

# IRWA Expands its Global Presence

## The Association Welcomes Nigeria Chapter 84



Nigeria Chapter 84 officers were installed in November. From the left, Kingsley Odeh, Cosmas Ezeh, Feechi Akobundu, Eze Odigbo, Charles Ebiai, Kene Onuora, Idongesit Akpan, Gershom Henshaw, Nasiru Gaya and Adamu Kasimu.

### BY MUZI SHANGE

In October 2013, IRWA's International Governing Council unanimously approved the creation of IRWA Chapter 84 in Nigeria. Coming only two years after the formation of IRWA Chapter 83 in South Africa, this will go a long way toward enhancing the Association's African presence.

After much planning, the inaugural annual general meeting and installation of chapter officers was held in November 2013 in Abuja, Nigeria. The meeting was followed by a one-day mandatory professional development seminar on International Standards for Compulsory Land Take. More than 40 professionals were in attendance, and before the two-day event was over, the chapter had already recruited 60 members.

### INAUGURAL CHAPTER MEETING

The Nigeria Chapter's first meeting was led by Chapter 84 President Charles Ebiai, who welcomed members and guests. Following the Nigerian national anthem, a video was played featuring International President Lisa Harrison, SR/WA, R/W-URAC, R/W-NAC, R/W-RAC, who congratulated the chapter for expanding the Association's presence in Africa. After introducing the slate of officers, Charles outlined the day's agenda, which included a budget update and presentations made by the chairs of the membership, education, professional development and newsletter committees.

As the South Africa Chapter 83 President, my presentation provided a general overview on

IRWA's vision, mission, code of ethics, professional development, education and the benefits of becoming a member. Our message in Nigeria has been very direct and simple - with IRWA you are afforded an opportunity as a right of way professional to stay current, credentialed and connected through experience, knowledge and ethics. I found participants to be quite receptive to taking advantage of the "3 Cs," as we call it, and they will need our full support in order to fully realize the Association's membership value. They recognize that IRWA is the unsurpassed source of right of way education and professional development worldwide and are proud to be associated with the industry leader.

The meeting concluded with a quote from one of Lisa's presidential interviews in Right of Way Magazine, where she stated, "We are an organization that's built on a foundation of professional ethics, quality education and the essential networking opportunities that connect us all. As members, we should recognize that this Association is worth investing our valuable time, energy and money."

## EDUCATIONAL FOCUS

The seminar following the meeting covered International Standards for Compulsory Land Takes and was presented by the Nigeria Institution of Estate Surveyor and Valuers (NIESV), in conjunction with the Estate Surveyor and Valuers Registration Board of Nigeria. The NIESV has 6,000 professional members in Nigeria, and Chapter 84 will draw most of its members from this association. We encouraged the members of NIESV to join IRWA and take advantage of all that our Association offers.

Other presentations gave the attendees valuable insight into differing methods used in Nigeria for conducting appraisals, acquiring land and relocating communities. One topic focused on Public Infrastructure Development and Rights of Way Acquisition, presented by Imo Ekanem, an Estate Surveyor and Valuer, and another on Land Take Ensuring Fairness, presented by IRWA Chapter

83 Past President Ernest Grunewald. Public-Private Partnerships as a means of providing infrastructure was presented by the Federal Capital Development Authority's Francis Okechukwu, and included an analysis of land swap scheme in the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja). Of particular interest was the paper on Valuation Reporting Requirements in a Resettlement Action Planning (RAP) Process presented by Adamu Kasimu, an Estate Surveyor and Valuer. Considering that South Africa does not have an official relocation policy and process, this was an especially relevant and applicable presentation. The RAP process will play an important role in the discussions with IRWA's International Relocation Assistance Committee Task Force, which was recently established to assist South Africa in the formulation of their own relocation policy.

Another highlight was a special meeting with the South African Deputy High Commissioner to Abuja. This was a strategic move on our part to ensure that all these efforts between South Africa and Nigeria are strategically positioned and politically supported.

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The new Chapter 84 leadership and its members at large are optimistic that their growth could easily reach 300 members in the next 12 months. We welcomed and encouraged this optimism and further promoted the valuable initiatives proposed for activism on membership growth. The chapter set up an exhibit booth outside the seminar meeting room and successfully recruited more than 15 new members on site.



The distance between IRWA's two newest chapters is 2,800 miles. The entire continent of Africa has 54 independent countries spanning 11.7 million miles and offers enormous growth potential for the Association.



More than 40 professionals attended the chapter meeting and seminar in November. The chapter now boasts over 60 members.



Nigerian representatives attended the 2013 IRWA International Annual Educational Conference to discuss professional development opportunities. From left, Charles Ebiai, Nkiru Zikora, Eze Odigbo, Nasiru Gaya, Cosmas Ezeh, and Ernest Grunewald from South Africa Chapter 83.

Ernest and I were able to meet separately with the Chapter 84 officers to strategize on an action plan for the future. There will be a recommendation to form Region 11 in the near future, which will become essential as more chapters are added in Africa. Other planning efforts include African-based training through IRWA's education courses, credentialing of right of way practitioners and regional and local conferences. We further used the opportunity to promote IRWA events, such as the Annual International Education Conference in Hartford, Connecticut in 2014. Given the amount of interest in the conference, we anticipate an increase in the number of African professionals attending.

### A PRIVILEGE TO SERVE

Indeed, the experience of serving this great Association has been worth the time, energy and money expended, especially as we expand our chapters

throughout Africa. It has been a very fulfilling experience, and I find it a privilege to serve. We are thankful, delighted and very much honored to be part of a great vision of building a better world together.

The inaugural meeting of IRWA Chapter 84 Nigeria was a great success. This was due to a number of factors, some of which include the dedication and unwavering support of IRWA Headquarters Staff, the leadership and vision of the International Governing Council and Board of Directors, and the ongoing commitment of the International Executive Committee. I would also like to recognize the organizational prowess and leadership of IRWA Nigeria Chapter 84, and the steady support and professional development focus demonstrated by the Nigeria Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers, together with the Estate Surveyor and Valuers Registration Board of Nigeria. Without all of this support, the success

that we experienced in Abuja would not have been possible.

All of us in Africa are grateful for the opportunity to be part of such a vibrant and growing Association.

Nigeria and South Africa are prepared to create awareness, trust and confidence in IRWA as the Association's presence grows on our continent. Going forward, Chapter 84 will require all our support as they delve further into IRWA's education and professional development programs here. ✪



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