

Annual Report to CDNL 2005 – 2006

Name of Country: South Africa
Name of Library : National Library of South Africa
Name of Chief Executive John Kgwale Tsebe

Following his appointment in March 2004, the National Librarian and his managers reviewed the National Library of South Africa's priorities to determine its focus and to create a cohesive team to communicate the vision and to empower employees. A grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York enabled the Library to compile a strategic plan for the 2005/6-2007/8 period to serve as a platform for its transformation in its vision to be a leading library in South Africa and Africa.

The Library is inadequately funded to fulfill its statutory obligations. However, grants from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Andrew W Mellon Foundation enabled the Library to develop its services to serve library and information services in the country. The Department of Arts and Culture allocated R1,2 million for the transformation and redevelopment of the Library. It was used to empower and develop formerly disadvantaged staff, rethink the Library's strategic course, and strengthen its relationships with libraries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

After the 1999 amalgamation of the two former national libraries, the National Library went through major organizational changes and a period of uncertainty for staff. In the past year, efforts were made to build a united organization and to strengthen and develop staff. Staff at all levels attended diversity workshops to gain greater understanding of one another. Several staff members attended the annual IFLA conference and standing committee meetings, gaining experience and getting exposure to views from other libraries, and the annual conference of the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA), where the Library won an award for the best exhibition. Other staff attended courses on paper and book conservation and restoration and one staff member was funded for an internship at the British Library.

The Library implemented the integrated Innopac Millennium library management system with financial assistance from the Andrew W Mellon Foundation. Further Mellon funding allows the Library to develop an interface and the infrastructure for enhanced co-operation and resource sharing among the country's five places of legal deposit and the information community. Preliminary work on the merging of the legal deposit libraries' databases has commenced. The Library embarked on a partnership pilot project to create a repository for the legal deposit of electronic documents published in South Africa.

The erection of a R160-million state-of-the-art building for the Pretoria campus has started. It will cover 33 000 m², seat 1300 users and provide better preservation conditions for the national heritage collections. Tenders were called in February and the contract will be awarded soon.

The Library is committed to its leadership role in the continent to support the NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) ideals. National librarians and role-players from the SADC countries discussed the utilization of information as a strategic resource for Africa's development at a workshop in March, 2005.

International relations were strengthened through generous support from various sources. The National Librarian visited the National Library of Iran and attended a Workshop on Leadership Development for Directors of National Libraries in Developing Countries in Malaysia as well as meetings of the Standing Conference of African National and University Libraries – East Central and Southern (SCANUL-ECS) and the Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African Libraries (SCECSAL) in Uganda. The Deputy National Librarian delivered a key-note address at the National Library of India's centenary celebrations. The Programme Executive: Preservation Services attended the International Conference on Archiving Web Resources in Australia and an artisan of Preservation Services assisted South African conservators with the conservation of ancient manuscripts at the

Ahmed Baba Centre of Timbuktu, Mali. Another staff member attended a workshop on preservation of digital heritage in Asia and Oceania in Malaysia.

Report compiled by Joan F de Beer
Deputy National Librarian

2005-08-05

Address : Private Bag X990, Pretoria 0001 South Africa
Telephone and fax details : (27) (12) 401 9781
Web address of Library : www.nlsa.ac.za