

Why the library, writers conferences were spot-on

EDITOR: Two important conferences took place recently in Uganda. First, was the annual conference of the Association of parliamentary Libraries of Eastern and Southern Africa (APPLESA). This was held under a theme *taking parliament to the people, the role of parliament libraries in bridging the gap between the people and the parliament.*

The theme is timely as it resonates well with some of the activities such as Annual Parliamentary Week, an agenda that seems to have been incorporated into the Parliament's calendar in recent times with an aim of sensitising the masses on, among others, the role of legislature.

At the conference, the Speaker of Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga, was of the view that the library Parliament should be open to the public. She also called for the possibility of the public accessing parliamentary library online. Kadaga's gesture is welcome to many researchers out there who always feel like 'storming' Parliament to access various data, but are constrained by labourious

procedures they have to go through to access that library.

Some time back, I attended the parliamentary sensitisation week and while I was moving around in exhibition tent, I came across the parliamentary library exhibition section and I was given a brochure.

It contained what the library had in stock. I was mesmerised by how rich their library is. For instance, it indicated the library not only contains information on how Uganda has been evolving way back from colonial times up to date, but also it does access some of the well-respected international magazines such as *The Times, The Economist, The African Report, The Forbes Magazine.*

One hopes, that when that time comes of opening up the library to the public, Parliament will make it easy for people to access that library because currently, especially if you are not a staff or an MP, it is not easy to use it. There must be secret to libraries no wonder Billionaire-Bill gates treasures most his library which is valued in millions of dollars!

May be that is why the British 10 pound sterling has

an inscription to the effect that "I declare after all there is no enjoyment like reading!" and a photograph of one of the British classic writers — Jane Austen.

The second event was the fourth edition of the Uganda International Writers symposium. These two summits reinforce each other (go hand in hand) — one of the traits of a good writer is reading voraciously which can happen in many cases through access to a library.

I noticed that on list of who-is-who in literary scene in Uganda was dominated with female writers. Where are men? Or is this generation of female writers? I ask these pertinent questions for I recall many of the novels and plays on literatures syllabuses used to and perhaps are still dominated by African male writers many of whom their themes rotated around the effects of colonialism and after months of independence.

But all in all, we are proud of all those that are using power of pen to raise Ugandan flag high in a literature world regardless of gender.

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LETTER OF THE DAY