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12th Annual Walter Rodney Symposium Wrap Up

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The 12th Annual Walter Rodney Symposium  March 20th - 21st, 2015

“Hungry Nation, Hungry World: Engendering Healthy Sustainable Food Systems”

The Symposium outlined the political and socio-economic frameworks used for the development of sustainable food systems. It addressed access to adequate, nutritious, safe and culturally appropriate foods within an understanding of the historical processes of underdevelopment, colonialism, globalization and land-alienation as well as patterns and systems of inequality. There were speakers from across the United States and the world that discussed a range of topics including economic, environmental; farming; gender equity; health; land ownership and rights; and war and conflict.

KEYNOTES

- Firoze Manji has more than 40 years experience in international development, health and human rights. He is the Director of the Pan-Africanism Institute for ThoughtWorks. He presented “Not Hungry, But Starved by Capital”.
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is a critically acclaimed novelist, essayist, playwright, journalist, editor, academic and social activist. He is a Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Irvine. He presented “The Language of Development in Africa”.

HIGHLIGHTS

- State Representative “Able” Mable Thomas (Georgia House of Representatives, D-Atlanta (District 56) provided greetings and a proclamation for Walter Rodney Day. It was the 1st Walter Rodney Day in the State of Georgia. Prior Walter Rodney Days were celebrated within Fulton, County, Georgia.
  - Faheem Khan of CARE, USA, presented “How do I Feed My Children.”
  - A Public Service Announcement “A Millennium to End Hunger: The Time is Now” was presented by students from Fort Valley State University.
  - Groundings Sessions: Tiffany Smith conducted a newly designed and insightful seminar titled “Technology and Activism”.
  - The post-symposium after-party was held at Club Erosol. Akala and Meryem Saci, among others, rocked the crowd with their powerful words embedded in their hip-hop lyrics.

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS

- Fatma Alloo discussed the concept of hungry nations in a wealthy world as a paradox of equity in development. Jesus “Chucho” Garcia also presented.
- Mengue Moli Jacques Bertrand, Diplomat Historian, Cameroon, West Africa, discussed Cameroon’s national policy of fighting, hunger and poverty while facing the challenge of international terrorism. K. Rashid Nuri described the creation and growth of the Truly Living Well Center for Natural Urban Agriculture in Atlanta, GA.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Graduate Students from CAU presented a framework for analyzing the implications of food security on the current state of poverty. Students from Georgia State University, Kennesaw State University and Fort Valley State University presented a variety of research on decolonizing food, farming and family.
Poster for the 12th Annual Walter Rodney Symposium, 2015.
From L to R: Firoze Manji, Jesse Benjamin, Mengue Moli, Akala, Patricia Rodney, and Fatma Alloo pose in solidarity as the first symposium day wrapped up.

Keynote Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o addresses attendees with a powerful discussion.

Jose Perez, Jesus “Chucho” Garcia, Fatma Alloo, Mengue Moli, and Firoze Manji participate in a legendary panel.

Former IBW workers/members/leaders Sue Ross, Aljosie Harding, and Lynn Suruma stand in the Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library with Mencer “Don” Edwards.

At the hip hop afterparty at Erosol in Atlanta, siblings Nducu wa Ngugi and Njoki wa Ngugi hang out with performers Meryem Saci and Akala.

Georgia Northcutt, Ariel Greenaway, Shawn Smith, and Bethlehem Tsegay, AADS students at KSU, share their PowerPoint presentation entitled “Case Studies on Hunger and its Causes.”

Meryem Saci entertains a lively crowd.
Akala passionately performs consciously-driven hip hop.

Kennesaw State University professor Seneca Vaught moderated the panel “Research on Decolonizing Food, Farming and Family” which included AADS students from KSU.

Members of the Rodney and Ngũgĩ families, special guests, and members of the Atlanta Pan-African community pose for a group photo the day after the Symposium at the Rodney home.