

Interventions from the 3rd African Ministers Roundtable on World Heritage in Africa

on the occasion of the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee
21 June 2014, Doha, Qatar
1:15 p.m. – 3 p.m.
QNCC - Auditorium 1

Discours de la 3^e Table-ronde des ministres africains sur le patrimoine mondial en Afrique

en marge de la 38^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial
21 juin 2014, Doha, Qatar
13 h15 – 15 h
QNCC - Auditorium 1

WELCOMING REMARKS / ALLOCUTION

Ms. Irina Bokova

UNESCO Director-General / Directrice générale de l'UNESCO

Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am deeply honoured to join you in Doha, for this third UNESCO Roundtable Discussion of African Ministers.

During last year's Roundtable, several ministers came forward to share perspectives on the challenges of balancing conservation and development needs.

This is relevant to Africa, and it is pertinent to countries across the world, at a time when societies are searching for ways to craft more sustainable development and as States are shaping the contours of the post-2015 development agenda.

In this respect, we heard about some very interesting initiatives.

Cameroon has adopted new laws to protect heritage, with a special unit in the armed forces to ensure security in national parks, particularly against poaching of elephants.

Kenya reminded us of the importance of channelling the energy of young women and men – and also of engaging young and the elderly together – for heritage conservation.

Tanzania alerted us to the high costs of some conservation measures and noted the responsibility to pay for this should not only be shouldered by the affected States Parties.

All of these points, and there were many others, remain valid today.

Following our Action Plan of the Periodic Report for the Africa Region, we have made progress towards increasing the number of African sites on the World Heritage List -- improving conservation and risk management, increasing community involvement and benefits to local communities.

I wish to commend the commitment of African State Parties to the World Heritage Convention, and let me also single out the effectiveness of our implementation partners, including the African World Heritage Fund, the School for African Heritage and the Centre for Heritage Development in Africa.

All of this would have not been possible without the financial support of our partners, for which I am deeply grateful.

We must continue on this momentum and this is why this meeting is so important.

Africa's cultural and natural wealth is simply immense.

In addition to 88 World Heritage sites, there are 251 natural and cultural properties in Sub-Saharan countries listed on UNESCO's World Heritage Tentative Lists.

We need to make the very most of this fabulous potential.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Je sais que beaucoup en Afrique se demandent pourquoi ils faudrait protéger le patrimoine alors que les besoins en développement sont si grands.

L'idée circule que la conservation du patrimoine est contraire au développement, et qu'il faut choisir entre les deux.

Cette position me rappelle l'époque de la campagne de sauvetage des temples de Nubie : des intellectuels se lamentaient de la disparition des temples d'Égypte, mais se disaient qu'après tout, à la place des temples, il y aurait des rizières, des récoltes, des champs.

Faut-il noyer le patrimoine pour nourrir la population ?

L'UNESCO a prouvé que non, car on peut avoir les deux : la culture et la nourriture, le développement.

Forts de cette expérience, nous devons montrer que la conservation est un tremplin pour le développement durable, et résister à la tentation de croire que la consommation des richesses conduit automatiquement à la croissance inclusive.

L'exploitation des ressources – qui souvent est en réalité une surexploitation – n'attire pas forcément les touristes, elle ne crée pas forcément des emplois locaux, elle ne forme pas toujours les jeunes pour lutter contre la pauvreté.

L'Afrique en a fait l'expérience.

Aujourd'hui 16 sites africains sont inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril, soit plus d'un tiers de la liste.

Beaucoup de ces biens sont listés en raison des conflits armés.

Le braconnage atteint des niveaux sans précédent, stimulé par le trafic international d'ivoire et de corne de rhinocéros. Il y a quelques jours, 68 éléphants ont été trouvés morts dans le parc du patrimoine mondial de la Garamba, soit 4% du nombre total d'éléphants du parc, tués d'un seul coup.

L'Afrique est la première victime des effets du réchauffement climatique, sans être la première responsable.

D'autres menaces viennent de la pression du développement urbain, d'exploitations minières et pétrolières.

Il est temps de changer les termes de l'équation. D'ici 2050, la population de l'Afrique aura doublé et va demander de l'énergie, de l'emploi, des ressources.

Ces ressources existent, il ne faut pas les dilapider : l'Afrique est le continent rêvé des énergies renouvelables, le soleil, le vent, les fleuves, la géothermie.

Nous pouvons développer une coopération scientifique plus forte autour des énergies propres et les sites du patrimoine mondial sont des laboratoires pour trouver des solutions.

Ce sont des repères culturels et sociaux qui représentent des leviers de cohésion sociale, de fierté et de dignité. Ce sont des lieux de formation, de gestion durable des ressources, par les savoir-faire autochtones.

Les sites du patrimoine mondial peuvent aider à jeter les bases d'un développement du peuple, pour le peuple, par le peuple.

Plus nous aurons de données pour démontrer la contribution de ce patrimoine au développement économique et social, plus nous pourrons forger des politiques durables.

C'est l'esprit du rapport sur l'économie créative publié par l'UNESCO avec le PNUD, il y a quelques mois - c'est aussi l'esprit de notre plaidoyer pour intégrer la culture au cœur du programme des Nations Unies pour le développement durable.

Dans cet espoir, je suis impatiente d'entendre vos opinions.

INTERVENTIONS

S.E. M. Abdoul Aziz Mbaye

Minister of Culture of Senegal / Ministre de la culture du Sénégal

Excellence Sheikha Al Mayassa Bint Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Présidente de la 38e Session du Comité du patrimoine Mondial,

Madame Irina Bokova, Directrice générale de l'UNESCO,

Mesdames, Messieurs les Ministres,

Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs les ambassadeurs,

Monsieur le Directeur du Fonds Africain pour le Patrimoine mondial,

Honorables membres du Comité du patrimoine mondial,

Mesdames Messieurs les experts et partenaires du patrimoine africain,

Mesdames, Messieurs, Chers amis,

Permettez moi, avant tout, de remercier Son Excellence Sheikhna Al Mayassa Bint Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Présidente de la 38^{ème} Session du Comité du patrimoine Mondiales et à travers elle les autorités du Qatar pour la parfaite organisation de cette Session et l'accueil tout aussi exceptionnel qui nous a été réservé.

Permettez-moi aussi de remercier S.E Madame l'Ambassadeur Fatim Gueye, Délégué permanent du Sénégal auprès de l'UNESCO pour son leadership dans la défense des intérêts du continent dans ce Comité où, le moins que l'on puisse dire, est que l'Afrique est sous représentée, un État partie africain sur les 21 États parties composant le Comité du Patrimoine mondial.

Il ressort de ce constat, que la liste du patrimoine mondial qui est déséquilibrée, ce que nous savions déjà, a désormais un problème de gouvernance car le groupe le plus important y est presque absent ce qui est d'une extrême gravité pour une Convention qui revendique, à juste titre, le statut de quasi universalité en terme de ratification avec 191 États.

C'est pour toutes ces raisons Excellence Sheikhna Al Mayassa Bint Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Présidente de la 38^e Session du Comité du patrimoine Mondial, Madame la Directrice générale de l'UNESCO, que cette rencontre est si importante pour l'Afrique et surtout la crédibilité de notre convention.

Il nous faut, en effet, plus que par le passé travailler à la rendre plus représentative, plus crédible, plus équilibrée, en un mot plus universelle.

Parmi les nombreux opérateurs de ces objectifs, il me plait de citer le Fonds Africain du patrimoine mondial qui, depuis sa création à l'initiative des délégués permanents africains à l'UNESCO a contribué, fortement, à endiguer le déséquilibre de la Liste du patrimoine mondial. Il a pu le faire grâce à l'appui de l'UNESCO qui en a fait un Centre de catégorie 2, ainsi que ceux de nombreux donateurs qui lui ont permis de travailler au renforcement des capacités, à la promotion des bonnes pratiques et à la préparation des dossiers de nomination dans de nombreux pays.

Je suis convaincu que Son Excellence Sheikhna Al Mayassa Bint Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Présidente de la 38^e Session du Comité du patrimoine Mondial sera attentive à cette initiative particulièrement bienvenue et ne manquera pas d'apporter au Fonds Africain pour le patrimoine mondial tout son appui.

Je suis également certain que Madame la Directrice générale de l'UNESCO, qui connaît parfaitement le rôle décisif que joue ce Fond, poursuivra son appui et fera son possible pour le renforcement de l'Unité Afrique du patrimoine mondial qui doit demeurer un opérateur stratégique dans notre volonté partagée de mettre au point une liste du patrimoine mondial équilibrée, représentative et crédible. Malgré le dévouement exemplaire du personnel de l'Unité Afrique, celui-ci a besoin d'être renforcé pour faire face aux multiples défis africains.

L'Afrique apporte, certes, son appui au Fonds, mais il est encore insuffisant malgré les efforts remarquables de certains pays. Le Sénégal, pour sa part, prendra les dispositions nécessaires pour apporter sa contribution dans les meilleurs délais possibles.

Excellence Sheikhna Al Mayassa Bint Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Présidente de la 38e Session du Comité du patrimoine Mondial,

Madame Irina Bokova, Directrice générale de l'UNESCO,

Mesdames, Messieurs, Chers amis,

Les défis auxquels est confronté le patrimoine mondial sont multiples et variés. Outre les périls traditionnels, liés généralement à gestion, nous avons des périls émergents liés aux guerres, aux changements climatiques et aux nécessaires aménagements de nos terroirs.

La Convention doit être attentive à ces évolutions afin de maintenir son leadership dans la gouvernance culturelle mondiale.

Je voudrai, à ce propos, insister sur le phénomène de l'érosion qui interpelle la planète entière. Si aucune zone côtière n'est à l'abri de ce phénomène, ses conséquences en Afrique sont particulièrement inquiétantes, notamment le long du littoral Atlantique où aucune parcelle de terre n'échappe à la furie de eaux.

C'est malheureusement le cas à Gorée, ville du patrimoine mondial, qui risque de sombrer sous les eaux si des actions immédiates ne sont pas menées. Le Sénégal vient de terminer une étude d'impacte très approfondie qui nous a permis d'évaluer, avec précision, l'ampleur de la menace et d'identifier les actions nécessaires à la protection de l'île.

Nous avons entrepris, sans tarder, des travaux de consolidation, mais il faudra beaucoup plus pour sécuriser ce patrimoine en partage.

Je viens ici plaider cette cause car cette Convention est une chose merveilleuse, elle est un de ces espaces de convivialité et de solidarité dont notre monde a grandement besoin.

Aidez nous à sauver Gorée avant que les mémoires de la Traite Atlantique ne soient englouties par le « Ventre de l'Atlantique ».

Merci de votre aimable attention.

H.E. Mr. Tshekedi Khama

Minister of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism of Botswana / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la faune et du tourisme du Botswana

TALKING POINTS

- Participated in the 2nd Cycle Periodic Reporting for the Africa Region and developed our Action Plan as per the Africa Action Plan for 2012-2017.
- In 2008 the State Party of Botswana sent participants to the first nomination dossier preparation course held in Lesotho organized by the African World Heritage Fund and the Centre for Heritage Development in Africa.
- Two officers were trained who spearheaded the review of the tentative list. The above officers were part of the team that worked on the nomination dossier of the Okavango Delta. The Okavango Delta nomination is a product of Botswana professionals, guided and supported by the African programme.
- Progress has been made in improving the state of conservation of World Heritage properties, in our case Tsodilo Hills through increased community participation.
- In 2005 an integrated management plan was developed, and in 2009 a core area plan was developed with the support of the African World Heritage Fund.
- The government of Botswana in partnership with civil society organizations has developed a project proposal to implement the community development aspect of the plan and has been supported by the Diamond Trust to the tune of P10m.
- The project started in 2010 and has since ensured that the Community of Tsodilo is involved in the management of the Site.

- The project has ensured that all categories of the Tsodilo Community derive economic benefits from the project. Through the project the community has been provided with clean water, water for livestock. Employment and income generation opportunities have been created through guiding, craft production, entrance fees, camping fees.
- A gate house, campsite, craft centre have been developed and run by the community.
- Plans are underway to develop two lodges of which the community will lease to the private sector.
- The Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture has approved a funding proposal for P1m to train young people on tourism related courses, to prepare them for the upcoming developments in the area.
- The above project will address issues of HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria.
- Also communities living in and around the Okavango Delta are involved in the management of the site and benefit from the site through Community Based Natural Resources Management Programme (CBNRM). There are 20 CBOs in Ngamiland utilizing concessions in and around the Okavango Delta for non-consumptive tourism
- The State Party experiences challenges as a result of Fire outbreaks. Interventions such a construction and maintenance of fire breaks at the site annually in partnership with the Department of Forestry and Range Resources are in place. Capacity building for community and staff of Tsodilo by the DFRR supported by the Australian government.
- Through the support of UNDP/GEF a fire management strategy is being developed for the Tsodilo World Heritage Site under the Rangeland Management project for Ngamiland.
- Memorandum of Agreement on Cross border Fire Management signed with the government of Namibia.
- Balancing conservation and development is top on our priority through existing laws, plans and structures of management. We will continue to create conducive environment for the protection and integrity of our sites and ensure that communities derive benefits from the sites.
- I thank you.

H.E. Mr. Amin Abdulkadir
Minister of Culture and Tourism of Ethiopia / Ministre de la Culture et du tourisme d’Ethiopie

Excellencies African Ministers of Culture,

Excellency Chairperson of the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee,

Excellency UNESCO Director General,

Excellencies Ambassadors and distinguished representatives of International Organizations,

Distinguished Moderator,

Dear Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to be here with you today at this 3rd African Ministers Roundtable on World Heritage in Africa.

Allow me also to express my appreciation to the African World Heritage Fund, UNESCO and the host country—Qatar—for bringing together African heritage experts and decision makers to exchange views on our common African heritages, and Africa’s contributions to the promotion, protection and enrichment of world heritages of outstanding universal values.

Africa, renowned as one of the continents with rich and unique cultural heritage, has been a source of heritage with their invaluable and priceless historical and cultural heritages of great global significance. Accordingly, our contribution to the enrichment and preservation of universal values of heritage is not only enormous, but has been duly recognized the world over, including by UNESCO and other reputed international organizations working towards the preservation of world heritage of the Outstanding Universal Values.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ethiopia, being among the first countries to ratify the World Heritage Convention of 1972, and with two of our sites among the first twelve nominations that were presented for inscription on the World Heritage List, has always attached great importance to the promotion of African and world heritage sites for preservation.

In this regard, I am delighted to note here that all African countries are currently States Parties to the Convention which is a situation when Ethiopia first ratified the Convention. This vividly demonstrates the determination and commitment of African countries to take appropriate measures to protect and preserve our African common heritages, and the heritages of mankind at large.

Today, Ethiopia proudly hosts 9 world heritage sites and 6 more sites on the tentative list which indeed makes Ethiopia to possess the highest number of world heritage sites on the African continent. That is why my government, as a State Party to the Convention, and in collaboration and partnership with UNESCO and other organizations such as, the African World Heritage Fund and EU is exerting all our efforts to take care of, and preserve our heritages sites. The Lalibela World Heritage Site management plan and the two iconic Ethiopian Paleontological World Heritage Sites are a point in case.

To this end, reiterating the commitment of my government towards the implementation of the Convention to preserve the common heritages of humanity, there arises the timely question of harmony with the rapidly growing demand for development which is a bold scenario generally to Africa.

With the spirit to alleviate poverty and prove sustainable economic development to a nearly billion citizens, we observe rapid changes in Africa. There also exists a pronounced voice that represents our collective aspirations on the protection of our common values through the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. Then the issue comes-**where is the balance!**

Our world heritage properties should therefore be managed in a manner that benefits communities living-in and around those properties. As far as Ethiopia is concerned, the project currently underway with 35 million dollars in two of our world heritage sites development program can be of an example.

It clearly demonstrates the reality that heritage preservation and sustainable development are not mutually exclusive.

We should therefore protect our heritage properties and ensure that they also contribute and can be managed in harmony towards the socio-economic development of our societies.

Excellencies and Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to raise a point which has been a concern for African countries for many years now. Africa, unfortunately, is under represented in the World Heritage Committee which

needs to be rectified without further delay. Our continent, as home for 54 nations indeed deserves fair representation which can allow us to play due role in accordance with the Convention.

I take this opportunity to call on those member states and appropriate organizations to give due attention in the upcoming extraordinary session of the General Conference.

I thank you.

H.E. Ms. Bomo Edna Molewa
Minister of Environmental Affairs of South Africa / Ministre de
l'Environnement d'Afrique du Sud

South Africa is proud of South Africa's 8 World Heritage Sites, but inscribing a site on the World Heritage List is not the end of the story. As a signatory to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention we are obliged to regularly provide an assessment of the state of conservation of sites and make sure to resolve recurrent problems which could result in the inscription of a property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The Africa region is currently undergoing substantial developmental change. This poses challenges to conservation activities and effective management of our protected properties.

The discovery of substantive deposits of minerals, petroleum and natural gas resources in commercially viable quantities in various parts of Africa, or the construction of dams or other infrastructural developments such as roads near World Heritage properties, is an increasing challenge to effective heritage protection, conservation and management.

Programme Director, sustainable development remains an important issue for the African continent. In 2012, South Africa together with the African World Heritage Fund took up the recommendation made by the African States to organise a regional meeting on World Heritage and Sustainable Development and used the platform to discuss the challenge of balancing economic and development needs with conservation.

Apart from creating a dialogue among key stakeholders, the conference resulted in an African position paper and key recommendations for the implementation of the Convention in Africa. The recommendations emphasized the need for inclusion of communities in making decisions concerning managing Africa's prestigious sites hence the popular phrase of the conference was "*nothing about us without us*". There was also emphasis on the need to establish a balance between conservation and development on the continent. The two are essential for a sustainable future for the continent. The paradigm underpinning the protection and conservation of sites should be rearticulated to reflect that conservation and sustainable development are not mutually exclusive. The alignment of World Heritage conservation priorities to the development and poverty alleviation needs in Africa is a crucial way forward in formulating frameworks for action.

It is our view that the needs of the continent to develop and to conserve its natural and cultural heritage are a priority which we have to jointly realise. If I may be allowed to borrow from the teachings of our ancestors that if you want to travel very fast, go alone but if you want to go far, go with others. It is therefore incumbent on us as a continent to ensure that our voice and our needs are also recognised not just by UNESCO but also by the advisory bodies who should not only look at our situation as if we are on the same level of development with our European and American counterparts. Our local communities need to enjoy the benefits of us protecting and managing our heritage.

We also note that in the past few sessions, the World Heritage Committee has had to deal with development activities in various parts of our Continent, among them, the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape, in South Africa, Selous Game Reserve in Tanzania (which has just been inscribed on the danger List) and many others. As a continent we must be capable of finding solutions and ensuring that heritage remains relevant to communities from an economic perspective. Above all, we must develop a shared perspective on striking a balance between the need for heritage preservation and protection and the equally important need to promote sustainable development on our continent. In practical terms, we need to address the following issues

- The role of World Heritage in the sustainable development agenda in Africa
- An evaluation of the critical role World Heritage Sites play in improving community livelihoods on our continent.

Fellow Africans, our success thus far in ensuring balance and equity in the UNESCO World Heritage List, has been a collective effort made possible in part through the African World Heritage Fund working together with UNESCO and the AU. I therefore take this opportunity to congratulate African Governments for taking the bold step of establishing the African World Heritage Fund in 2006.

The government of South Africa as host of the fund will continue playing its part. As promised by President Zuma in Addis Ababa we will continue supporting the fund.

H.E. Ms. Nadia Arop Dudi
Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports of the Republic of South Sudan /
Ministre de la Culture, de la jeunesse et des sports de la République du
Sud Soudan

My sincere greeting to you all.

I would like to thank the leadership of the World Heritage Centre for inviting us to participate in this important meeting

Also I want to extend my gratitude on behalf of my delegation to the Chairperson of the 38th session H.E. Al Sheika Al Mayassa for her professional way of leadership.

South Sudan gained its independent in 2011 by splitting from Sudan and it has become No. 194 among the countries in the world. We know that some World Heritage work was already undertaken when we were one country, but as we are now a new country, we have to start a new process to enter into any agreements.

The Natural Heritage sites in South Sudan that were proposed for Tentative Listing by Sudan at that time were as follows:

1. Boma Wildlife Park- Migratory Routes for Antelopes
2. Sudd Area in Jongle State
3. Numuli National Park – in Bahar- Al jabel
4. Southern National Park

The Government of South Sudan still recognizes and preserves these sites.

We look forward to undertaking more research on our heritage sites. As we did not yet ratify the 1972 World Heritage Convention, we will need your support in this endeavour.

Our country is now in the process of completing the ratification of the 1972 World Heritage Convention this month, your support as a continent is important in terms of strengthening cooperation in this field and your advice is important as well as your expertise.

Finally, I want to thank UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the head of the UNESCO mission in South Sudan for the continuing encouragement and support that they are giving to us. I also want to remind our mother AWHF that South Sudan needs your support and the support of the continent.

S.E. M. Cornélio Caley

Secretary of State from the Ministry of Culture of Angola/ Secrétaire d'Etat du Ministère de la Culture d'Angola

MADAME IRINA BOKOVA

MESDAMES ET MONSIEURS LES MINISTRES EN CHARGE DU PATRIMOINE NATUREL ET CULTUREL DE L'AFRIQUE

MESDAMES ET MONSIEURS

Nous avons pris la parole pour affirmer que nous apprécions les efforts que Madame la Directrice Générale de l'UNESCO a toujours faits pour encourager les pays africains.

Nous apprécions également les efforts de leadership du Sénégal en tant que le seule Membre du Comité pour la région Afrique.

L'Angola est en train de travailler sur le Dossier de Mbanza Kongo en vue de son inscription sur la liste du Patrimoine Mondial en 2016.

Comme Vous le savez, Mbanza Kongo a été la capitale du Royaume du Kongo.

En raison du Congrès de Berlin, ce Royaume est dispersé entre plusieurs pays a savoir : l'Angola, la République Démocratique du Congo, la République du Congo et le Gabon.

Excellences,

Mesdames et Messieurs

Pour cela, nous sollicitons votre solidarité et soutien pour notre Project, pendant ce processus.

Ceci étant dit, nous vous remercions infiniment pour votre aimable attention.

CLOSING REMARKS / ALLOCUTION

Mr. Sibusiso Xaba

Chairperson of the African World Heritage Fund / Président du Fonds du patrimoine mondial africain

Your Excellency Honourable Ministers, Director General of UNESCO Ambassadors guest and experts our sincere gratitude to you and your government for coming to this round table discussion on World Heritage in Africa. We salute and commend the leadership role you have played, in promoting and championing the preservation and management of Africa's cultural and natural heritage.

Through the leadership provided by your governments and, with the contribution of funds by many of you, the AWHF has been able to initiate several capacity building programmes on the nomination and conservation of World Heritage sites on the African continent. This has resulted in us executing a number of programmes of which I urge you to read our annual report so as to see the work we have done. Some of the results we were able to witness during this Committee meeting

Heritage has an important and pivotal role to play in the development of a stable and prosperous continent. I am pleased to inform you that both the Chairperson of The African Union Commission Dr Nkosazana Zuma and The Director General of UNESCO Madam Irina Bokova have agreed to jointly support our fundraising efforts. As a result in January this year The Africa Union together with UNESCO hosted a Head of states and government side event in Addis Ababa Ethiopia during the Heads of States Summit with the objective of raising awareness and support for the work of the AWHF. The event attracted more than 34 heads of states and or their representatives. I am happy to inform you that the Heads of States who spoke urged us to continue with the work of promoting Africa's heritage and identity. During that meeting we were able to raise 3.5 million USD pledges made from the following heads of states Algeria Chad, Namibia, Kenya and South Africa. Promises of unspecified amounts come from the other states. Given the time not all the countries were able to announce their support; nonetheless it's never too late.

Your Excellences, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished experts, I call upon the African State Parties and Africa's friends to support our course. We would like you to support our joint initiative and consider contributing to the Endowment Fund in order to ensure that the AWHF is strengthened and empowered to carry-out its mission. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate African countries for standing in unity and supporting this event, and the AWHF

Let this also strengthen our efforts to work together in dealing with the challenges of implementing the World Heritage Convention on our continent.

We thank you for the support and contribution to this noble cause dedicated to the promotion and management of Africa's World Heritage Sites.
