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Trinidad 2006: February 2006 Newsletter

Dear colleagues:

We may be five months away from the dates of our conference, but I hope we are all making early preparations for the trip. I just wanted to bring a few things to your attention:

1. Immigration: Please check carefully with the appropriate diplomatic sources in your country to ascertain whether or not you need a visa to enter Trinidad & Tobago. If you do, then you should obtain a letter of invitation from our conference hosts to facilitate your application to the consulate of Trinidad & Tobago in your country for a visa. Please write urgently to Professor Funso Aiyejina, chair of our Local Organizing Committee at the University of the West Indies at St Augustine, Trinidad & Tobago, stating the title of the paper you will be presenting at our conference and copying me. You will receive a letter signed by the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Education at the university, inviting you to the conference. Professor Aiyejina's e-mail address is faiyejina@fhe.uwi.tt. Your message needs to be copied to me so that I can have an independent list, should a clearance be sought from me by the LOC at any stage. I will also get a copy of every letter written by the Dean.

2. Accommodation. As I indicated in earlier newsletters, participants are responsible for making their own accommodation arrangements, especially since some of us have plans for tourism beyond our commitments to the conference. Whatever the case may be, it is important to make these accommodation arrangements NOW, because July is in the thick of the tourism season in Trinidad & Tobago, when hotel prices are usually spiked quite high. Again, as indicated in an earlier newsletter, the prices quoted in the hotel lists published earlier (and many of these hotels are in Port-of-Spain, about 20 minutes drive from St Augustine) may have all been raised, so there is need for speed at this time. At the moment, however, the conference's LOC at the University of the West Indies in St Augustine has been able to negotiate very affordable prices for conference participants. I attach here a statement specifying the different facilities concerned, what they offer, and the prices they are offering us. We had actually hoped to have most of the spaces reserved for graduated students and much younger faculty among us who don't have much support from their institutions, and we still hope this is the case. However, those who haven't already booked their hotels and are interested in considering staying in these places negotiated by the LOC are free to call them and make their reservations.

3. Travel: We are compiling a separate list for arrival and departure. Once you have made your travel reservation, please write to the ISOLA Administrative Secretary, Dr Stephen Belcher (at spb3@psu.edu), telling him by what airline and on what date and time you will be arriving at the airport in Port-of-Spain, capital of Trinidad & Tobago. Our university hosts will be organizing transportation for the benefit of participants at the conference. The vehicle(s) will be on service as early as July 17 (for those arriving ahead of conference dates, possibly to take in some tourist time), taking guests to hotels where they will stay; throughout the conference dates, taking us between our hotels/lodges and various conference venues; and concluding their service on July 24, when all participants are expected to depart the conference. Those who intend to stay in the country beyond July 24 should make their own transportation arrangements to go to the airport for departure. Sometime before the conference week, Stephen Belcher will send the list of names and details he has compiled to the LOC chair, Professor Aiyejina. Later on, we shall publish a couple of telephone numbers to be called by anyone in any kind of emergency upon arrival or during the conference. Everyone should please stay as close to the conference group as possible during the period, to ensure our mutual security. Please book your flights early, to avoid steep hikes closer to your time of travel..

4. Tobago: If you are planning to join the day-trip to Tobago, please remember to include Tobago in your round-trip flight to the entire country (Trinidad & Tobago). From my information, the package usually works out cheaper that way. Once again, book the flight on "Tobago Express" for July 22, leaving Port-of-Spain (Trinidad) for Scarborough (Tobago) at 6 a.m. and returning the same day at 9 p.m. If you are joining us on the trip, please let me know now if you haven't already done so. Our hosts in Tobago would like to know exactly how many people will come, since they are making some catering arrangements.

5. Performances: If you plan to read some poetry or tell a story during the evening of performances being arranged for the conference, please send me your name so that we know exactly how many people wish to be involved in the event. There are other scheduled events (e.g., songs by an Orisha Choir, Calypso music, etc.), so we need to manage the time accordingly.

6. Multimedia needs: Anyone who requires special electronic/audiovisual services at the conferences should please let me know as soon as possible, so that provisions could be made for them as much as possible.

7. Conference registration: Those who have paid their pre-registration fees will have their programme folders and name tags ready for them to pick up at the conference registration table in St Augustine. Those who have not yet done so have until April 30 to pre-register at US\$60 (for everyone except those from Third World countries). After April 30, registration will cost US\$70 and can only be done at the registration table in St Augustine. For those who plan to pre-register before April 30, I am attaching to this message a copy of the new credit card deposit form should they wish to send me their payment that way.

8. ISOLA Publication News: I am also attaching to this message details of articles and books published by ISOLA members during the year 2005.

9. General meeting: The ISOLA general meeting will be scheduled for the (late) afternoon of July 21. If you have any items you would like included in the agenda, please let me know now so we know exactly what our main concerns will be.

10. Miscellaneous: Any other issues will be taken up in a later newsletter.

Best wishes,

Isidore Okpewho
President of ISOLA