A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

May is "Africa Month". It is a month-long celebration of the motherland – this time focused on the rich, diverse culture and heritage that make Africans who they are today. Culture is our past, present and future. Art and the creative industry have the power to preserve the dignity and confidence of Africa’s people. Today, the strength of Africa’s culture presents the world with transformative legacies. Legacies that have stitched societies together – promoting resilience, even amidst great adversity. In the RBA May Digest, we feature key themes and discussions, centered on Africa’s art and culture. It is a reminder of what our role should be in stewarding the rich depth of these assets, and in holding on to their transformative power to foster Africa’s inclusive, green and sustainable development.

Ahunna Eziakonwa

SPOTLIGHT - AFRICA MONTH

Reshaping mindsets

Under the theme of “Cultural identity and ownership: reshaping mindsets,” the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (UNOSAA)’s 2021 Africa Dialogue Series brought together thought-leaders and decision-makers to reflect on Sustainable Peace for Development, Harnessing Culture and Heritage for Economic Transformation, and Unleashing the potential of Africa’s human capital. These in-depth debates produced forward looking recommendations that will contribute towards the continent’s sustainable development.

[Discover the entire Africa Dialogue Series]

[Watch the BBC documentary “Mother Africa - History Of Africa with Zeinab Badawi”]

[Watch Ahunna Eziakonwa’s remarks]

Empowering “Made in Africa”

Top innovations tackling COVID-19 were profiled during the Africa Dialogue Series. The UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa shone a light on this ingenuity, interviewing innovators on these ideas that continue to have resonance for Africa, and for the rest of the world.

To promote utilization of opportunities in the #OneAfricaMarket, UNDP leaders on the ground had the privilege to engage with H.E Mr. Wamkele Mene – Secretary General of the AICFTA Secretariat. This discussion opened new dimensions to our strategic partnership.

[Watch the conversation with innovators]

[Rediscover the magazine]

Writing Africa’s future history

Africa is in a unique and enviable situation with its asset of immeasurable promise – the youth. If harnessed to full potential, Africa’s youth will be the cohort that broke the commodity curse; the cycles of poverty; and the strong man of inequality. Africa’s youth will deliver Africa’s promise. The Young Africa Leaders Initiative (YALI) - the U.S. government’s signature initiative investing in the next generation of African leaders - celebrated 10 years of changing young people’s lives. UNDP joined the celebrations – sharing perspectives with YALI on strengthening democratic institutions, good governance, spurring economic growth and prosperity, and fostering peace and security in Africa.

[Read Ahunna Eziakonwa’s Keynote Speech]

Who is telling Africa’s stories?

For decades, Africa has been over-studied, over-analyzed and over-prescribed solutions for. However, African voices have often been missing in these prescriptions. The future of development, especially in Africa, is one that must be determined by homegrown solutions, underpinned by equality and fairness. Media and marketing experts from across the globe gathered for the Africa Communications Week to brainstorm on ways to change the development narrative on Africa. They looked at how to spotlight the stories that will inspire African innovators and entrepreneurs in shaping today and tomorrow.

[Find out more]

[Watch the conversation with Ahunna Eziakonwa]

Sharing Africa’s culture and heritage

As an ambassador for Africa’s development, here is how you can tell stories that uplift, with dignity and impact:

1. Tell stories about Africa’s rich culture and inheritance.
2. Pick success stories about what is working- diffuse them globally, to full capacity.
3. Provide Africans the platform – give them the voice.
4. Follow the stories - stay the course…success begets success – especially if examples are seen as adaptable in context.
5. Work together, inspire people and generate new ideas and projects, to provide information and to highlight the future of Africa.

Who is telling Africa’s stories?