

Report on FICE International Federal Council meeting and conference in Kenya – Kisumu

Introduction

The South African delegation missed the first days of programme exchanged where delegations visited families and experienced local community life styles. It is important to say that even though I have not been able to visit, I am convinced by the delegates that I have spoken to that they were appreciative of the hospitality and the overall experience. We were not able to join the safari as well which was sad. But I hope that all who went enjoyed the experienced.

Travelling to Kisumu

Our travel from South Africa was smooth and there were no challenges on the way until we reached the destination. The transfer from Kisumu was also very good, we were humbled by the kindness of the driver who received us on arrival and assisted us with our bags. The driver (I think his name is Oliver) drove us to the hotel where we were also welcomed by the hotel staff. Everyone was very kind and timely in responding to our request.

On the 27th evening we were taken to the Green Garden restaurant by Simon. The walk was very refreshing and we got to experience Kisumu town in the night time. Realising that the shops there would open 24 hours that was good as this is rare in the African towns. I must say that I was touched by seeing so many boys living in the streets of Kisumu. What further broke my heart is that the politicians would give them t-shirts which for me do not only promote their sense of being kind but a feeling that they are using this young people to promote their own political agendas. I respect the local organisations that work with the children and assisting to re-unite them with their families as well as any other services they provide.

The food at the restaurant was very good. I enjoyed every bite at the restaurant. The waiter was very friendly and in particular the fish tasted very fresh. I even tasted “ugali” which is different to how it is cooked in South Africa. I would like to thank Simon and his team for the hospitality in that evening. I do recognise that he and the team were tired but he still provided the time to spend the evening with us as well as his team members.

Federal Council

The federal Council went well. I would like to thank the Executive committee for spending time in preparing for the meeting. The thinking put into the programme and new ideas that have been raised will move FICE forward.

However, I was sad that there were many countries who were not able to attend. I was hoping to meet Rolf to hear some of the work that he has been doing on behalf of FICE. I felt that we missed a report of what FICE has been doing since Vienna conference.

The idea of FICE Kenya to have invited the first lady and the Minister of Welfare was a great one. The country was exposed to the work that Simon and the team are doing as well as exposing Kenya to the world as far as children programs are concerned.

The memorial service of Carol Kelly was very touching. I would like to thank the Kenyan team for the thought and all the preparations to get the children to prepare and the other people who played a role in ensuring that Carol is given the kind of respect she deserved during her lifetime. To the entire Kenyan team thank you very much for providing a platform where we remembered the work that Carol did and what she has left behind for us to continue.

Conference:

The conference was so well planned. I enjoyed every presentation made and I think that we have all learnt from the different programmes taking place around the world. I think that one day for a conference is short. May be in the future we need to provide for a day and a half where possible.

Conclusion

In conclusion, FICE Kenya has for the first time made history in bringing Kenya International to Africa for the Federal Council meeting. The entire programme has not gone without challenges, but as Simon said "what has happened had to happen" I think the team had received a lot of lessons in the process. What stands out for me is that they were able to make the event successful. Due to time challenges FICE Africa was not able to have its own meeting, effort will be put in place to work on some of the issues through emails.

Once again, thank you very much to Katy, Herman, Simon, Maximilian and the entire international working team and the Kenyan working committee. We had a great time in Kisumu.