

## EAACLALS Report

East Africa Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (EAACLALS) received a boost at CHOGM 2007, 22nd-25th November. Ranjini Mendis and Geoffrey Davis attended the Peoples' Forum at the Peoples' Space, accompanied by Chris Wanjala, the Chair of EAACLALS. A spectacular encounter between them and members of FEMWRITE and Pen International, Uganda, opened a new working relationship between EAACLALS and FEMWRITE, which enabled us to recruit new members. Arthur Gakwandi, Chair of International PEN (Uganda) and Apophia Agiresaasi, FEMWRITE General Secretary, invited the three of us to attend talks and public readings at the Makerere Main Hall and at the Peoples' Space. Some of the writers were familiar faces at Kwani creative activities in Nairobi, Kenya. ACLALS was given a three-hour slot by the Commonwealth Foundation at the Peoples' Space, where Geoffrey and Ranjini introduced ACLALS, *Postcolonial Text* (<http://postcolonial.org>) and East Africa ACLALS, and Chris gave a talk on "Popular culture in East Africa," touching on the evolution of East African literature in English. Danson S. Kahyana (Department of Literature, Makerere University) invited Chris to join a panel of Commonwealth writers to discuss the "Mission of Writers in Africa" at which many interesting questions were raised.

The three ACLALS representatives met Kizito Serumaga, the son of the late East African novelist, playwright and radio journalist, Robert Serumaga, who was Secretary/Treasurer of ACLALS between 1971 and 1974, while the Malawian poet, diplomat, and academician David James Rubadiri was the Chairman of ACLALS, and the late David Cook and Rose Mbowa were active members. Serumaga and Rubadiri were elected to take charge of ACLALS at the Kingston, Jamaica ACLALS Triennial in January 1971, and they hosted the Triennial Conference in Kampala, Uganda, in 1973. David Rubadiri has since been a Senior Lecturer at Makerere and University of Nairobi, and Professor at the University of Botswana, Permanent Representative of Malawi to the UN and Vice-Chancellor, University of Malawi.

Kizito and his brother Robert Serumaga (Jr) are engaged in resuscitating Buganda expressive culture, religion and political participation by using creative writing, film making, ICT, radio broadcasting and political activism. Kizito showed willingness to

join EAACLALS and spoke of reissuing his father's prose books, plays, and manuscripts, to recapture the intangible and tangible cultural heritage of the Baganda which was desecrated during the reigns of Milton Obote (the founding President of Uganda), Iddi Amin, Obote's ouster, and the current President, Yoweri K. Museveni who is believed not to be doing enough for the feudal kingdom of Buganda.

EAACLALS is born and is in sound health. Its personality will soon be manifested in the family activities of ACLALS. Many writers and literary scholars from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi want to join EAACLALS, including Dr. Wotsuna Khamalwa, Director of the Institute of the Sociology of Religion and Language at Makerere University, and formerly Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. We are all happy that EAACLALS was launched at the Kampala CHOGM.

Chris Wanjala

EAACLALS Chair