



# Building back better with Africa's libraries

Side event at the Seventh  
Session of the Africa Regional  
Forum on Sustainable  
Development

Feb 25th, 8:15am - 9:45am  
CET / Brazzaville time

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Pictured: Iknl's Kibera Community Library, Kenya

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An informed society is an enabled society. Yet far too many Africans find themselves on the wrong side of the information divide, without the connectivity or skills to make use of the possibilities that the internet and other information sources bring. What was a challenge before has become a crisis now during the pandemic, jeopardising opportunities for social, economic, cultural and civic participation (SDGs 1, 8, 10 and 16). Alongside this, we have also seen the potential of information in supporting the search for treatments and vaccination (SDG 3).

Yet Africa also has a richness – its libraries – ready to unblock the bottleneck that a lack of meaningful access to information can bring, and so accelerate progress towards the 2030 and 2063 Agendas. Come along and find out more about how information can be a development accelerator, hear about what we have learnt from the pandemic, and discuss what reforms are needed to ensure that libraries can create better informed, better enabled, better engaged societies, as concerns all of cultural, economic and civic life.

Panellists will address: why access to information should be considered as a development accelerator how COVID-19 has affected demand for – and provision of – this access, notably through libraries what governments can do to realise the potential of libraries in the recovery.

## Speakers

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Mr Bernard Akondzo  
Director, National Library of the Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo

Ms Victoria Okojie  
Department of Library and Information Science, University of Abuja, Nigeria

Ms Irene Onyancha  
Chief, Knowledge Management Services Section, UNECA, Ethiopia

Mr Alim Garga  
Director of the Library of the National Assembly, Cameroon

Ms Sarah Negumbo  
Director, Namibia National Library and Archive Service, Namibia

## Moderator

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Mr Damilare Oyedele  
Co-Founder, Library Aid Africa, Nigeria/Rwanda