior to the dinner, Mr. Cliff Musiimenta delivered the Annual Audit Report on ICOB chapters and, in addition, managed the auction which raised funds for the Kigezi Education Fund.

The Hilton Hotel served delegates with a sumptuous three course dinner which was crowned with a dance. Many of the delegates participated in Ekizino of the Bakiga and Ekitaguriro of the Bahororo. The DJ played music through the ages.

The video Nyaka Widows Project was presented and a representative from the next host city, Ms. Bridget Nkojo, made an excellent presentation about Vancouver, British Columbia welcoming delegates to the next convention scheduled for the Summer of 2018.

Respectfully submitted by,

Carol Kemigisha
Secretary General, ICOB