

EXPERT MEETING

“World Heritage in Africa: looking back...moving ahead”
A meeting organised in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of
the World Heritage Convention in Africa

[25-28 May 2022]
Robben Island - South Africa

CONCEPT DOCUMENT

The Government of the Republic of South Africa, in collaboration with the African World Heritage Fund, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, ICCROM and the Robben Island Museum, are pleased to announce an Expert Meeting on the theme “World Heritage in Africa: looking back...moving ahead”. The meeting is being organised on the occasion of the worldwide celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention under the theme “The next 50: World Heritage as a source for resilience, humanity and Innovation”. The meeting will bring together heritage institutions and experts, local communities, youth, and development sectors.

A- BACKGROUND

1. The *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (usually named World Heritage or UNESCO 1972 Convention) was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on 16 November 1972 with a set of recommendations concerning the Protection at National Level of the Cultural and Natural Heritage. The Convention offers a framework for firm actions toward the safeguarding of heritage having outstanding universal value, using various tools such as its Operational Guidelines. As of April 2022, the World Heritage List comprises in total 1154 properties including 897 culture, 218 nature and 39 mixed. Fifty-two of those sites are inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger. The distribution of the World Heritage List in the various UN/UNESCO regions shows 547 (47% of total) from 50 State Parties in Europe and North America, 278 (24%) from 36 State Parties in Asia and the Pacific, 147 (13%) from 28 States Parties in Latin America and the Caribbeans, 88 (8%) from 18 State parties in Arab States and 98 (8%) from 35 State Parties in Africa region. Despite the Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List which was endorsed by the World Heritage community since 1994 and the subsequent actions undertaken, the typological and regional discrepancies keep widening every year.
2. Considering the above from a continental perspective using therefore the African Union framework (which is also the scope of work of AWHF), 141 properties are inscribed on the World Heritage List including 21 in the World Heritage List in Danger. These figures represent respectively 12% of the World Heritage List and 40% of the World Heritage List in Danger. The African footprint has been perceived at global and continental levels as misrepresenting the richness and diversity of African natural and cultural heritage, hence a deliberate effort by global and continental organisations and experts to put a series of mechanisms in place to address the challenge. Among those are the African World Heritage Fund and the UNESCO Global Priority Africa Strategy 2022-2029.
3. The African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) was created in 2006 by UNESCO and the African Union in South Africa to support the effective conservation and protection of cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value in Africa. The work of the Fund evolves around building capacities as a crosscutting strategy to sustainably address the challenges of underrepresentation of African sites on the World Heritage List and the insufficient conservation and management of these sites. Since its launch, the Fund has strived to provide technical and financial assistance to fulfil its mandate when strengthening the network of professionals and institutions for World Heritage implementation on the continent. The Strategic Plan 2022-2027 of the AWHF is built on 5 strategic objectives namely (1) Contribute to increasing the number of African sites on the World Heritage List, (2) Improving the management and conservation of World Heritage properties in Africa, (3) Increasing sustainable growth for local communities linked to developed World Heritage properties, (4) Improving awareness about AWHF and strengthening partnerships to generate support and increase operational resources and (5) Consolidate institutional capacities of the AWHF. The work and resources of AWHF are yet to be consolidated for impactful sustainability on heritage landscape in Africa.

4. *Global Priority Africa* and its strategy 2022-2029 were approved on 22 November 2021 by the 41st Session of the General Conference of UNESCO (Paris). The strategy is built of 5 flagship programmes namely (1) Campus Africa: Reinforcing Higher Education in Africa, (2) The General History of Africa (GHA) as a catalyst for achieving Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, (3) Fostering cultural heritage and capacity development, (4) Harnessing new and emerging technologies for sustainable development in Africa, including through the implementation of the recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence and (5) Enhance Open Science, reinforce capacity building in Basic and Applied Sciences and Scientific Research to strengthen innovation and technology development and use in Ocean Science, climate change resilience and water resource management in Africa. World Heritage falls heavily under the Flagship programme 3 which defines the following key main outputs (1) Support the development of World Heritage nomination files in Africa, (2) Support the removal of sites from the List of World Heritage in Danger, (3) Harnessing good conservation practices for socio-economic development, (4) Capacity building and (5) Support cultural heritage experts from Africa.
5. Similar priorities were highlighted in the 2021-2027 Action Plan of the *3rd Cycle of Periodic Reporting Exercise in the Africa region*. The Periodic Report comprises 26 actions grouped into 5 strategic objectives namely (1) Strengthen the representativity and credibility of the UNESCO World Heritage List in the Africa region, (2) Improve conservation, effective management and promotion of African World Heritage, (3) Develop capacity for conservation, management and promotion of cultural and natural heritage, (4) Enhance education, communication and awareness-raising of World Heritage in the Africa region and (5) Strengthen community and stakeholder engagement for effective management of World Heritage properties.
6. In 2012, at the occasion of the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention under the theme: “*World Heritage and Sustainable Development: the Role of Local Communities*”, the African community was mobilised on the continent through a three-pronged development programme namely a situational analysis on “*World Heritage and extractive industries in the Africa region*”, an expert meeting on “*Managing the impacts of development activities and resource extraction in and around World Heritage in the Africa region*” (3-5 May, Maropeng, South Africa) and an international conference on the theme “*Living with World Heritage in Africa*”. Beyond reflections and engagements of various stakeholders, the outcomes of those celebration consisted of a set of resolutions and recommendations summarised in 3 conclusive positions: (1) “our contribution to the heritage of humankind is the sum of our present actions” (2) “*World Heritage in 3 words: knowledge, awareness and belonging*” and (3) “*if you do something for me without me, you are against me. You cannot say it is for me without me*”. Subsequent actions from the worldwide celebration of the 40th anniversary in November 2012 in Kyoto, Japan, led to the work on the “Future of the World Heritage Convention”.
7. At its Extended 44th Session held from 15th to 31st July 2021 in Fuzhou, China/Online, the World Heritage Committee “*takes note of the preliminary preparations for the 50th anniversary of World Heritage Convention*” (Decision 44 COM 5A). That decision takes stock

of a previous one where the Committee “*recommends that consideration is given to using the opportunity of the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention in 2022 to undertake a reflection on the Global Strategy*” (Decision 43 COM 8), which was launched by the Committee in 1994 to ensure that the List credibly reflects the world’s cultural and natural diversity of outstanding universal value. At the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Convention, a series of celebrations are planned throughout the year and those include publications, events, and reflections.

B - CELEBRATION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION IN AFRICA

8. In a context marked by the persistent spread of COVID-19 pandemic, the series of events marking the 50 years celebration of the World Heritage Convention in Africa comprises:
 - a. A series of continental-wide **celebrations of African World Heritage Day**, the 5th of May. The events will include public lectures and debates, social media contests, radio talk shows, guided tours to heritage sites, on-site volunteer activities, cultural performances and others under the theme “**Celebrating the World Heritage Convention at 50: African Heritage as a source for Humanity, Innovation and Resilience**”. These constellations of events aim to raise awareness about World Heritage in Africa and strengthen the involvement of the various segments of the public (including local communities, civil society organizations, youth and women, decision-makers, amongst others) in the implementation of the Convention in the region.
 - b. The **Youth Forum** is an annual youth engagement on World Heritage, initiated in 2016 by AWHF and its partners. The forum gathers about 40 young Africans aged from 18 to 28 years who are looking for opportunity to identify and gain experience on World Heritage related matters in Africa. Building on the experience from the 5 first editions held respectively at Robben Island, South Africa (2016), Gaoua/Loropeni Ruins, Burkina Faso (2017), Island of Mozambique, Mozambique (2018), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (2019) and online (2021), the **6th Regional Youth Forum** will be held **from 9th to 14th May 2022 in Rabat, Morocco** on the theme: “*The Next 50: Youth Innovation for Sustainable and Resilient World Heritage in Africa*”. Most of the resource persons are youth alumni of the programme.
 - c. An **Expert Meeting** on “*World Heritage in Africa: looking back...moving ahead*” will be held from **26th to 28th May at Robben Island, South Africa**. Taking stock of the achievements and challenges of the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in Africa in the last 50 years and considering the actual strategies to address those challenges, the meeting will develop a set of priority actions/recommendations projected in the next 50 years. The meeting will be structured in a way to allow heritage expert reflections, contribution from the African Youth and the involvement of Government and key partners of World Heritage in Africa. The expected output is “**the Robben Island Declaration on World Heritage in Africa: the next 50**”.

- d. A **Gala Event** is planned in South Africa early December 2022. It will give an opportunity to conclude the series of events organized through the year in Africa to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention. The Gala Event will bring together high-level decision makers and representatives from the government institutions, heritage institutions, and the development sector. The Gala Event will be structured around (1) a high-level panel discussing how to sustain World Heritage in Africa and (2) a fundraising event.

C – EXPERT MEETING ON “*WORLD HERITAGE IN AFRICA: LOOKING BACK...MOVING AHEAD*”

9. The Expert Meeting is a contribution to the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention. The Meeting will bring together about **30 participants** including heritage experts, young leaders, officials from government and heritage institutions and actors of development and private sector to discuss the experience and perspectives of World Heritage in Africa. An opportunity will be given to non-African participants to share their experience on site inscription and management.
10. The Expert Meeting is bilingual (English/French). Simultaneous interpretation service will be provided during the meeting.
11. The Expert Meeting will be structured in 3 interactive sessions namely:
 - a. **Setting the scene workshop (Day 1):** this session follows the opening ceremony. It will be launched by 2 presentations providing informed opinion on the implementation and perspectives of the World Heritage Convention in Africa. The presentations will be followed by a structured engagement session with the multisectoral and multigenerational audience with the perspectives to identify and nurture areas of interest for the Robben Island Declaration.
 - b. **Words and Experience by partners (Day 2):** a few experts and officials from non-African State Parties will be invited to the meeting. The purpose is to engage with the audience on strategies and practices having produced results mainly for nominations and sustainable conservation of World Heritage. Then, the participants will be offered an opportunity to visit Robben Island World Heritage Site.
 - c. **Robben Island Declaration on World Heritage in Africa: the next 50 (Day 3):** the participants will provide relevant input serving to update the draft Robben Island Declaration. It is essential for the Declaration to identify challenges and prospective happening by 2072 taking into consideration the actual conditions and strategies. The African perspective to the 50 Years celebration will provide the basis for appropriate actions in Africa in support of the effective implementation of the World Heritage Convention. Once adopted by the Expert Meeting, the Robben Island Declaration will further be presented and championed in other relevant forums.

12. The Expert Meeting will be preceded on 20-25 May 2022 by the **African Young Leaders Workshop**, a flagship component of the *Youth.Heritage. Africa* programme, an initiative of ICCROM in partnership with the School of African Heritage and the AWHF. The African Young Leaders Workshop under the theme “*Of the Past, to the Future: Strengthening the Resilience of African World Heritage through Youth Leadership and Innovation*” will culminate with the **official launch of both the Youth.Heritage.Africa programme and the 50th Anniversary Expert Meeting** on 25 May (Africa Day), showing therefore the critical role the African Youth can/must play for both the effective implementation of the UNESCO Conventions and the African Union *Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want*. The African Young Leaders Workshop aims to develop leadership skills of Young Africans will gather 25 young leaders and representatives from partners and affiliate organisations. A session of the workshop will be dedicated to the 50th Anniversary celebrations in Africa.
13. It is anticipated that Robben Island World Heritage Site will be the **meeting venue and accommodation** for participants to both the African Young Leaders Workshop (20-25 May) and the 50th Anniversary Expert Meeting (26-28 May).

D - PARTNERS OF THE EXPERT MEETING

14. The Expert Meeting is jointly planned and organised by the Government of South Africa (Department of Sport, Arts and Culture and Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment), the Robben Island Museum, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, ICCROM and the African World Heritage Fund (using funds generously made available by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs).
15. The **Government of South Africa** will provide overall support to the meeting especially for wide reach out among officials and guests to invite to the event.
16. The **Robben Island Museum** (RIM) will provide the venue, accommodation, and meals for the Expert meeting. RIM will also provide to participants and guests a courtesy ticket for the ferry when appropriate.
17. **UNESCO World Heritage Centre** will provide guidance for the Declaration taken into consideration the dynamics within UNESCO in that regard. UNESCO will also facilitate the development of further steps concerning the outcomes of the meeting.
18. **ICCROM** will identify non-African (Italian) partners to the meeting and provide an overall support to the meeting. ICCROM will support the drafting of the Meeting Declaration.
19. The **African World Heritage Fund** (AWHF) will ensure the overall coordination of the event. This includes administrative and logistic organisation of the event as well as engagement with relevant partners. The AWHF will make available to partners the outcomes of the Expert Meeting.

Draft programme

Date	Time	Activity	Speaker/Presenter
25 May 2022	10:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome Remarks - Launch of the Youth.Heritage. Africa Programme (Programme Activities Report and - Celebration of Africa Day - Welcome Dinner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AWHF - DG ICCROM - UNESCO - Department of Art and Culture - Undersecretary of State, Italian Ministry of Culture / Ambassador of Italy to South Africa
26 May 2022	10:00-11:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setting the scene workshop: Keynote Presentations & Discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AWHF & UNESCO - Italian Ministry of Culture and Experts
	12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Successes and challenges for World Heritage Convention Implementation in Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - African World Heritage Expert
	13:00	Lunch	
	15:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - World Heritage Convention in Italy: Successes and Challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undersecretary of State, Italian Ministry of Culture - Italian Experts; Florence, Pompei, Padova site Managers
	16:00	Nominating a Site for inscription on the World Heritage List: Institutional and Financial Implications - Experience from Africa and Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Italian Ministry of Culture- World Heritage Focal Point - African World Heritage Fund Specialist
27 May 2022	10:00	Managing World Heritage Sites: In-sight Venice and Robben Island	Venice and Robben Island Site Managers
	12:00	The role of Youth and Local Communities for successful Implementation of the World Heritage Convention: Experiences from Africa and Italy	African and Italian World Heritage Site Managers
	13:00	Lunch	
	15:00	Voices of the Youth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The African World Heritage Youth Forum - Young Professionals Forum- Italy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AWHF-ICCROM - Centro Conservazione Restauro La Venaria Reale - Italy
	16:00	Site Visit of Robben Island	All participants
28 May 2022	10 :00	Presentation of Draft Final Declaration	AWHF-ICCROM
	11:00	Break-away Sessions for Declaration Review and Inputs	All participants
	12:00	Plenary Presentation: Group Feedbacks	All Participants
	13:00	Lunch	
	15:00	Adoption of the Final Declaration	All Participants
	16:00	Free	