



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

“Living with World Heritage in Africa”

[26-29 September 2012]

South Africa

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

The Government of the Republic of South Africa, in collaboration with the African World Heritage Fund and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, are pleased to announce an International Conference on the theme “**Living with World Heritage in Africa**”. The Conference is being organised on the occasion of the worldwide celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention under the theme “**World Heritage and Sustainable Development: the role of local communities**”. The Conference will bring together high level decision makers from African Governments, heritage institutions, local communities and development sectors.

I- BACKGROUND

1.1- Introduction

1. The World Heritage Committee and States Parties have long recognized the relationship and challenges between World Heritage and Sustainable Development worldwide. As a developing continent, Africa is often faced with challenges in achieving Sustainable Development while sustaining its social and cultural fabric. The World Heritage community often refers to concepts such as “conservation”, “Outstanding Universal Value”, “sustainable management”, “biological/ecological balance”, “social cohesion”, “identity”, “sustainable development” etc. whereas Government institutions and development agencies are more comfortable by driving terms such as “job creation”, “economic growth”, “infrastructure development”, “social development”, “poverty alleviation” etc. At face value, there appears to be contradictions between the priorities of the World Heritage Committee and the States Parties. Sustainable Development should meet the present socio-economic needs, without compromising the future of World Heritage sites. Sustainable Development equally considers environment, economics and social aspects.

1.2-World Heritage and Sustainable Development

2. The 34th World Heritage Committee session (Brasilia, 2010) endorsed an Action plan developed by an expert meeting on World Heritage and Sustainable Development held in Paraty (Brazil): 29-31 March 2010. The Paraty Action Plan proposed activities aimed at mainstreaming a Sustainable Development perspective into the World Heritage Convention, among them a consultative expert meeting on World Heritage and Sustainable Development which was held in Ouro Preto (Brazil): 5-8 February 2012.
3. The 35th World Heritage Committee session adopted a number of amendments to the *Operational Guidelines* which made reference to sustainable development, with the aim of ensuring that any use of World Heritage would be sustainable with respect to maintaining their Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), and on the other hand to affirm, as a principle, the idea that management systems of World Heritage should “integrate Sustainable Development principles”.
4. The Paris Declaration on “Heritage as a Driver of Development”, adopted by the 17th General Assembly of International Council of Monuments and Sites-ICOMOS (Paris, 2011), and some of the related resolutions, notably N. 27 gave an impetus to the adoption of the “*Strategic Action Plan for the Implementation of the Convention, 2012-2022*”. The Plan was developed in the context of the reflections on the “Future of the Convention” by the 18th General Assembly (Paris, 2011), and integrates a concern for sustainable development, notably in the “*Vision for 2022*”, which calls for the World Heritage Convention to “contribute to the Sustainable Development of the world’s communities and cultures”.

5. The World Heritage Centre, in consultation with States Parties, has consistently worked to ensure that heritage is taken into account in the processes leading to the formulation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development due to take place in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012 (also known as Rio +20), as well as to the new agenda for development that will be adopted in 2015 by the international community as a recommendation of the Paraty Action Plan.
6. The States Parties, acknowledging the link between World Heritage and Sustainable development, made a recommendation in 2010/11, to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention under the theme: “*World Heritage and Sustainable Development: the Role of Local Communities*”. Subsequently, the 35th Session of the World Heritage Committee adopted this theme (35 COM 12D). The following sub-themes were proposed to States Parties as focus for thematic meetings throughout 2012:
 - a. The role of local communities in the nomination process, in the day-to-day management of properties, and in the conservation of sites;
 - b. The role of communities as actors and beneficiaries from the social and economic points of view;
 - c. Indigenous management practices at World Heritage;
 - d. Mapping of traditional knowledge in conservation techniques and practices;
 - e. Strengthening the local communities’ role in sustainable cultural tourism and ecotourism at and around World Heritage;
 - f. Public-private sector partnerships to foster local development and economic revenues of local communities.
7. Decision 35 COM 12D encouraged States Parties to develop, support and carry out activities to promote the 40th Anniversary and to notify the World Heritage Centre of their intention to host events to celebrate the event, and further encouraged States Parties to mobilize various UNESCO related institutions, programmes and networks to join in celebrating the Anniversary and reaching out to the broader public.
8. The Government of Norway (14-16th of May 2012) hosted an international conference on “**Living with World Heritage**” in Røros, Norway as part of the activities leading to the celebration of the 40th Anniversary. The conference discussed strategies and means of (i) raising local awareness on the unique values of World Heritage, (ii) involving local communities in the nomination process of World Heritage, (iii) securing local benefit from World Heritage, and (iv) documenting and recognizing sustainable traditional management systems at World Heritage. The conference had an interregional focus emphasizing Europe and Africa.

1.3- State of conservation of World Heritage

9. In spite of the above, the state of conservation of World Heritage since 2005 reveals two key threats affecting cultural and natural properties worldwide:

- Development and infrastructure including building and development, transportation and service infrastructures, pollution and physical resource extraction;
- Management and legal issues including institutional factors.

Given the percentage of threats related to development and infrastructure projects, the World Heritage Committee during its 34th meeting held in Brasilia (25 July-3 August 2010) stressed “*the need for structured heritage impact assessment of major projects to be carried out at the earliest opportunity in order to assess the impact of potential projects on Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage*”.

1.4- Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Africa region

10. In the report on the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Africa region adopted by the World Heritage Committee in June 2011, “*physical resource extraction is reported as relevant for 21% of the cultural properties... and carrying and/or mining are reported to affect 11 cultural properties*”. For natural sites, “*mining and quarrying are negatively impacting on 9 natural properties and might potentially affect a further 12, implying that these two factors might negatively impact on two thirds of the natural properties in the Africa region*” (WHC 35 COM 7C). The link between World Heritage and development was then listed as one of the most crucial issues to be addressed.
11. Based on these confirmed and recurrent findings, the World Heritage Committee, in its decision 35 COM 10A, took note of “*the States Parties’ request for concerted efforts to effectively address the conflicting interests of conservation and development needs*” and requested “*the World Heritage Centre to organize, in partnership with the African World Heritage Fund, a special meeting on managing the impacts of development activities and resource extraction in and around World Heritage in the Africa region*”. This special meeting was subsequently organised as an expert meeting in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the Extractive industry. The expert meeting made recommendations to the States Parties, Extractive industries and World Heritage Centre.

1.5 THE PROGRAMME ON WORLD HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

12. In line with the Committee decision [35 COM 10A], the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the African World Heritage Fund developed a seven (7) months programme on “World Heritage and Sustainable Development”. The programme consisted of the following activities, namely:
 - a. **A situational analysis report** (March and April 2012) provides an updated assessment of the relations between World Heritage and extractive industries in the Africa region with recommendations therein tabled during the Expert workshop held in May 2012 (South Africa).

- b. **An Expert Workshop on “Managing the impacts of development activities and resource extraction in and around World Heritage in the Africa region** (23-25 May 2012, Maropeng, South Africa): the expert meeting discussed issues on the ground, existing best practices and developed recommendations on best practices for consideration as part of the African contribution to the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention.
 - c. **An International Conference on “Living with World Heritage in Africa” (South Africa): 26-29 September 2012.**
13. In line with World Heritage Committee Decision (**35 COM 21D**), the Government of the Republic of South Africa offered to host an event on the occasion of celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention on behalf of the African continent under the theme **“Living with World Heritage in Africa”**. The conference will discuss experiences and explore possibilities related to “World Heritage and Sustainable Development” in Africa.
14. In addition and prior to the implementation of the seven months programme, a workshop on **“Heritage Sites and Sustainable Tourism”** (December 2011) was coordinated by African World Heritage Fund in partnership with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (through the Swedish Embassy in South Africa), for selected African countries. The workshop designed pilot income generating projects around heritage sites in South Africa, Botswana and Namibia.

1.6 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

15. The International Conference on **“Living with World Heritage in Africa”** is a contribution to the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention. The conference will bring together high level decision makers and representatives from the government institutions, heritage institutions, local communities and the development sector to discuss the theme of World Heritage and Sustainable Development in Africa.
16. The International conference will consist of Colloquiums for (i) African Ministers Culture, Tourism, Environment and Mining focusing (ii) local communities invited from World Heritage in Africa, (iii) development and private sector and (iv) Tourism Industry. The Colloquiums will consist of plenary and parallel sessions, including presentation of academic papers, side-line videos/films and exhibitions. The conference presentations and discussions will be based on the conference theme and sub-themes.
17. The conference theme aims to ensure an inclusive (i) consideration of the sub-themes of the 40th Anniversary (paragraph 6), and (ii) participation of all relevant stakeholders. Participants will identify issues relating to each sub-theme, and develop recommendations on best practices and strategies. The conference is expected to offer alternative but complimentary linkages between conservation and development as part of the African position in the discussions on World Heritage and Sustainable Development.

18. It is expected that the International conference will contribute to the global discussion on “**World Heritage and Sustainable Development: the role of local communities**” through:
- a. a better articulation of the role of World Heritage properties in the Sustainable Development agenda,
 - b. an evaluation of the critical role World Heritage play in improving community livelihoods in Africa,
 - c. the development of a framework to address conservation and development needs on the African continent and,
 - d. exploring guidance for policy development agenda at national and regional level.

1.7 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: “PROGRAMME”

19. Running through all the sub-themes of the conference will be identifying the means and strategies of creating sustainable management systems for World Heritage properties in Africa in the face of increasing developmental pressure. This will include addressing the changing land-use systems. The following sub themes will guide panel themes for the colloquiums and academic presentations:

- a. **World Heritage, Sustainable Development and poverty alleviation**
- b. **World Heritage and Local Communities**

20. Colloquium for African Ministers of Culture, Tourism, Environment and Mining

The colloquium for African Ministers will provide an opportunity for discussing World Heritage and Sustainable Development at regional level, thereby giving guidance to the African position for consideration by the World on the occasion of celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention.

21. Colloquium on World Heritage, Sustainable Development and poverty alleviation

Two parallel sessions will be organized on:

- a. *Colloquium on World Heritage and Development/private sector*

The colloquium will discuss strategies to ensure that development in Africa meets the present socio-economic needs without compromising the future of World Heritage. This colloquium will discuss (1) how the three pillars of sustainable development (environment, economics and social) are integrated into extractive and developments activities in and around World Heritage, (2) best practices for Sustainable Development around World Heritage properties, (3) implementation and challenges associated with Environmental Impact Assessments, (4) Sustainable Development and politics, and (5), strategic framework for achieving sustainability between World

Heritage and extractive processes. The colloquium will also discuss (6) poverty alleviation programmes and their impacts on World Heritage, and (7) provide guidelines on how communities can identify programmes that may co-exist with the values of the properties. Target sectors include extractive industries, fishing, forestry, oil and gas industries, infrastructural development agencies, agriculture etc. in the context of public-private sector partnership.

b. *Colloquium on World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism*

The colloquium on World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism will explore: (1) tourism as one of the poverty alleviation strategies, (2) tourism policy and heritage resources in Africa; (3) marketing and financing for World Heritage, (4) the role of the private tourism sector at World Heritage sites, (5) sustainable management of World Heritage sites, (6) community (grass roots) beneficiation and involvement in World Heritage tourism projects.

22. Colloquium on World Heritage and Local Communities

The colloquium on World Heritage and Local Communities seeks to understand and define the potential, but also the untapped role of communities in the management and development of World Heritage. Aspects to be discussed include: (1) experiences in living with World Heritage (from a community perspective), (2) the reality of beneficiation and involvement of communities living in and around World Heritage sites, (3) obligations/responsibilities of communities in the protection and conservation of World Heritage sites, (4) entrepreneurial opportunities at World Heritage, (5) strategies to strengthen local communities' role in sustainable tourism in and around World Heritage and (6) educational programmes to empower communities. The highlight of this sub-theme will be testimonies from invited communities living in and around World Heritage properties in Africa.

23. Academic seminar: cross-cutting issues on the conference theme

The seminar on cross cutting issues will consist of parallel presentations of papers relating to the sub themes of the conference: (i) World Heritage, sustainable development and poverty alleviation and (ii) World Heritage and Local Communities. The presentations will be guided by the number of approved papers.

1.8- PARTNERS OF THE PROGRAMME

24. The International Conference is jointly planned by the Department of Arts and Culture (South Africa), the Department Environmental Affairs (South Africa), the National Department of Tourism (South Africa), the World Heritage Centre, the African World Heritage Fund and Peace Parks Foundation.