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# INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF BANYAKIGEZI

## 16TH ANNUAL CONVENTION & ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

### VANCOUVER, CANADA

28TH JUNE - 2ND JULY 2018

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POST EVENT REPORT

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*The 16th Convention and Annual General Meeting of the International Community of Banyakigezi (ICOB) were held at the Harbour Front Hotel, Vancouver, Canada from Friday June 28th to July 02, 2018. The theme for this year's Convention was "Unlocking Kigezi's Tourism Potential".*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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When we started planning to host ICOB Convention 2018, we did not know what to expect. First, it seemed like an eternity away, and we were not clear on what the theme of the day would be. What we were sure about though is that we wanted a theme that would be representative of both Kigezi and our host city Vancouver. Interestingly, inspiration came from the most unlikely source – the book “My African Journey” by Winston Churchill. In this book, Churchill wrote “*For magnificence, for variety of form and color, for profusion of brilliant life - bird, insect, reptile, beast - for vast scale - Uganda is truly “the Pearl of Africa.”*”. He named K i g e z i as the Switzerland of Africa for its rolling hills, and crisp cold air. That quote gave birth to our theme ICOB Vancouver 2018 sing “**Unlocking Kigezi’s Tourism Potential**”.

In selecting Vancouver, ICOB could not have chosen a better venue for this year’s convention. Uganda and British Columbia (B.C) are very similar, both being the most beautiful places on earth and are inhabited by the most friendly and welcoming people.

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### OBJECTIVES

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In keeping with the theme of the day, the objectives of the convention were the following

1. Finding ways of harnessing Kigezi’s beauty into viable economic activities that can spur economic growth within the local communities  
Through this convention, we wanted to start the conversation on how like B. C tourism can be used as an engine for development in Kigezi region. We reached out to various stakeholders in the tourism industry in Uganda and during the convention, we are happy that we were able to hear from industry leaders and torch bearers from the Uganda tourism sector. By the end of the convention we had a better idea of how tourism supports the local economy and how we as diasporians can lend our support.

2. Lobby and advocate for the local tourism industry

We also hoped to lobby the political leadership present to advocate on behalf the industry. Invitations were sent out to the Minister of Tourism as well as various M.Ps from Kigezi region for this purpose.

3. Create awareness among members of the diaspora on the potential of tourism in Kigezi and promote the idea that Kigezi can be a worthwhile vacation destination.

4. Youth Engagement

The future belongs to the young and a big part of our program lineup targeted the youth .We were hopeful that our younger delegates would be more engaged in the activities planned for them- from the Rukiiga language lab, to career guidance, to a workshop on life skills.

5. Networking .

And what is a convention without networking, fun and relaxation. As has been an ICOB Convention tradition, we had planned a Dinner Dance Gala and a BBQ Picnic in benefit of the Kigezi Education Fund. It was our hope that delegates would open their hearts and wallets in support of this noble venture.

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## PROGRAM AND SPEAKERS

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### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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#### Thursday June 28th 2018

Welcome and Pre- Registration  
Executive Board Meeting

## Friday June 29th 2018

### OPENING SPEECHES

- Chair, ICOB Vancouver 2018 Organizing Committee – *Ms . Bridget Begin Nkojo*
- President , ICOB - *Dr. Muniini Mulera*

### KEYNOTE ADDRESS

- Empowering Rural Communities through Local Tourism" *Andrea Sedlock President and Founder, Rukundo International*

PRESENTATION: Kigezi , your next Vacation Destination *Ivan Batuma*

PRESENTATION: Tourism and the Low Budget Traveler. Case Study: Kigezi and its Natural Eco System *Lillian Kamusiime Founder Kigezi Biota Tours*

PRESENTATION: Kigezi Investment Forum (KIF) *Mr. Emmanuel Turyamuhaki*

## Saturday June 30th 2018

Language Lab/ Workshop with Children and Young adults-Facilitator : *Mrs Peninah Ngategyize*

PRESENTATION: Life Skills : Managing stressful situations , decision making & handling limiting beliefs & rules, taking responsibility your their lives *Mrs. Joy Odera* -

PRESENTATION: Careers and the importance of mentorship. Second Generation Immigrants, striving and succeeding in the diaspora : *Dr. Bolu*

AGM – Dr. Muniini Mulera

DINNER DANCE GALA

## Sunday July 1st 2018

BBQ at Trout Lake Park . Vancouver

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## Official Opening and Introduction

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The meeting was officially opened by the chief organizer of the ICOB Vancouver Convention, Ms. Bridget Begin Nkojo who gave a few welcome remarks and in turn Introduced the ICOB President, Dr. Muniini Mulera.

Dr. Muniini in turn welcomed the delegates on behalf of ICOB Board and Executive Committee. He extended greetings from members who were not able to attend. Muniini emphasized how ICOB is about giving, not receiving, ICOB exists to make 'Kigezi Great again'.

Kigezi can be a choice destination for everyone, Banyakigezi have been challenged. 'We are here in Vancouver, because someone made a sacrifice for us'. Exploit Kigezi for the benefit of the people, especially for the young people in Kigezi. He concluded by reminding delegates on the purpose of the gathering in Vancouver, that is to network, share ideas on how we advance Kigezi and ultimately strive to make a difference to someone else's life, through the Kigezi education Fund

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## Presentation:

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### KIGEZI INVESTMENT FUND AGENCY (KIFA) BY MR. EMMANUEL TURHAMUHAKI

The ICOB President through his efforts constituted a sub-committee to draft a proposal to establish the Kigezi Investment Forum. This arises from one of the resolutions at the London ICOB convention. The Kigezi Investment Forum, birthed KIFA whose submissions from both discussants and the audience put the presentation into context. The following were highlights from the discussion:

- KIFA is being proposed as the agent for sustainable growth, development and actualization of Kigezi. This could occur through a partnership with ICOB, which has been in existence for over 15 years and has members at an International level, with varied skill sets that could be tapped.

- ICOB should seek to enhance opportunities and take leaps that will enable a vibrant and progressive Kigezi. KIFA & ICOB present opportunities of a partnership that is deeply enshrined in the fabric of Kigezi, a unique opportunity to merge two worlds, the Corporate and Social-humanitarian aspects of the two.
- The Legal form and nature of partnership was discussed e.g. would it take the form of SACCO's or Mutual Funds or both? ICOB's strong diaspora has an even greater opportunity to adopt a funding model that is far superior. These can be tailored within KIFA to give us an engine or fund that could be utilized to enhance investments in the Kigezi region, with the expectation that Banyakigezi would be contribution members to the fund.
- *'Agateirine gata'igufa'* - KIFA would provide Unity of purpose, encourage a saving culture, while being at the helm of resource mobilization. This would be made possible and enhanced by Government efforts to support the cause. Potential opportunities, challenges and threats would continuously be assessed.
- On that note Emmanuel ended with, *'Mwije Twombeke Kigyezi Yeitu'*.

*Action item:*

- Going forward, clarity on what form KIFA would take is paramount e.g. would it be a for-profit entity? will it be an organ of ICOB? Where will it be registered? It is important for members to have assurance that they have recourse once they have invested in KIFA.

## Key Note

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### EMPOWERING RURAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH LOCAL TOURISM

Key note address was made by Andrea Sedlock – President, Rukundo International and highlighted the following:

- Community tourism is the support of community development, in partnership with tourism which covers the following areas; guided tours, cultural performances, homestays & accommodation, sale of hand crafts, dining and workshops.
- It also involves partnership between Ugandan nationals, non-government organizations and the government, involving changing attitudes, examples include:
  - The Green Environment Promotion (GEP) operates both community-based tourism and eco-tourism with tree planting being mainly promoted. It was started by Evelyn Ninsiima of Kabale and has been involved in planting over 2 million trees on 40 acres in 5 districts within communities living in and surrounding the Mafuga Forest Reserve.
  - Exclusively through community tourism. GEP provides for both long and short-term volunteers and shorter stay adventurers and tourists. GEP's facilities accommodate up to 25 people and have the capability to organize gorilla tours in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park.
  - Examples of other community support provided through Tourism including Sam Hampson and Eden School and the involvement of a United States family in raising funds to provide electricity to a school they had visited while on a family safari in Kitwe
- The benefits of community tourism include: Unique experience, cultural exchange and awareness, job creation, environmental conservation, while instilling a sense of pride within the community. Community tourism has increased market for local products like hand crafts.

*Action Items:*

- Stakeholders including ICOB can get involved in supporting the ever-growing community tourism sector as an engine of national development and tool for income generation. The areas include; identifying local products and finding a market for them, supporting sustainable programs and initiatives, using services provided by the locals, finding partners on the ground and providing direct support, in that way money trickles down, which leads to improved livelihoods.

## Presentation:

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### TOURISM THE NEXT FRONTIER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN KIGEZI: IVAN MBABAZI BATUMA

Day 2 started with a presentation and discussion by Engineer Ivan Mbabazi Chair, Kigezi Tourism Cluster, and a leading investor in tourism in Kigezi.

His presentation highlighted the major tourism attractions in Kigezi but also noted that tourism in the region is still virgin facing a number of challenges. These include.

- The existence of the Kigezi Tourism Development Plan which has not really been implemented.
- Lack of proper regulations and planning in the tourism sector. Proper zoning would prevent building structures haphazardly which could result in lack of uniformity in appearance specifically identifying e.g. where boats can dock, identifying a strip for landing planes has not been done systematically..
- Investment in the sector by government is delayed due to the nature of resource transfer through taxes collected, i.e. Government collects taxes, which are transferred to the central docket, before funds are remitted back.

This topic generated a lot of contributions from delegates

- Thomas Tayebwa mentioned Rubuguli with the highest number of gorilla families and how government plans to improve the road network in that area to ease transportation, that would lead to increase in Tourists.
- Philip Odera observed that taking an example of the Kenyan Tourism sector investment in the sector is driven by private individuals and communities and that government will typically follow the lead proved by locals. For example Mombasa hotels are mainly owned by locals and so are the roads leading to Masai Mara.
- Claire Atwongaire cited the difficulties in obtaining a speed boat along Lake Bunyonyi, and noted that a speed boat would boost tourism and minimise risks on the lake.
- Cynthia Betubiza pointed out the need for the region to maximally utilize the power of social that provides cheapest possible cost. She noted that there are entire social media accounts dedicated to travel, which would show case.
- Emmanuel encouraged members to come together, contribute towards the Kigezi Investment Fund. This would open up resources for investment in Kigezi, without having to rely on Government.

## Presentation

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### TOURISM AND THE LOW BUDGET TRAVELER: LILLIAN KAMUSIIME

Lillian Kamusiime is the founder of Kigezi Boita Tours. She told stories that challenged ICOB members to visit Kigezi, as there are low cost opportunities to enjoy wildlife tracking and the national parks. She indicated that by virtue of being East African gorilla permits, park entry fees, boat trips, mountain hiking fees are all subsidized by the Government of Uganda.

Uganda is blessed with a diversity of unique flora and fauna, seldom found anywhere else. It has 10 national parks, and every two hours' drive from Bwindi to Queen Elizabeth National Park, there is different diversity with an array of tourist attractions. These include; tree climbing lions, the Rift Valley, Kazinga Channel, which joins the two lakes Edward and George, , salt water crater lakes, Rwenzori mountains.

Lillian talked about Bwindi National Park, a world heritage site and its popularity with the Mountain Gorilla. Bwindi also has several species of birds, butterflies and was once was home to 3 primates living in harmony, i.e. humans, chimpanzees and gorillas.

On the issue of facilities, Uganda has a wide range of accommodation to suit every budget. These range from Five Star hotels to backpacker's lodging . Transport opportunities are limitless from use of private cars to public transportation.

Challenges facing the tourism industry in general identified include; meeting staffing needs at tourist destinations e.g. chefs. This affects service delivery and urgently requires skilling to build a pool of talent.

## YOUTH ACTIVITIES

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In order to reach every demographic and encourage participation, the convention hosted the youth to more age appropriate activities. These included a language lab, a presentation on life skills and another one on careers and the importance of mentorship

### LANGUAGE LAB – PENINAH NGATEGIZE.

The language lab was facilitated by Peninah Ngategize . In this session, young people were encouraged to embrace their cultures by way of speaking the local language spoken in Kigezi. Rukiiga phrases and words were introduced to the participants

## LIFE SKILLS – MS JOY ODERA

Ms Odera spoke to the youth about managing stressful situations, decision making and handling limiting beliefs and rules.

## CAREERS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORSHIP FACILITATED BY DR. BOLUWAJI OGUNYEMI –

## ICOB 2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

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1. Minutes of the previous AGM that was held in Orlando, were read and adopted.
2. Report on state of ICOP - The ICOP President read the amendment to the bylaws prepared by Legal counsel Andrew Katarikawe. Article 3 was modified to allow full membership to friends of Banyakigezi who have shown consistent dedication to the spirit of ICOP.
3. ICOP strategic plan - The Board agreed to hold back feedback regarding the Strategic Plan till a later date. Leo Nkurunziza, one of the Board members reiterated, that the process was consultative and required more questions to get answered as well as incorporating members contributions. One Member Harrison Mutikanga was coopted to join the Strategic planning team, having shared his experience in his current job.
4. Auditors report - The Auditor's report highlighted that a great percentage of ICOP resources is from pledges made by members to the Kigezi Education Fund at annual conventions. A great percentage of this amount remains uncollected, some dating back to 2007.
5. Election of the next president – The Secretary called upon the ICOP Chairman UK, he talked about the nomination of Dr. Muniini, who was also the only candidate for this position. A Board Member, was called upon and declared the candidate unopposed. Dr. Muniini will continue to serve as ICOP President for the next 2 years, and encouraged all Banyakigezi and friends to carry the message, 'ICOP is an organization for all of them, and will not engage in partisan politics'
6. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

## KIGEZI EDUCATION FUND DINNER DANCE FUNDRAISING GALA

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This was a well-attended gala event, held in the Cordova Ballroom of the Pinnacle Hotel. A sumptuous Indian dinner was served and delegates were entertained by renowned BC Band - Ezra Kwizera in conjunction with a local DJ.

The ICOP President made a presentation on the Kigezi Education Fund journey, and the projects that have been established to date. The fundraising was done was to establish Technical Institutes in the two new districts, Rubanda and Rukiga.

Fundraising: King Caesar Mulenga presided over the fundraising appeal that generated over USD\$29,000.00 in pledges against an initial target of .....

## EVENT FEEDBACK:

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At the end of the convention, an electronic feedback form was circulated amongst the delegates evaluate their experiences at the convention. Below are the direct responses to the questions asked

### 1. Favorite part of the convention

The Gala Dinner , everything, Speakers , presentations by the speakers on tourism, accommodation/hotel were nice and initiating non Banyakigezi or friends of Banyakigezi into clans and giving them a name is a welcoming gesture as well as recognizing them at the dinner.

### 2. Least favorite part of the convention

Responses included –, limited extra activities after the meetings, fundraising style at the dinner was uncomfortable for many, too many speeches at the gala- people pay a lot of money to network and have a good time dancing. There needs to be more balance.

MC for fundraising used up too much time for entertainment

### 3. What would you have liked to see more of?

A planned group drive - or a bus tour across the city better dinner menu , hot food ,Increase interactions after the meetings, some fun games/icebreakers to get to know one another in a less formal way, dinner banquet entertainment, and youth engagement in some session of choice

4. **How satisfied were you with the logistics?**

- Venue ( Pinnacle Hotel) – Somewhat Satisfied
- The Program – Very Satisfied
- The presenters – Very satisfied
- Fundraising Gala – Satisfied
- BBQ – Very Satisfied
- Registration Fee - Somewhat satisfied

5. **Any suggestions on how best to manage the above logistics in future**

- Meals - Consider hot meals instead of cold sandwiches. If possible, arrange specific menus friendly to the participants
- Organize tour of the host city.
- Reduce the number of presentations; shorten the long discussions that are repetitive.
- Keep the program running on time. It is essential to let people know in advance how much time they have for a session and hold them to it. Have all IT equipment and presentations ready and loaded before-hand.
- Arrange for transportation /information, pre-arranged group tour, collect pledges in real time -where possible with card reader at the fundraising function

6. **In future, what activities would you like to see incorporated in the program to target the youth?**

- music and dance
- Afternoon should be free for sightseeing etc
- The youth should also be given an opportunity to make a presentation

REVENUE AND EXPENSES

Revenue and expense summary			
	Units	Price	Amount \$
<b>Revenue</b>			
Registration fees			20,027.87
T-Shirt sales	50	35	1,749.00
Donations			1,000.00
Administration fees - Ug registration			1,184.00
			23,960.87
<b>Expenses</b>			
			(23,944.07)
			16.80
Uncollected Reg Fees			(1,420.00)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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The convention was a testament of the power of unity and comradery. It showed the importance Banyakigezi attach to their shared heritage and the love for their culture and their home town. From an organizer's perspective, organizing the convention was a steep learning curve which nonetheless was embraced with zeal.

Whereas the convention was considered a success, there are some lessons learned that could be helpful to future convention organizers and these are the recommendations.

### **1. Venue selection:**

Selection of an appropriate venue is crucial to how much surplus revenue can be collected during and after the convention. Venue selection is a very complicated affair as there are many variables that have to be juggled, pricing being the number one. It is important to identify a hotel that is reasonably priced and affordable for the vast majority. Pricing encompasses not only accommodation, but meeting rooms and small incidentals that add up. These include Audio Visio equipment, meeting rooms etc. While negotiating the pricing of the hotel, the following have to be considered

- a. It should be a bed and breakfast. i.e it is imperative that breakfast be included in the boarding/ accommodation cost
  - b. Reasonably priced hot meals
  - c. Ensure audio visual equipment is provided and in instances where it is not provided, that there are no exorbitant surcharges for outsourcing this service.
  - d. While proximity and centrality to CBD is important – it should not be the driving factor for selection of a particular venue. Cheaper out of town venues might be more cost effective – and can be complemented with group tour buses
2. The host city and theme for the following convention should be agreed on at the end of the current convention. This will allow for advance planning, selection of appropriate speakers, identification of potential speakers and development of promotional materials
  3. Preparations for the next convention need to start at the very least, nine months in advance and encourage pre payment of registration fees. Also, find a way of incorporating some costs in the registration fee. For instance incorporate the cost of t.shirts, contribution to KEF etc into the registration fee, that way all participants inadvertently donate to KEF without realizing it.
  4. On the day of, ensure there is a permanent representative at the registration desk. We were thankful to have Prisca Atukunda to manage the desk, without whom last minute registration would have been a nightmare!
  5. It was very helpful for us to have a reliable Ugandan liaison to help collect fees and issue refunds to delegates from Uganda. This greatly streamlined the payment process that by the end everyone was satisfied with the process and there were no complaints of unissued refunds.
  6. To bring all this together ICOB needs to create a position for a permanent board member in charge of events. This board member would be tasked with overseeing the organization of the conventions, linking past, present and future organizers. Identifying convention themes, working with the respective convention organizers to see the vision through
  7. Lastly, we would strongly recommend the engagement of a PR/ Communications firm to mobilize delegates from Uganda, handle social media publicity, engage government officials, manage sponsorship etc. This firm would be provided with specific deliverables and payment contingent on fulfilling those deliverables

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THE END

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