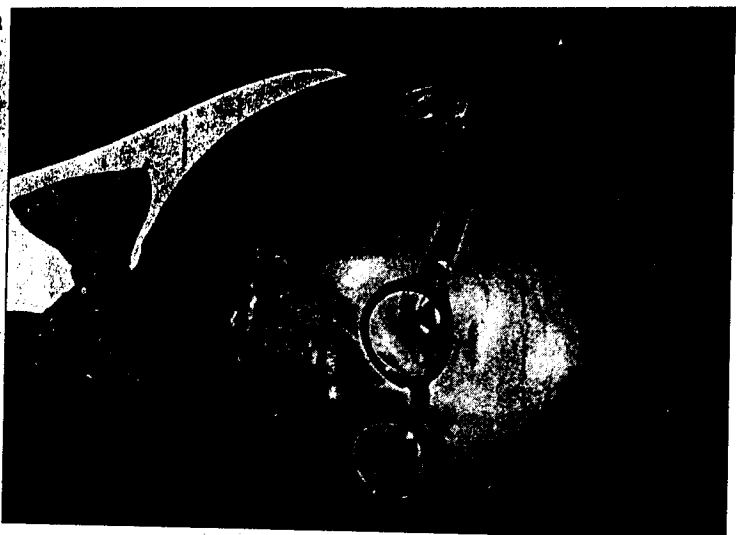


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# Masire in line for American sab battical



Charles Sthi, head of the new African Presidential Archives and Research Center, based at Boston University.

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Staff Writer

**A**FTER serving as United States ambassador to Tanzania, Rev. Charles Sthi did not return home to relax. Instead, he sought constructive ways through which the American people could better understand Africa.

The former envoy has set up an organisation known as the African Presidential Archives and Research Center (APARC), which allows a select group of ex-African presidents to spend up to two years in America as resource persons on democracy.

The select group of ex-African leaders who will gain from the initiative must have conformed to the ideals of democracy while in power. The Boston University-based APARC runs an academic forum known as the African Presidents in Residence Programme (APRP), where carefully screened and invited former African presidents will spend considerable time sharing their experiences.

Already there is a short-list of ex-leaders headed by Nelson Mandela and Kenneth Masire, respected former Presidents of South Africa and Botswana, respectively. Other former Presidents on the APARC list

include Ghana's Jerry Rawlings, Senegal's Abdou Diouf, Tanzania's Ali Hassan Mwinyi and Kenneth Kamanda and Frederick Chiluba of Zambia. If Masire who is rated second to Mandela on the list opts for the residency then he will spend up to two years at APARC. The chosen candidates will among other tasks teach at the university, present papers, publish articles and travel around the US giving public lectures to support democratic transitions of power in Africa. According to Sthi the visiting leaders will broaden the knowledge of Americans about Africa and its politics. Already the

Lloyd G. Balfour Foundation has donated \$1 million to the program. The money is meant to finance the travel, stipend and accommodation expenses of the selected candidate. But not every democratically elected ex-President will qualify for the sabbatical. Those who mess up while in power like Zimbabwean Robert Mugabe might find themselves excluded because they did not conform to the ideals of democ-

racy.

"I thought hard about strategies and policies the US needed to promote in Africa. I came to the conclusion that in order for a progressive and dynamic relationship to be present between Africa and the US, Americans must have a better understanding of Africa. The only images of Africa in the minds of the Americans have stemmed from the colonial period and Hollywood movies. There is no appreciation for contemporary Africa. Americans don't distinguish what is happening in the DRC and what is going on in Botswana," Sith noted.

He said because of lack of knowledge about Africa, it is important that Americans are aware and appreciative of African leaders who have turned their countries into icons of democracy like Botswana.

"There are steadfast leaders in sub-Saharan region, who are very serious about democracy. These political, opinion and media leaders are essential in setting the public agenda," he explained.

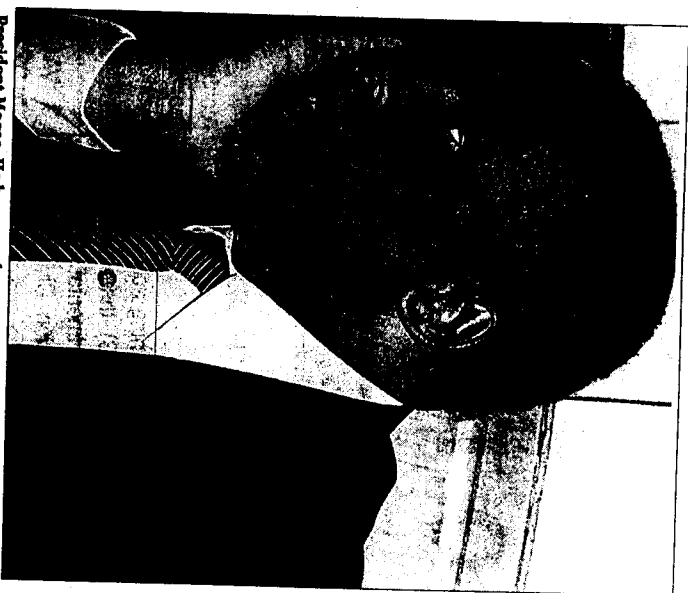
Sith said it is unfortunate that Africa is independent politically but not economically. He praised African leaders who effectively led their countries in the transition from colonial rule to political independence.

"There is interdependence in the area of economics. The 1990s and today are equally important in terms of political institutions and economics. These changes we see in this era will be logical and important to understand Africa and her developments 100 years from now," he said.

Meanwhile, contrary to remarks made by American President George Bush, APARC

views terrorism as a threat not confined to the Middle East.

"He had a point he wanted to put across about Iran and Iraq being havens of terrorism. But one must remember that he also added North Korea. But it is debatable given the response on the evil of terrorism around the world. I would say the United States must be sensitive to understand that while security and military objectives remain critical, foreign relations geared towards investment to build other nations is also a necessity. We must be seen to



President Mogae. He has agreed to support APARC with his speeches

be a partner with Africa, to grow her economies and sustain available opportunities. Unless you ultimately deal with conditions that breed despair and discontent, you can never be free of terrorism," Sith explained.

President Festus Mogae has agreed to support APARC and promised to release some of his speeches from the State of the Nation address and on HIV/AIDS.

"He is not only Africa's most progressive leader, but one of the world's best leaders in the fight against the disease," Sith said of Mogae.

APARC hopes to explore an opportunity to collaborate with the University of Botswana to share research opportunities. The first conference of APARC was postponed from September 13-14 2001 because of the terror attacks in the United States. It will be held in mid-March with a revised topic that focuses on the impact of the terrorist attacks on the economies of Africa.