



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

Special event of the Regional Meeting for Asia and the Pacific Region on the International Decade for People of African Descent

Voices of the Decade: Connecting Cultures through Art and Media Featuring Sam Okyere and Rene Hoshino

Organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Monday 15 January, 12:30 to 13:30

Hybrid format

Background

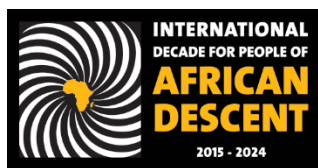
In the framework of the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent (General Assembly resolution [69/16](#)), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is organizing the regional meeting for Asia and the Pacific Region to address the three themes of the Decade: recognition, justice and development.

In this context and to highlight the diverse experiences of people of African descent in Asia, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is organizing a special side event featuring the voices of two prominent figures of African descent living in the region, namely Mr. **Sam Okyere**, a prominent Ghanaian television personality currently residing in the Republic of Korea and **Rene Hoshino**, a Cameroon-born and Japan-raised manga creator.

Objective of the special event

The special event aims to raise visibility and awareness about the positive contributions made by people of African descent to the region's cultural diversity and social fabric. The discussion will shed light on how Sam Okyere and Rene Hoshino, through their respective work and public engagement, seek to contribute to building a message of mutual understanding that can surmount differences in birthplace or skin color. The discussion will also address challenges they have faced and ways to overcome these challenges.

Date and venue



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The event is scheduled for Monday 15 January 2024, from 12:30 to 13:30 CET and will take place at the International Conference Center for Geneva (rue de Varembe 17 1202 Geneva).

Registration: <https://indico.un.org/event/1009472/>

Format and Methodology

The event will be set in a Davos-style seating arrangement to foster an interactive and engaging atmosphere among the speaker and participants. A moderator will pose thought-provoking questions to the speakers, creating an interactive and dynamic discussion. It will be moderated by **Ms. Kaylois Henry**, Head of Editorial Unit at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The special event will be divided in three moments:

1. An opening by the moderator introducing the speakers
2. An interactive discussion between the speakers and the moderator
3. A Q&A session

Expected outcome



Through this special event, we expect to:

1. Enhance understanding of the positive contributions made by people of African descent to the region's cultural diversity and social fabric, with a focus on Republic of Korea and Japan.
2. Increase awareness of the issues faced by people of African descent in Asia, particularly in the Republic of Korea and Japan.
3. Recognizing the transformative potential of art and television as powerful platforms to reshape negative narratives and promote diversity and inclusion.

Bios

Sam Okyere Sam Okyere is a Ghanaian TV and Entertainment personality in Seoul, South Korea. He shot to fame after appearing on JTBC's popular show, "Abnormal Summit," and he has showcased his multi-talent and featured in reputable TV & radio shows, movies, dramas, and reality TV programs.

As a public speaker, Sam has toured schools across Korea and lectured many young Koreans on acculturation, race and shared his experiences of navigating through Korean society as a person



of color. In 2017, he embarked on a philanthropic mission by partnering with World Vision to raise funds to build schools for under-resourced remote communities in Ghana.

Sam's vast portfolio also cuts across working with organizations like Seoul metropolitan government, African group of embassies, KOICA, Ban Ki-Moon Center, UN-habitat, Korea Legacy Committee and the Ministry of Tourism, Ghana.

Mr. Okyere has served as an honorary brand ambassador for Yongsan District (a predominant expat district in Seoul) where he engaged with higher authorities on policies that could improve the quality of life of foreigners in the community.

Among some of the notable awards in his stash includes being named in the 2017 Forbes 30



Under 30 list – Asia region for the entertainment category, acknowledging his contribution to the entertainment industry in Korea and Asia. "Best Foreign Entertainer" at the First Brand Awards and "Global Star Award" at the 8th Korea Drama Awards.

Mr. Okyere was conferred as an honorary member of the Korean Heritage Guardian and through this role, has contributed immensely to the preservation of Korea's cultural and historical heritage. He also utilizes his role as a Ghana Tourism Ambassador to deepen the cooperation between Ghana, Africa, and Korea. Sam also serves as an Honorary Ambassador for the Korea-Africa Foundation. He continues to use his influence to mitigate the misconceptions and stereotypes about people of color in Korea while creating opportunities for others to rise.

Rene Hoshino is a manga artist who draws upon his own experiences to create humorous stories depicting the cultural differences between Africa and Japan, as well as people's preconceived ideas and misunderstandings regarding different cultures. Born in 1984 in the Republic of Cameroon, he moved to Japan at the age of 4 when his mother married a Japanese man.

After graduating from high school, he found employment at a local construction firm. Seeking new opportunities, he eventually moved to Tokyo. In Tokyo, he engaged in various activities, including appearing on television and creating projects. Subsequently, a manga series depicting the adventures of my nephews, which he had been writing about on Twitter, gained popularity and led to the publication of several books.

His work, such as "The Result of an African Boy Growing up in Japan," portray the cultural differences and experiences of growing up in Japan as an African boy.



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Currently, he also actively participates in speaking engagement at Japanese schools and events. He has collaborated with organizations such as the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), contributing to manga creation and other projects. To date, three books have been published as part of his body of work.