

Noma award

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ing Thandika Mkandawire head of the UN research institute on social development, Kole Omotoso of the university of Western Cape, a novelist, and Mary Jay of the African Books collective as members, also singled out Antjie Krog's *Country of My Skull*. (Johannesburg: Random House South Africa (Pty) Ltd, 1998) for Honourable Mention. Krog is a poet and journalist who reported on the South African Truth Commission. Through witness stories, interviews with psychologists, the Truth Commissioners, and others, she vividly offered an understanding of the Truth Commission, and through that, the new South Africa.

Former director of culture passes on

NIGERIA'S pioneer Federal Director of Culture, Dr. Garba Ashiwaju has passed on. He was aged 65. He died in the early hours of Monday March 13, 2000 in Lagos following a brief illness.

The death occurred shortly after his assumption of office as General Manager of the Musical Society of Nigeria (MUSON) Centre. He was buried at a Lagos cemetery on Monday the 20th of March.

Dr. Ashiwaju will be best remembered for his tenure as head of the FESTAC International Festival Secretariat. His time as Federal Director of Culture witnessed the completion of the National Theatre complex in Lagos, the management of which fell on his hands for some years.

Also he was the moving spirit behind the well-known cultural journal *Nigeria Magazine*.

In a condolence letter to his wife Mrs. Aneliese Ashiwaju, President Olusegun Obasanjo paid tribute to a man who 'brought to bear on his various assignments his immense scholarship and determination to situate culture at the centre of national development'.



Asmara's Intercontinental hotels complex

Asmara conference on African languages

THE first edition of the conference of African writers, scholars and publishers on indigenous African languages held in Asmara,

Eritrea between January 11 and 17, 2000, was attended by over two hundred African participants, drawn from across the continent.

The conference Against All Odds (AAO) intended as a continuous forum for experts in the field of African languages and literature deliberated on the theme 'African languages and literatures into the twenty-first century'

featuring scholarly panels, plenary sessions, book exhibitions, drama and performance of oral literature. The presiding chairs were Egyptian novelist, Nawal El Sadawi, Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa Thiong' O, Ghana's former minister of state and dramatist Ama Ata Aidoo and South Africa's Mbulelo Nzamane.

Declared open by the Eritrean President at the Asmara continental, one of the conference venues, the conference climaxed with a village performance session before an audience of over a thousand people.

Institute of Visual Art lectures

THE institute of Visual Art and Culture launched its lecture series under a year 2000 programme, set to 'increase dialogue and exchange ideas in the visual arts and culture in Nigeria by inviting international curators, critics and art historians to be guest speakers'.

The IVAC co-ordinators are Bisi Silva and Sinmi Ogunsanya. According to Bisi Silva one of the motivations for the programme is to provide insight into art

practices in countries as diverse as Japan, South Africa, Cuba and England.

The first in the series toured Nigerian cities - Zaria, Enugu and Lagos - during the third week of March, 2000. Speaker, Katy Deepwell, a UK-based artist and writer, also editor of *N. Paradoxa* a feminist journal, spoke on the contributions of women artists to the contemporary visual arts.