

Open panel submissions for the 2nd International African Congress

Towards Decolonizing African History and Visions of Development

Geoffrey Nwaka

Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria

The panel considers the trends in African studies and historiography that challenge the unjust traditions, prejudices and exclusion rooted in the colonial legacy. It explores ways to restore the distorted image of Africa, and to renegotiate new international partnerships that will promote a more equitable pattern of global development. The panel takes the position that African independence will only begin with the decolonization of the continent's history and visions of development; that independence goes beyond the removal of colonial administrations, with Africans taking over as mere gatekeepers of the colonial heritage. We invite papers that consider how Africa can respond in a balanced way to the colonial experience, and to the unfolding forces of modernity and globalization. In the writing and study of African History, bold attempts have been made by local and academic historians of Africa to counter the misrepresentation of the continent as a 'dark continent' with no history or civilization worthy of study. New sources and methods have been adopted in reconstructing and interpreting the African past. As well, there is a new trend in Development Studies to re-center Africa, and to rethink the system that views the continent through the lens of the West. This widening movement for African intellectual decolonization is now complemented by growing decolonial activism in the Rhodes-Must-Fall epistemic revolts in Southern Africa against unfair and unjust educational and related systems, and the widespread agitation to return and restore items of Africa's cultural heritage plundered during the colonial period. The panel welcomes papers that debate different ways to decolonize Africa; how to reshape power relations, renegotiate new international partnerships with the former colonial powers, and with the new global powers of China and the USA, on the basis of mutual respect, and on terms that ensure that Africa regains control over its land, politics and resources.

Geoffrey I. Nwaka, MA (Birmingham), PhD (Dalhousie) is Professor of History and former Dean of Postgraduate Studies at Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria. He has a wide teaching and research experience in Nigerian universities, and has been researcher and visiting scholar in Europe, Australia and North America. His research interests focus on historical and contemporary urban issues, environmental protection, and African development. In 1990/91 he served as Special Adviser to the Governor of Imo State of Nigeria, and he has several scholarly publications. Publications: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=3hMEYc0AAAAJ&hl=en>.

If you are interested in contributing a paper to this panel, please contact Prof. Nwaka at: ginwaka@abiastateuniversity.edu.ng.