

D.C.-DAKAR - TALK
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AROUND AFRICA

Lesotho, formerly Basutoland, country in southern Africa, bordered on all sides by South Africa. Lesotho is one of three nations in the world to be completely encircled by a single country (the others are San Marino and Vatican City). The kingdom of Lesotho was renamed upon independence from the UK. Its dependence on South Africa for access to the outside extends to economic reliance as well, and has deeply affected the development of the country since independence in 1966. The kingdom of Lesotho is mainly mountainous and has a total area of 30,355, slightly smaller than Maryland. The capital and largest city is Maseru.

Land and Resources

The climate is mild, with hot summer days in the lowlands relieved by cool nights. Winter can be cold, particularly in the mountains, and heavy snows occasionally occur. Lesotho is poor in resources. The principle source of wealth is livestock raised on the country's grazing land. Lesotho's rivers and mountainous terrain offer potential for hydroelectric development. Some diamonds are found, although the country's only large production mine closed in the early 1980s.

Population

Almost all the inhabitants of Lesotho are black Africans, and most are Basotho (a division of the Sotho ethnic group). There are small communities of Europeans and Asians. Only 29 percent of the population is classified as urban; most live in small villages centered in communal agricultural land. The traditional tribal structure of village life has been maintained in part through land-use control by village and district chiefs. The population of Lesotho (2003 estimate) is 1,861,959. The population was growing at 0.2 percent a year in 2003. While the growth rate was lower than in many countries, it was still high enough to place a burden on Lesotho's limited resources. Many people, particularly men, reside outside the country for a portion of each year working as laborers.

Religion and Language

About 91 percent of the people of Lesotho are Christians, mainly Roman Catholics, Lesotho Evangelicals, and Anglicans. Most of the remainder follows traditional beliefs. English and Sesotho, a Bantu language, are the country official languages.

Education

Education is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 13; virtually all school-age children are enrolled. Christian missions under the direction of the minister of education operate most schools, which are free at the primary level. In 2000 some 411,000 pupils attended 1,283 primary schools, and 74,100 pupils attended secondary and vocational

schools. The National University of Lesotho (1966), in Roma, is attended yearly by about 1,400 students and has a teaching staff of more than 200. The Lesotho Agricultural College (1955) is in Maseru. Lesotho has a literacy rate of 85 percent.

Economy

The economy of Lesotho is based almost entirely on agriculture, livestock raising, and the earnings of Basothos employed outside the country. About two-thirds of the adult male labor force works in South Africa. Tourism, particularly from South Africa, has expanded rapidly.

Agriculture

Some 11 percent of Lesotho's land is cultivated. Maize, wheat, sorghum, and fruits and vegetables are the main crops. In 2002 livestock included about 510,000 cattle, 730,000 sheep, 570,000 goats and 1.7 million poultry.

Currency and Foreign Trade

The currency unit in Lesotho is the *loti* (plural *maloti*), which is divided into 100 lisente (8.61 maloti equal U.S. \$1; 2001 average). Most trade is with South Africa, which Lesotho is linked in customs union, along with Botswana, Namibia, and Swaziland.

The 2001 data on HIV/AIDS -adults prevalence rate: 31 %, people living with HIV/AIDS: 360,000 and HIV/AIDS – deaths: 25,000.

*The Embassy of the Kingdom of Lesotho
2511 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20008
202-797-5533 (Fax 202-234-6815)
Her Excellency Molelekeng E. Rapolaki*

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**US SISTER CITIES CONFERENCE receives recognition from Sister Cities International**

The U.S. Africa Sister Cities Conference held in Accra, Ghana, June 29-July 5, 2003 was presented a resolution by the Board of Directors of Sister Cities International signed by the Present, Glenn Gray and Executive Director, Tim Honey, for the leadership joint leadership provided by the President, Shirley Rivens Smith and Prince Kwame Kludjeson of Ghana. The resolution can be viewed on-line at [www.usasc.org](http://www.usasc.org)

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By Carol McGruder
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www.aamap.org
Ghana, West Africa

Cultural, economic, and social exchange one city at a time!

AIDS, poverty, famine, civil war in Liberia, political instability in Cote d'Ivoire, slavery in Sudan; these are but a few of the images that might pop into your head if your only source of information about Africa is the mainstream media. Though these issues are valid news items more than worthy of media coverage there is so much more to Africa than disease, famine, and war. There is history and culture, close-knit extended families who take care of each other, middle class neighborhoods with beautiful homes, respectful uniformed children who are happy to be in school, world class scholars and prestigious universities, cyber-cafes, health clubs, fancy restaurants, happening night spots and first class hotels.

Those of us who love, cherish, and identify with the "African" in African American know that while all too often Africa presents us with many harsh realities, it is also a land of great wealth and opportunity, a land where there are millions of people living in peace. A land of people who want what everyone wants a home, good health, meaningful work, and a future for their children.

As we here in America sit, looking, listening and reading about Africa, many of us feel compelled to do more to get involved. Whether it is working to get more in touch with our heritage or working on solutions to some of the real problems facing Africa, we want to do something that fosters meaningful long-term solutions or exchange, something that provides the opportunity for real understanding and growth. One way to get involved in more meaningful and long-term exchange is through a Sister City relationship. The U.S. - Africa Sister Cities Foundation, Inc. is an advocacy organization that addresses issues affecting Africa and promotes public awareness through the African sister cities relationship. The foundation promotes friendship, understanding, values of mutual respect, cooperation and benefit as well as encourages a better quality of life economically, technically, and environmentally.

For the past twelve years, representatives from 25 U.S. states and 26 African countries, towns or villages that are "Sister Cities" have met annually to exchange information and promote joint projects. Each sister city decides their focus and areas of exchange. Recent projects and areas of focus include fighting AIDS in Africa, economic development, women's issues, infant mortality, even the fight against the globalization of Big Tobacco in Africa has gotten some attention.

Every fourth year the Conference is held in an African country. This year's conference was hosted by Accra, Ghana which has a sister city relationship with the city of Chicago. The conference, ***Strengthening Sister Cities in Africa: Focus on HIV/Aids Crisis, Democratic Governance, Exploring Business, Trade and Investment,*** was a resounding success, attended by seasoned as well as first time travelers to Africa. The host committee treated U.S. and African delegates who attended the conference as visiting dignitaries. There were exciting workshops, meetings and receptions with traditional leaders/elders, day trips to the slave castles of Cape Coast, trips to Parliament, and even an audience and reception with the President of Ghana, His Excellency John A. Kufuor.

Interested in working on a sister city relationship, the first things to do is investigate and see if your city already has one. Although my city, San Francisco has enjoyed a sister city relationship with Abidjan, the commercial center of Cote d'Ivoire since 1985, many people remain unaware of this fact. Checking is easy, just go to the US-Africa Sister Cities website at www.usasc.org. The website offers a wealth of information on how to get involved or establish a new sister city relationship. In addition, Shirley Rivens-Smith, President of USASC can be emailed at shirleys@upo.org. The US-Africa Sister City relationships forge real exchange and understanding one city at a time. Next years conference will be held June 17-19, 2004 in Richmond, VA. In May 2005, St. Louis, MO.

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**KWANZAA**

## **Background Information**

**Kwanzaa** (KWAHN-za) is a seven day African-American holiday that starts on December twenty-sixth and ends on January first. It is not a religious, political, or patriotic event, but a time for black families to gather and celebrate their rich African heritage. Many wear bright African clothing, serve traditional foods, and listen to African music. The cry “Harambee” (ha-RAH-mbee) –which means, “let’s pull together” – can be heard throughout the seven-day festival.

The word “Kwanzaa” comes from an east African language called Swahili. It means “the first,” or “first fruits of the harvest.” The Swahili language was chosen because it is both easy to pronounce and also one that many African Americans understand.

## **Dr. Maulana Karenga**

Dr. Karenga is credited with being the originator of this holiday. He is black studies professor who decided that it was important for African Americans to build stronger family and community ties. One of the ways to accomplish this was to set aside a particular time of the year for families to gather together and thank God for the good life that they inherited from their ancestors. Kwanzaa began in 1966 and it is patterned after the yearly harvest festivals held in Africa. The festivals are a time of great joy and togetherness. One of the African groups that Dr. Karenga had studied celebrated the harvest festival at the end of the year, and he thought that this was a good time festival he had in mind.

## **Nguzu Saba** (Nn-Goo-zu SAH-ban)

Dr. Karenga found, in his studies, that the lives of most African groups were governed by seven principles. He decided that during Kwanzaa one principle would be celebrated each day and by end of the week all seven principles would be included. These seven principles are called Nguzu Saba.

Nguzu means seven and Saba means principles.

1. **Umoja** (oo-Mah jah) --- **Unity**
2. **Kujichagulia** (koo-jee-cha-goo-LEE-ah) --- **Self determination**
3. **Ujima** (oo-JEE-mah) --- **working with each other and helping each other**
4. **Ujamaa** (oo-jah-Mah) --- **cooperative sharing with others**
5. **Nia** (NEE-ah) --- **having a purpose or setting goals**
6. **Kuumba** (koo-UH-mabah) --- **creativity**
7. **Imani** (ee-MAH-nee) --- **faith and believing**

## **Symbols of the Holiday**

1. **Mkeka** (mm-KAY-kah) --- **a mat, generally made of straw**
2. **Kikombe Cha Omoja** (ki-KOOM-bay chao-MO-jah) --- **a unity cup for the family or group**
3. **Vibunzi** (vee-BOON-zee) --- **an ear of corn for each child in the home**
4. **Mazao** (mah-ZAH-oh) --- **fruits and vegetables**
5. **Kinara** (kee-NAHR-ah) --- **the candle holder, representing African Ancestors who have died**
6. **Mishumaa Saba** (mi-shoo-MAH SAH-ba) --- **seven candles which symbolize the seven principles of Kwanzaa. The black candle, which is used to light the other candles, is the center of the Kinara. There are three red candles on the left side and three green candles on the right side. The candles are lit alternately, one at a time, from left to right on each of the seven days.**
7. **Zawadi** (za-WAH-dee) --- **the gifts, generally handmade, are usually given on January first, the last day of Kwanzaa (although gifts can be given at anytime during the holiday). Usually the children receive two gifts – one is a book and the other is a memento from Africa. It could be a wood carving, beads, or something made from African cloth.**

## **Preparations for Kwanzaa**

Everything must be ready for the celebration including the bendara (ben-DER-ah) – the African-American flag – which can be seen in many places during this holiday. Marcus Garvey, a famous African-American leader, designed this flag many years ago. It has three broad stripes of black, red and green, each of these colors has a special meaning. **Green** (the top stripe) not only represents the green hills of Africa – the motherland- where the ancestors

were born, but it also stands for the hopes and dreams of African-American children, representing the future. **Black** (the middle stripe) stands for the people. **Red** (the bottom stripe) is for the struggles of black people everywhere. These colors can be found on all kinds of decorations, such as balloons, streamers, and flowers. Prints of African painting are part of the decorations as well.

### **The First Day (December 26) Umojo ---- Unity**

On December 26<sup>th</sup>, the family makes preparations for the first ceremony. The mother gets dressed in her lappa (LAH-pah), which is an African-style dress. She may braid her hair as well as her daughter's hair into fine cornrows. The men in family might wear dashikis (Da-SHEE-kees), which are traditional shirts and kofis (KOO-fees) on their heads. Generally the ceremony takes place just before the family gathers for the evening meal.

First the mkeka (a straw mat) is placed on the table. Then the kinara (the candle holder with seven candles) is centered carefully on the mkeka. Next the mazao (a basket of fruit), the vibunzi (ears of corn), and the kikombe cha umoja (the unity cup) are placed on the straw mat. Last are the zawadi (children's gifts). Each of these items is important to the celebration. When all ready, it is time for the celebration to begin.

The ceremony begins with the lighting of the black candle in the center of the kinara by someone in the family. Many parents like to have one of their children lead the ceremony each day because they feel it will not only help their son or daughter remember the principle itself, but it also gives the child the opportunity to express his or her own feelings about what the principle of the day's ceremony (such as unity on the first day) means. The principle is recited by the leader and then it is followed by a discussion. The discussion might center on the benefits of being close as a family or neighborhood. Everyone is encouraged to share his or her thoughts with the rest of the family. The discussion is also an opportunity to remember those famous African-American leaders who have contributed to the unity of the race, such as Shirley Chisholm, Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, or Medgar Evers.

After this first part of the ceremony is completed, the leader picks up the3 kikombe cha umoja (unity cup), which has been filled with water or fruit juice, and pours some of it into a bowl. This is to honor the ancestors. The leader drinks from the cup and then raises it while shouting, "Harambee" (ha-RAH-mbee), means "lets all work together." The family members repeat the word "Harambee" seven times, once for each of the principles. The cup is then passed from one person to another until everyone has had a chance to drink from it. The family then eats dinner, which might be fried chicken, collard greens (symbolic of good fortune), black-eyed peas for luck, followed by a potato pie. Afterwards, the family listens to or sings some African songs accompanied by African drums if they have them.

### **The Second Day (December 27) Kujichgulia – Self –determination**

On this night, another family member has the honor of lighting the candles. The black one is lit first and then the red candle. The leader talks about the second principle, *self-determination*, and what it means. The discussion might be about making decisions, being in control of yourself, or how to gain self confidence. Other members then individually share their ideas about what is right for them. The ceremony of the kikombe is then shared with each member of the family. Tonight the family may choose to eat dinner on the floor, just as their ancestors did many years ago. They might serve the food in large leaves or in wooden or ceramic bowls. Everyone uses their fingers to eat rather than utensils such as knives or forks.

### **The Third Day (December 28) Ujima—Collective work and responsibility**

The mother of the family might begin the ceremony by shouting, "**Habari gani?**" (hah-Bah-ree-GAH-nee), which means, "What's the news?" "Ujima!" the family shouts back in answer. The black candle is used to light both the first red candle and the first green one as well. The leader then talks about the meaning of *collective responsibility*, explaining how people can accomplish many good things by working together. After the leader is finished, others might share their ideas about what could be done in their neighborhood if many people work together. It might be mending or painting a fence or cleaning up a forgotten yard. This could lead to a family project. After the discussion, the leader then honors the ancestors, drinks from the cup, shouts, "Harambe!" seven times, and passes the cup around the table for other to share.

### **The Fourth Day (December 29) Ujamaa—Cooperative economics**

The fourth candle, which is the second red one, is lit by another member of the family to start the ceremony of Ujamaa. As the family watches the candles burn, the night's leader will express personal feelings about the importance of *sharing with others*. When everyone works together, then everyone benefits. Some people in a neighborhood might band together to start a business such as a grocery store. Another community might help pay for the medical schooling of a student who then returns to help the community. When the leader has finished speaking, the kikombe is poured, ancestors are honored. Harambee is shouted, and everyone drinks.

#### **The Fifth Day (December 30) Nia — Having a purpose or setting goals**

The second green candle is lit so that a total of five candles are burning in the kinara. The leader begins the discussion of *setting goals*. He or she might share one goal such as working for a good grade on a test that is coming up. A mother might tell about a goal of spending more time with each of her children. Someone else may talk about what he wants to be when he grows up. After the discussions, the drink is poured into the bowl to honor ancestors, Harambee is shouted, and everyone drinks from the cup.

#### **The Sixth Day (December 31) Kumbaa – Creativity**

On this night, many families will gather in a home, community center, or a church to share a feast called Karamu (kah-RAH-moo). The spirit of Kwanzaa is to share food, music, and drink with neighbors, just as their ancestors had done after a successful hunt or harvest. The room is decorated with banners of the traditional black, red, and green colors. Families bring their favorite dishes to share with each other and place them on a large Mkeka that is spread across the center of the floor. Different foods are brought for the feast such as soups, a rice dish or two, candied yams, turnip greens, black-eyed peas, fish, chicken, breads, and fruits.

When the ceremony begins, the five candles from the day before are lit, along with the new one, which is red. An honored speaker will celebrate the creative spirit which helps to make homes, neighborhoods, and lives more beautiful. Individuals tell what they have done to fulfill this principle of creativity. The cup is filled and some of the drink is poured into the bowl in remembrance of ancestors and famous African Americans. After the ceremony, friends sit together in unity circles to eat and talk. This is followed by group singing, dancing, poetry readings, story telling, chants, or performances. Many dances tell stories of great hunters, fishermen, leaders, or just the simple joys of childhood. People may wear African clothing including masks, which are made of papier-mâché, wood, or painted on someone's face.

Finally the time has come in Kwanzaa for the children to receive their gifts. They have worked hard all year long for their rewards.

#### **The Seventh Day (January 1) Imani—Faith and believing**

On this last day all seven candles are lit to complete the Mishumaa Saba. The family thinks about the spirit of Kwanzaa and shares what they truly believe in. Some may talk about their belief in god or in themselves as a people. Others may talk about believing in their parents, teachers, or leaders. The family discusses what has happened in the year gone by and how they intend to keep faith to improve their lives in the year ahead. The kikombe is filled for the last time, ancestors are honored, and "Harambee" is shouted seven times, each one drinks from the cup and then Kwanzaa is over, but the seven principles will be remembered throughout the year ahead.

#### **Suggested Activities**

1. Have the students develop thematic dictionaries or a word wall using African American words that are found in this study.
2. Give each student an outline of a face to create an African mask that could be worn to the kinara during Kwanzaa.
3. Have the children research their own ancestors and tell what they have learned about them. See if they have inherited any physical features of their ancestors or if they have any of the same abilities as their grandparents, such as painting, building things, sports, etc.
4. Hold a Kwanzaa ceremony in your classroom. Decide which of the seven days you will celebrate and discuss the principle of the day. Finish by having students draw pictures, or write stories or poems about what the day meant to them.
5. Let students find out about African instruments such as a thumb piano or the Lion's Roar. Encourage students to make their own versions of these instruments or any that would go with the celebration of Kwanzaa.

6. Each morning during Kwanzaa greet the students in your class with the words, "Habari gain?" Encourage them to answer you.
7. Collect newspaper or magazine articles written about Kwanzaa. They can usually be found each year in the days before the celebration begins.

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Recipe

Sweet Potato Crisp

1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
 1 can (40 ounces) cut sweet potatoes, drained
 ¾ cup packed brown sugar, divided
 ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 1 cup chopped apples
 2/3 cup chopped cranberries
 ½ cup flour
 ½ cup old fashioned or quick oats, uncooked
 1/3 cup margarine
 ¼ cup chopped pecans

Heat oven to 350 F

Beat cream cheese, potatoes, 1/3 cup sugar and cinnamon in large mixing bowl at medium speed with electric mixer until well blended.

Spoon into 1 ½ -quart casserole or 10 x 6-inch baking dish. Top with apples and cranberries.

Mix flour, oats and remaining sugar in medium bowl; cut in margarine until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in pecans. Sprinkle over fruit.

Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until thoroughly heated.

Make 8 servings

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### Senegalese Ambassador

In September 2002, The Honorable Amadou Lamine Ba, PhD became the Ambassador of Senegal to the United States of America station in Washington, DC. In 1993, he received his PhD from the Ohio State University in Columbus, OH. Amb. Ba agreed to continue the tradition as a member of the DC-Dakar Board of Directors.

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AFRICARE

US Africa Sister Cities pledged to help fight AIDS in Africa by supporting Africare. We have met our original commitment by contributing over \$20,000. **The need is so great we can't stop.** This year we have contributed \$3,000, thanks to help from children in St. Louis, MO (\$2775) and Washington, DC (\$225).

Every US Africa Sister City should make an effort to help contribute to this fight over and above your direct contribution to your African sister city. Make your checks payable to Africare and send them to D.C.-DAKAR, 2000 Upshur St., NE Washington, DC 20018. By sending the money through us we can keep a record and report back on our progress.

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### December 2003

- 17 Joint membership meeting with the Prince Georges County Friendship Council
- 25 Christmas- invite an African student to dinner
- 26-31 Kwanzaa, an African American cultural holiday, see attached.

### January 2004

- 15 Martin Luther King' Birthday
- 19 Martin Luther King's Official Holiday
- 26 DC-Dakar General Membership meeting Location: TBA 6:45 pm

### February

- 23 DC-Dakar General Membership meeting Location: TBA 6:45 pm

### March

- 29 DC-Dakar General Membership meeting Location: TBA 6:45 pm

### April

- 15 Fund Raiser at Senegalese Embassy
- 16 DC-Dakar General Membership meeting  
Location: TBA 6:45 pm

### May

- 17 DC-Dakar General Membership meeting Location: TBA 6:45 pm

### June

- 17-19 13th Annual US Africa Sister Cities Conference, Richmond, VA
- 28 DC-Dakar -Year-end meeting Location: TBA 6:45 pm

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2003 DC-Dakar Board of Directors

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In 1980, Washington, DC, officially twinned with Dakar, Senegal. Generally the purpose of our sister city relationship is to promote friendship and mutual understanding between the two cities and their citizens, based upon the principle of mutual respect, mutual benefit and cooperation. Through D.C.-Dakar, people in the Washington Metropolitan area can participate in a variety of cultural, educational, and economic development activities which help to foster a bond with the people of Dakar.

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**Remember that the membership runs concurrently with the calendar year. If you have not paid your 2003 membership (\$40.00 for individuals and \$60.00 for couples) please do so now!**

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WE NEED PERSONS TO WRITE PRESS RELEASES, ARTICLES FOR THE NEWSLETTER AND PROPOSALS FOR FUNDING.

DON'T THROW THIS NEWSLETTER AWAY, COPY IT - POST IT AND SHARE IT!!!

MAKE tax deductible CONTRIBUTIONS DC-Dakar to help support some of our projects in Dakar.

We support African relationships. If you wish to host an African visitor for a meal, a short visit or a semester, please contact us.

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**Would** you like to have a friend in an African country? If you are between the age of 13 and 25, become a pen pal with a friend in Senegal.

**Write:** PADEC

B.P. 13046

Dakar Grand Yoff

Patte d'Oie Builders No. A78

Dakar Senegal

**Email:** [padec@hotmail.com](mailto:padec@hotmail.com)

For other countries, name the country/city, send your name address and age to D.C.-Dakar.

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~~~D.C.-DAKAR IS DC'S ONLY AFRICAN SISTER CITY~~~

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