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# African Association for the Study of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AASIKS)



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## Welcome address from the LOC Chairperson, Tanzania to the 2018 AASIKS Conference

The Local Organizing Committee and the African Association for the Study of Indigenous Knowledge Systems welcome you to Tanzania and the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual AASIKS conference! Tanzania is the home of the snowcapped Kilimanjaro, the tallest mountain in Africa and the Great Lakes, Olduvai Gorge, the cradle of humanity and the Serengeti, the magnet of the biggest animal migration of its kind in the world. We hope you can find time to visit these historic wonders of the world, including the island of Zanzibar, the hub of the 19<sup>th</sup> century slave trade, renowned for the oldest spice farms with historical connections with Indonesia, Malaysia, and other Far East countries. We are proud to host this Annual conference in Moshi at the Mwenge Catholic University main campus. The three days of the conference will be filled with sessions on the latest research on African Indigenous Knowledge Systems, as well as many opportunities to catch up with old friends and meet new colleagues.

We feel particularly privileged to bring the annual AASIKS conference to Tanzania because of its important historical role in establishing and pursuing Education for Self Reliance. Though not completely successful, this educational reform project has formed the foundation of our conversations about the preservation and promotion of indigenous knowledge and African heritage in schools and in adult education programs.

We look forward to meet Professor George Sefa Dei of the University of Toronto. Dr. Dei will deliver the keynote speech on Monday, November 5. Dr. Dei is considered one of Canada's foremost scholars on race and anti-racism studies. Born in Ghana, Dr. Dei is currently Professor of Social Justice Education and Director of the Centre for Integrative Anti-Racism Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT) Canada.

The conference program features of over 50 research papers interwoven with three plenary sessions. The conference theme is that of "*Indigenous Knowledges in African Contexts: Ways of Being, Knowing, Acting and Reading the World.*" At this time, we take stock and take note that we live in a world of profound, persistent, and interrelated social, economic, and educational inequalities. In addition, perhaps, inequalities have been wedged and tipped against Africans because of the unique ways of being, knowing, acting and equally many ways of reading the world. While these ways of knowing have in the past been disregarded, despised and excluded from school and STEM classrooms, the situation is rapidly changing. Research and publications on the value of integrating African values, African ways of knowing, and the history of the African heritage are on the rise.

This year's theme offers a welcome and needed opportunity to be able to focus on theories, methods, and practices towards better understanding of this situation and what should in order to progress. It is important to recognize, however, that this is contested terrain, and therefore it is important to examine and discuss our

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disagreements. This conference will provide the venue and opportunity for dialogical argumentation. Concurrently, the theme advances previous conversations and research on African Indigenous Knowledge systems. It was designed to further this conversation and to advance the dialogue for exploring African worldviews.

The conference aims at a holistic view of “other” ways of knowing and encourages scholars to investigate these perspectives. Participants will learn from leading educators, traditional elders, medicine men, and women. The venue was purposely chosen to allow participants to experience the rich African heritage, visit historical sites, and see how culture, knowledge, language, and learning in people’s lives are intertwined. The intent is to engage participants in appreciating African diversity, thinking more critically about their own history, culture, and identifying values that shape their own worldviews to “read the word and to read the world,” all of which are important to understanding meaningful cross-cultural encounters and other ways of knowing and learning in comparative contexts.

The Local Organizing Committee looks forward to meeting you and sharing with you our culture, hospitality and serene setting of Mwenge Catholic University.

LOC Chairperson

Prof. Ladislaus Semali

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