

REPORT ON THE MISSION TO
Robben Island, South Africa

From 14 – 18 March 2011



Lazare Eloundou Assomo – WHC/Africa Unit
Sheridan Burke – ICOMOS
March 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
1. Background to the mission	5
1.1 <i>Inscription history.....</i>	6
1.2 <i>Criteria and World Heritage values</i>	6
1.3 <i>Examination of the State of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee</i>	6
1.4 <i>Justification of the mission</i>	8
2. National Policy for the Preservation and Management of World Heritage Property	9
2.1 <i>National Heritage legislation</i>	10
2.2 <i>Institutional framework.....</i>	10
2.3 <i>Current management structure.....</i>	10
3. Identification and assessment of issues	11
3.1 <i>Executive Summary</i>	12
3.2 <i>Factors affecting the property</i>	12
4. Assessment of the state of conservation of the property	14
4.1 <i>Stabilization of the institutional/managerial aspects of the property, including the creation of a statutory authority under the World Heritage Convention Act with a permanent Chief Executive Officer and the provision of adequate resources.....</i>	15
4.2 <i>Progress on implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of public works and availability of resources for all the planned maintenance work.....</i>	16
4.3 <i>Progress ICMP implementation</i>	17
4.4 <i>Ongoing improvements in interpretation and visitor management.....</i>	20
5. Conclusions and recommendations	22
6. Annexures.....	25

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2011 World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS mission would like to express its sincere appreciation for all the arrangements put in place by the State Party during the preparatory period, and extended during the March 2011 Robben Island World Heritage visit.

The mission team records deep appreciation to the Robben Island Museum Council and all its members, for their availability through the entire mission, and for ensuring that all logistical support and information were provided to the experts. The mission has particularly appreciated the openness and multiple frank discussions led by Dr Dikobe Ben Martins, Vice Chairperson of the Council and Deputy Minister of Public Enterprises.

The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), and the Robben Island Museum Council, were excellent hosts and all their representatives significantly contributed to the success of the mission. Special recognition is therefore made here of their sterling efforts. The mission team is particularly appreciative of the professional contributions and assistance provided by Mr Fundisile Mketeni, Deputy-Director General (DEA), Mr Vusi Ndima, Deputy Director-General (DAC), Ms Skumsa Mancotywa, Chief Director of Transfrontier Conservation and Protected Areas (DEA), Ms Thembi Malao, deputy Director (DAC), Mr Ntsizi November, Deputy Director (DEA), Ms Sibongile Van Damme, Chief Executive Officer of the South African Heritage Resources Agency, Mr Sibongiseni Mkhize, Chief Executive Officer of Robben Island Museum, Mr Richard Whiteing, Acting Site manager of Robben Island World Heritage Site, Ms Laura Robinson and Mr Andrew Hall, ICOMOS South Africa.



Mission team

This report is dedicated to Beverly Joy Crouts-Knipe, a friend and colleague from SAHRA who will remain forever in our hearts...

1. ■ Background to the mission



Security fence at Maximum security prison

From 14-18 March 2011, a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission was undertaken to Robben Island (South Africa). The mission aimed to assess the overall state of conservation of the property and particularly, the effectiveness of the Integrated Conservation Management Plan (ICMP) and structure in conserving the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

1.1 Inscription history

Robben Island was inscribed on the World Heritage List in December 1999, during the 23rd session of the World Heritage Committee (Marrakech, Morocco) as the first property proposed by the Government of South Africa. The island, which was used at various times between the 17th and 20th centuries as a prison, a hospital for socially unacceptable groups and a military base is today characterized by its buildings, particularly those of the late 20th century such as the maximum security prison for political prisoners that witnessed the triumph of democracy and freedom over oppression and racism.

1.2 Criteria and World Heritage values

By passing Decision 23 COM VIII.C.1, the World Heritage Committee inscribed this property on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii) and (vi):

- **Criterion (iii):** The buildings of Robben Island bear eloquent witness to its sombre history.
- **Criterion (vi):** Robben Island and its prison buildings symbolize the triumph of the human spirit, of freedom, and of democracy over oppression.

It should also be recalled that many members of the Committee expressed their pleasure and emotion and congratulated South Africa for having proposed this site which symbolizes the fight against oppression, the victory of democracy as well as the process of national reconciliation.

The State Party has submitted in 2010, the following revised criteria, which should form part of the statement of outstanding universal value to be adopted at the next 35th session of the World Heritage Committee:

- **Criterion (iii):** The buildings of Robben Island bear eloquent witness to its sombre history. The existing quarries, prisons, WWII relics, infirmaries and the remnants of the demolished leprosaria and seventeenth century gardens are evidence of Robben Island's long history of human habitation through difficult periods and great challenges. The more recent buildings are unique in that they represent a time in history that has gained universal symbolism while the residents (the ex-political prisoners and former warders and their families) are still alive. The closeness of this history makes Robben Island and its related structures unique in the international context.
- **Criterion (vi):** Robben Island and its prison buildings symbolize the triumph of the human spirit, of freedom and of democracy over oppression. The site has come to symbolise, not only for South Africa, or even the African continent, but also the entire world, the resilience and the eventual triumph of humanity over enormous hardship and adversity, and therefore is a catalyst for healing.

1.3 Examination of the State of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee

The state of conservation of Robben Island has been examined several times by the Committee since 2007 as follows:

a) 27th session (Paris, France, 2003)

The Committee requested the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN to undertake a mission to Robben Island to ascertain the state of conservation of the property, including the status of the wildlife populations, and to prepare an information document with a proposed rehabilitation programme in order that the World Heritage Committee can examine the state of conservation of the property at its 28th session in 2004.

b) 28th session (Suzhou, China, 2004)

The Committee requested the State Party to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the IUCN/ICOMOS/ICCROM mission, and in particular to:

- review and adopt as appropriate, and implement within an agreed timeframe, recent proposals for rationalization, consolidation and integration of the management structure of the Robben Island Museum,
- study, with a view to consolidating them into a single Conservation Management Plan, the source documents for the Conservation Management Plan Summary showing medium and long-term programmes identified; ensure that Annual Action Plans of Operation are prepared for conservation and maintenance work at the property; and implement the proposals contained in the Phase 1 Robben Island Tourism Development and Management Plan,
- conduct a comprehensive analysis of the opportunities and constraints for tourism products based on the unique natural and cultural landscape character of the property, with a view to diversifying the visitor experience and ensuring that positive impacts are enhanced and negative impacts avoided or mitigated,
- explore linkages with other institutions and programmes such as South African National Parks and the Table Mountain National Park, the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board, the City of Cape Town and Cape Action for People and the Environment to ensure that the wealth of expertise in the region regarding management of the natural and cultural landscape environments is available to the site's management,
- establish a Memorandum of Understanding or similar formal relationship with the Public Works Department to strengthen programs' coordination for conservation and maintenance at Robben Island,
- set-up a statutory body for Robben Island with specific regulatory mechanisms as provided for by the World Heritage Convention Act (1999), for the managing and up keep of the property;

c) 29th session (Durban, South Africa, 2005)

The Committee urged the State Party and the Robben Island Museum, with the assistance of the Advisory Bodies, to set priorities for the implementation of all the recommendations made by the 2004 joint ICOMOS/ICCROM/IUCN mission .In December 2005 a second Advisory body mission visited Robben Island and provided a report.

d) 30th session (Vilnius, Lithuania, 2006)

The Committee regretted that the recommendations of the 2004 ICOMOS/ICCROM/IUCN joint mission had not yet been fully implemented and that the State Party support necessary to ensure their fulfillment was still lacking at that date. The Committee therefore strongly recommended that the State Party work closely with the Advisory Bodies and Robben Island Management Authority (RIM) to develop an action plan to address priority management issues already established for the property;

e) 31st session (Christchurch, New Zealand, 2007)

The Committee noted that the State Party had made substantial efforts in complying effectively with all its requests, particularly in producing a comprehensive and integrated management plan, and encouraged it to initiate without further delay, activities leading to its implementation;

f) 33rd session (Seville, Spain, 2009)

The Committee noted the continued progress by the State Party on the implementation of the Integrated Conservation management plan, specifically in relation to physical conservation and preventive conservation work, ongoing improvements in interpretation and visitor management, and better cooperation with the Department of Public Works. It therefore encouraged the State Party to continue working on stabilizing and reorganizing the institutional/managerial aspects of the property, including the creation of a statutory authority under the World Heritage Convention Act with a permanent Chief Executive Officer, and to implement the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Public Works and to make available resources for all the planned maintenance works.

1.4 Justification of the mission

The 2011 mission was undertaken on the basis of the following terms of references:

- a) Undertake a programme of visits to assess the state of conservation of the property, to evaluate the:
 - stabilisation of the institutional/managerial aspects of the property, including the creation of a statutory authority under the World Heritage Convention Act with a permanent Chief Executive Officer and the provision of adequate resources,
 - implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Public Works and availability of resources for all the planned maintenance works ;
 - progress made by the State Party regarding implementation of the Integrated Conservation Management Plan, specifically in relation to physical conservation and preventive conservation work, and to the overall environment of the property
 - ongoing improvements in interpretation and visitor management;
- b) produce a common mission report on management/institutional aspects of the property as well as ongoing conservation, maintenance, interpretation, and visitor management Implementation of the Integrated Conservation Management Plan;

The mission was conducted by Ms Sheridan Burke (ICOMOS) and Mr Lazare Eloundou (World Heritage Centre). Details of the program are available in Annexure 1

2. National Policy for the Preservation and Management of World Heritage Property



Entrance of Victor Vester prison in Paarl

2.1 National Heritage legislation

Robben Island is legally protected under the World Heritage Convention Act of South Africa, and is a National Heritage site in terms of the National Heritage Resource Act of South Africa (Act No 25 of 1999). The Cultural Institutions Act of South Africa (No 119 of 1998) establishes the criteria by which a Public institution is appointed to oversee the conservation and management of any National Heritage Site. Robben Island Museum (RIM) was thus established in terms of this Act, and is also considered as the Management Authority in terms of the World Heritage Convention Act (Act No1, 1999), under the authority of the Minister of Arts and Culture.

Robben Island management is also undertaken in accordance of several other Acts, such as: the Environmental Conservation Act, the National Environmental Management Act, the Marine Living Resource Act, the Sea Shore Act, and the Western Cape Planning and Development Act.

2.2 Institutional framework

Robben Island Museum (RIM) is the Management Authority for the site and is governed by a council (Robben Island Museum Council), a body nominated by public process and appointed by the Minister of Arts and Culture. The Council has the responsibility of the policy development and is charged with financial accountability. RIM's activities are supported by the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC).

Robben Island is legally owned by the Ministry of Arts and Culture through DAC, which owns 99% of the island and the surrounding sea within one nautical mile off the shore. However, other parastatal institutions are also involved in the management of the property:

South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) (agency responsible under National Heritage Resources Act for its supervision — responsible for issuing permits for various activities concerning the Site);

Department of Public Works is responsible for the funding of maintenance of all buildings and the infrastructure development of the Island — it's staff supervise all construction and maintenance works on the Site; and

Department of Environmental Affairs (responsible for compliance with the policies and laws governing World Heritage Sites in South Africa and for environmental compliance).

2.3 Current management structure

In 2010 a new chairman and fourteen member council were appointed for the Robben Island Museum by the Minister for Arts and Culture. The Council has established eight sub-committees to overlook key operational areas.

In November 2010 a new CEO was subsequently appointed by the Council. In January 2011 a new CFO was appointed. In February 2011 a new company secretary was appointed.

An organization chart of the organization (240 staff) was prepared at the request of the mission (Annexure 2). There is approximately 30% vacancy rate within the approved management structure. The present structure of 8 units (governance and operational) all report direct to the CEO. A Strategic Plan 2010/11-2012/13 guides activities.

3 ■ Identification and assessment of issues



Meeting with ex-political prisoners

3.1 Executive Summary

Over the last five years the Robben Island Museum (RIM) has experienced difficult organisational upheaval and change. There have been four CEOs and three CFOs; three museum Councils, various interim management structures as well as a three year staff recruitment moratorium and serious financial restrictions

A new Council has now been appointed by the Minister and gradually senior management positions are being filled, although staff vacancy rates remain high. There is enthusiasm for a fresh start.

However, the lack of direction and balanced decision making during the period of upheaval has exacerbated threats to the OUV of the site and the Interpretation Plan and Visitor Management Plan remained unimplemented when the mission visited in March 2011. Commendable achievements include presentation of the site during the World Cup; a range of conservation works projects and the preparation of a holistic Maintenance Plan by DPW, to be implemented soon.

This report examines a range of management and conservation issues and at the request of the RIM Council, recommends a series of 12 priority actions together with close monitoring and support by the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre.

3.2 Factors affecting the property

The mission was able to visit a range of sites and projects, but had limited inspection time available. Meetings and presentations from Ex Political prisoners, RIM Council and staff, and departmental officers from DAC, DEC, PWD, and SAHRA, together with the provision of a range of reports for review and visit to the Madiba House at Victor Verster in Drakenstein proved to be an eventful programme. A list of participants is at Annexure 3.

A further range of reports were forwarded following the mission, including an organization chart and current Strategic Plan 2010/11-2012/13.

It was evident to the mission that four major factors continue to affect the property:

1. **Management and resource instability** has resulted in a loss of focus, absence of priority setting, and a high rate of (unbudgeted?) staff vacancies. Management Units appear to operate as silos, working hard to achieve specific projects in the absence of co-ordinated direction. Cross-unit committees such as the Interpretation Committee no longer meet. Where responsibility for such work is not directly an existing unit's core role, accountability for results and commitment appear to be lacking - such as visitor management and interpretation. The absence of a basic organisational organization chart of RIM, and confusion about shared corporate knowledge such as visitor numbers and trends is a concern.
2. **Absence of integrated interpretation planning and pro-active visitor management** has led to a decline in visitor experience. Marketing focus is on destination (70% marketing budget spend), rather than heritage values and tourism products for visitors have not been diversified.
3. **Non-implementation of important elements of the ICMP**, , includes ongoing lack of review of Collections Management Plans, absence of development of Disaster Preparedness Plans and lack of forward planning for the review of the ICMP due in 2012 suggest a need to revitalise and refresh alignment with the conservation goals and OUV of the property.
4. **Ongoing absence of a consistent and agreed appropriate maintenance regime** and forward works planning has led to a range of deterioration and ad hoc projects.

However, major achievements are welcomed and in particular:

1. **A new management team is being appointed:** A new CEO and Council have been appointed in recent months, together with several senior management positions and a conservator. The Council Deputy Chairman assured the mission of its willingness to take advice regarding priorities and sought the support of the Advisory bodies and WHC in the ongoing conservation of the property. The mission was advised that Key Competencies regarding the implementation of the ICMP are to be added to new staff contracts, which will support its better integration in management process.
2. **Specific major projects:** have been completed including the introduction of disabled access at the Maximum Security Prison; restoration and resurvey to 2030 of the prison boat Dias; first stage restoration of WWII gun emplacement and bunker; Administration Complex refurbishment, partial completion of various exhibitions including Jetty 1 and the Robert Sobukwe complex; management of feral animals; development of an Underwater archaeology programme with SAHRA.
3. **RIM's basic core operations** have been maintained: 80 conferences and events in 2010, 10,000 school visitors 2010, 299,000 annual site visitors in 2010/11 showing a rise from 276,000 in 2009/10; preparation for World Cup visitation and property media focus; staff restructure; Mayibuye archives projects and; natural environment conservation management initiatives have been undertaken.



Sikhululekile ferry

4. ■ Assessment of the state of conservation of the property



View of the lime quarry

4.1. Stabilization of the institutional/managerial aspects of the property, including the creation of a statutory authority under the World Heritage Convention Act with a permanent Chief Executive Officer and the provision of adequate resources

RIM has undergone a significant period of instability over recent years. The State Party states in its 2011 state of conservation report that *“In 2008 a process of restructuring was initiated by the department of Arts and culture in response to the corporate leadership crisis that resulted in three Executive Officers ending their employment with the museum. An interim CEO was appointed to lead the restructuring progress together with the Robben Island Council....In May 2009 the challenges faced by the corporate leadership ended in a governance crisis with the Council and the CEO resigning after consultation with the Minister for Arts and Culture.*

The Minister put in place measures to stabilise the museum that included an appointment of an interim CEO and begin the process of appointment of a new Council which sat for the first time in March 2010.The role of the CEO was performed by the chairman and Deputy Chairman of the council’. Until in November 2010 a permanent CEO was appointed followed by a new CFO, appointment of a senior heritage manager and a new Ferry manager. A new Company Secretary joined RIM in early 2011. The new RIM council first met in March 2010 and has appointed 8 subcommittees to oversight key operational areas.

The impact of this period of destabilisation and associated financial insecurity has been significant. It is evident in the lack of co-ordinated conservation and management objectives and absence of integrated management direction across the organisation. Units appear to be working without co-ordination, separately delivering specific projects rather than developing important integrated programs such as visitor management services and diversified tourism products. This is an understandable reaction to the lack of direction and senior level decision making, and it has led to some unscheduled projects being advanced and funded, yet essential building conservation and maintenance and basic site signage remains lacking.

The organisational de-stabilisation has halted the development of new tourism products such as exhibitions and walking tours and observably diminished visitor experience and understanding of the OUV of the property.

There is a significant challenge before the senior management and the Council to reconfirm RIMs objectives and to urgently reassess and direct priorities that will conserve its OUV. The mission met briefly with the CEO (who generously delayed urgent travel on family business to meet) and several members of the Board including the Deputy Chairman. All strove to emphasise that the new administration would be focussed on transparency and excellence in management. The Deputy-Chair noted that it was likely that several council members would also change in the near future (due to recent election appointments), but assured the mission that it was keen to receive a list of priority actions to implement.

The appointment of the RIM Council as the statutory Management Authority for the World Heritage Site pursuant to the South Africa World Heritage Convention Act was made in 2010.

The mission was told that in 2006 a specific funding allocation of R9.6 m was made to RIM as a Turnaround Strategy to ensure that the ICMP was finalised by 2007. However, the purchase of a new ferry due in 2005 was delayed, actually arriving in 2008, resulting in a budget blow out from hiring boats to cover visitor transport, which resulted in no remaining funds for ICMP implementation, and a moratorium on staff recruitment.

In 2005 an MOU was entered between DPW, SHARA and RIM which established a Heritage Advisory Committee to meet monthly and include representatives from HWC and the City of Cape

Town,¹ to monitor the implementation of the ICMP and advise on the management of the Islands heritage resources. The 2006 State Party report to the World Heritage Committee noted that this would provide the necessary expert advice from a range of stakeholders and expedite applications for permits, rather than the secondment of a SAHRA staff member to RIM. Its operation is not mentioned in the 2009 State Party report, or the 2011 report.

The ICMP is an ambitious document, and its review in 2012 will benefit from engagement of specialist advice from SAHRA and from organisations like ICOMOS to ensure this process is timely and adequately matches resourcing realities of RIM.

The appointment of a site manager/chief heritage officer, with overall responsibilities for the property conservation, interpretation and visitor management to lead the integration process and ICMP review is recommended.

4. 2. Progress on implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of public works and availability of resources for all the planned maintenance work

As the custodian of all state property in South Africa, and thus of Robben Island's immovable assets, the Department of Public Works has functional responsibilities for the maintenance of the World Heritage Site (built and natural environment). The Robben Island Museum is the user of these assets, the developer and operator of the island as a heritage resource and conservation institution. The co-ordination of maintenance, and conservation standards at Robben Island between DPW, RIM, DAC, and the South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA) has long been a concern of the World Heritage missions.

A welcome initiative has therefore been the recent development by DPW of a Maintenance Plan for Robben Island, dated November 2010, which clearly sets out the relevant and relative roles and responsibilities of the various authorities and proposes a maintenance strategy for the islands immovable heritage, responding directly to six of the strategic objectives of the ICMP with a holistic, and hopefully cost-effective delivery mechanism.

The Maintenance Plan 2010 sets out an approach to documentation of existing fabric (digital imaging and conventional plans) and includes a condition assessment of 479 structures and a maintenance delivery strategy based on preventative, corrective and emergency maintenance needs. The critical function of management and monitoring the maintenance contract is proposed to be by the appointment of a principal agent, employed by DPW. It is proposed to issue the EOI for the maintenance contract immediately.

DPW also proposes to commence preparation of individual or group CMPs to inform maintenance work and to document existing fabric before maintenance commences. The Maintenance Plan 2010 recommends a new Service Level Agreement between the Minister for Public Works and the Minister for Arts and Culture, which will also need to be consulted with RIM regarding its requirements. This will replace the current Service Agreement between RIM and PWD

The 2010 Maintenance Plan includes the ICMP Principles as an annexure and refers to international benchmark standards for conservation works.

RIM maintenance is presently delivered by a range of DPW personnel, contractors and RIM staff with variable efficiency and effectiveness. DPW proposes instead a single comprehensive outsourced 5 year contract to deliver all facilities management work from infrastructure to

¹ 20 June 2005. HAC membership to be reviewed p 3 years

rubbish removal to all building and garden maintenance works (which includes restoration). Unfortunately there was minimal time available for the mission to discuss these proposals with DPW, which regrettably occurred on the final day of the mission, but a copy of the Maintenance Plan 2010 and a PPT presentation was provided, which states that the proposed preventive, corrective and emergency maintenance work will follow RIM Principles and policies for conservation, and that the contractor will establish workshops and staff accommodation on the island, which should secure more timely maintenance response rates.

The PPT identifies 8 immediate risks requiring action including an ecological management plan to control plant growth at the quarries, an issue that the mission noted with concern.

DPW has arrived at this proposal after examining the backlog of maintenance and the years of challenges of supervising staff in a remote location, in coming to the decision to out-source all RIM maintenance. DPW consultant Built Care has just completed a comprehensive Facility Assessment report on which future maintenance costs and priorities for all DAC properties (a portfolio of 157 monuments, sites and buildings) across South Africa will be assessed for budgeting. Many of the DAC properties are functional buildings, for which such a system represents a good comparative costing base. Its applicability to a site such as Robben Island, where the buildings **are** the artefacts, and “as new” condition is **not** the objective was questioned by the mission. . Concern was expressed by the mission that the proposed Maintenance Contract EOI and tender documents needed to include the ICMP so that prospective tenderers could be fully apprised of the conservation requirements of the property

The mission was advised that the condition audit was prepared without involvement from the RIM conservation architect and in the absence of individual CMPs, though there are dossiers of research material assembled for many buildings, the integration of the research into the condition assessment recommendations is not explained in the documentation received. The mission was not able to clarify the intentions of RIM and DPW regarding future roles and responsibilities regarding maintenance and Capital expenditure funding responsibilities and whether the proposals will create more streamlined processes for RIM to achieve direct maintenance relationships and timely results, or may inadvertently create an over-restored state.

It is suggested that the proposed RIM site manager/chief heritage officer and a representative of SAHRA as the relevant national conservation department, the SAHRA may need to become an active participant, and possibly a partner, (short term at least) in the negotiation of the SLA and implementation of the Maintenance Plan outsourcing package.

4.3 Progress ICMP implementation

The ICMP was completed in 2007. In 2008 its implementation was initiated via a Strategic Plan process.

The ICMP sets out 11 strategic and broad ranging objectives and includes a short discussion and actions to be undertaken to achieve outcomes:

- a) Retain the significance of the heritage resource
- b) Gather and curate the heritage resource
- c) Provide excellence in heritage management
- d) Manage the visitor experience
- e) Communicate and interpret the heritage values
- f) Institute appropriate governance

- g) Transform institutional capacity
- h) Provide necessary staffing and other infrastructure
- i) Ensure financial sustainability
- j) Improve public awareness
- k) Promote the World Heritage Site

It also included a programme of action of 13 specific projects related to the objectives and it incorporates a full Interpretation Plan (Addendum 4) and Visitor management Plan (Addendum 5).

In respect of the 13 projects, the mission could observe that six are either completed or in progress (Maximum Security Prison restoration; Sobukwe complex interpretation, Limestone Quarry access (but not interpretation), Administration building refurbishment, some aspects of administration and management and harbour works, some education and exhibitions projects Mayibuye archives (but not policy reviews and Disaster Preparedness Planning).



A view of the maximum Security prison

Are slated for action in 2011/12 (Old power station storage area, Ou Tronk repair, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation programme. Others are unresolved (bluestone Quarry, some Admin and management. Projects that are not yet achieved include the implementation of the Routes projects, Visitor Management Strategy and Interpretation Strategy and a range of institutional capacity and financial/governance stability activities.

A number of additional projects not in the ICMP have been activated. These include the restoration of WWII guns and bunkers, and the adaptation of the Female Asylum.

The mission is not qualified to assess the progress of the natural environment projects.

As noted above the 2008/9 period was a volatile one for RIM with interim management, resignations and public concern about RIM management and it appears that strategic plans were drafted and issued, without relevant approvals² naturally progress regarding implementation of the ICMP was disrupted. A Strategic Plan 1 April 2010/11- 31 March 2012/13 has since been developed and the mission was advised that it is in operation now. As is to be expected given the circumstances, this Strategic Plan places great emphasis on corporate governance and administration priorities including risk management.



View of restored WWII guns and bunkers



Female Asylum building

The Strategic Plan 2010/11-2012/13 priority titled: Custodianship of the World Heritage Site includes 5 research activities, 6 works projects, 2 ecological projects, 3 archives programmes and 2 exhibitions projects one of which is develop and implement an interpretation strategy. The tourism unit proposes to design variety of tours by April 2011, though this was not presented to the mission

Education and exhibition units are still hard at work, with exemplary schools projects and exhibitions in train.

However, during the interim period an ad hoc selection of projects has taken the place of orderly implementation of agreed ICMP priorities Due to the staffing instability, and in the absence of an overall use plan for island buildings and sites, various rehabilitation works have taken place in an ad hoc manner, often without a permanent future function planned e.g. Female Asylum has recently been refurbished as accommodation (60 rooms). However, there are no dining or ablution facilities to enable their use as yet. Future funding may provide this, but there is no plan as yet developed as to how such accommodation will be used or marketed, so it remains empty. Similarly, the restoration of a WWII gun emplacement (12 million Rands for stage 1, 22 million Rands in total) is a meticulously researched and impressive project, which needs to be included in visitor experience, with guides familiarised and trained, but it was not a project mentioned in the ICMP, nor within the priority focus of “a landscape of imprisonment”. This does not imply criticism of this project, which is quite exemplary, and significant, simply that it is a diversion from agreed priorities.

² Strategic Plan 1 April 2009-31 March 2012 Introduction

In the absence of individual CMPs for buildings, rehabilitation work is undertaken to bring buildings to an “as new” standard as an asset rather than conserving evidence of its heritage values and history (Medium Security Prison, Female Asylum) This inappropriate practice will cumulatively erode evidence and values of the site, especially in the absence of “as found” documentation.

Although the ICMP provides clear processes and philosophical approaches to conservation works, they do not appear to be either fundamentally understood or put into practice by contractors/staff responsible for conservation works (eg Cement render Garrison Church). These problems may be due to lack of experience, poor supervision, changing management, inconsistent approach to, or lack of basic understanding of, guiding philosophy. There currently appears to be no regular maintenance or preventative maintenance programme in place.

The initial ICMP period was 2007-2012, thus 2011 is the year in which it should be reviewed, its performance evaluated and an updated plan issued. The original plan was ambitious and its implementation has been marred by changing organisational structure and instability. Now is the time for consultation and development of an achievable plan 2012-2017.

The Strategic Plan 2009-2012 has an understandable emphasis on governance and risk management (given the time at which it was prepared) however it does not refer to or implement the recommendations of the World Heritage monitoring mission 2005. Thus, it does not include actions to implement the Visitor Management Plan or Interpretation Plan, preparation of Disaster Preparedness Plans, or to review the ICMP which ends in 2012.

4.4 Ongoing improvements in interpretation and visitor management

The ICMP includes a specific Addendum 4 which includes an excellent Interpretation Plan which was collaboratively developed by RIM staff in 2007. However, there has been no discernable implementation of its major principles. Rather, individual projects are being developed and delivered on an ad hoc basis, for example a temporary exhibition has replaced the introductory RIM exhibitions at the NMG, with the detainee experience corridor exhibition now used as a storage area, thus removing a fundamental introductory element of the visitor experience. A small exhibition for the FIFA World Cup in 2010 now occupies the visitor waiting area. The basic introduction to the history and significance of RI is therefore no longer available at NMG and visitors understanding of the place, its many stories and values are not developed.

A positive achievement is that the Jetty 1 area has been converted from RIM offices to a small exhibition space, which is partially outfitted with an excellent exhibition which, with the recently restored and in-service prison boat the Dias moored directly outside and remnant security fence on the V&A Waterfront, provides an excellent potential introduction to RI. However, there is no signage or information about Jetty 1 at NMG, nor any visitor entry signage to indicate its presence in what appears to be an anonymous wharf shed on the other side of the V&A harbour from the NMG. The basic connection between the jetty, NMG and RI is not discernable to visitors.

On the Island, there is no visitor experience/ general introduction to the site. Visitors disembark the ferry and board directly onto buses for 2-3 hours and are returned to the ferry to meet its timetable. The 2005 proposed concept of using the (original prison) Visitor Reception Centre has not been undertaken, although the building is clean and well maintained and able to undertake such a role immediately. Unfortunately its connection to the ferry wharf at Murrays Harbour, and ability to interpret the prison visitor arrival experience has been hindered by the recent construction of a formal bus car park, which needs to be reconsidered

An excellent small exhibition has been installed at the Robert Sobukwe complex, seizing an opportunity for understanding his experience on the island, through minimal intervention in the

house and a small display in an adjacent building. Unfortunately this is not part of all visitor experiences, just those whose guide allows time for a visit and some school groups.



Robert Sobukwe interpretation centre

A very innovative approach to the interpretation for children is partially installed in another adjacent building, but it is accessed only by groups of children on school programmes who specifically select this option.

An excellent proposal for a walking trail had been developed by the 2011 field school, which would be a readily implementable and sound addition to diversify the tourism experience of the Island, focusing on the political landscape and the island's natural and maritime heritage.

The Visitor Management Plan, Addendum 5 of the ICMP also remains unimplemented, apparently in the absence of agreed responsibility for implementing this critical work to enable visitors to understand the site and prison processes. This is a major structural problem for RIM management, as the essential task of managing visitors is assigned to tourism, but effectively appears to be poorly integrated between department's uncoordinated separate programs and projects achieving some objectives whilst potentially damaging others. Indeed opportunities for positive development of interpretation and visitor management action have been missed through (apparently) unscheduled infrastructure projects that have removed important elements of the visitor arrival experience (Loss detainee corridor exhibition at NMG, adverse impact of car park at visitor Centre at Murray's Harbour).

The mission was advised that the Interpretation Committee no longer meets, and without a champion evident in the senior management structure, responsibility for interpretation simply "falls between" units.

The mission met with a group of Ex Political Prisoners some of whom are employed by RIM regarding their role as "living heritage" in site interpretation and management. Their stories are significant components of the Island's oral heritage. They seek representation in various departments of RIM and a range of management changes, a process beyond the scope of this mission.

5. Conclusions and recommendations



Maximum security prison

Given that the Senior management and Council of RIM are so comparatively newly appointed, these recommendations must be addressed to the States Party for consideration and implementation.

At the meeting of the mission with the RIM Council, Deputy Chairman Ben Martins requested the mission assist the new Council with firm recommendations from its examination of progress. It is to be commended. These recommendations could form the basis for future RIM reports on progress to Advisory Bodies and World Heritage Centre and the **terms of reference for the next review visit**.

5.1 Recommendations

1. To provide the essential senior conservation authority and direction which RIM so urgently requires, the mission recommends the **appointment of a Site Manager/Chief Heritage Officer (SM/CHO) at COO level within 6 months**. This position would function as a Deputy CEO, responsible for directing all site management divisions and site project work. A substantial background in architectural conservation and complex heritage site management is needed, with direct reporting to CEO. Heritage Manager/Tourism manager/Environment Manager would report to SM/CHO.

As part of the role, the SM/CHO would directly liaise with DPW and the principle agent appointed to deliver the Maintenance Plan, develop individual CMPs to define works and drive conservation policies; ensure that use is confirmed and organisationally supported before works commence.

2. An adequately resourced and **timely review of the ICMP by external professionals/advisers** is needed, to be completed by February 2012. Ensure that annual action plans fully implement the ICMP.
3. Identification of a senior executive who is accountable and **responsible for visitor management** is also needed within 6 months. A key priority is to improve visitor arrival/intro exhibition at NMG, on board ferry and at Murrays harbour. Responsibility for the review and the implementation of the Visitor Management Plan (within the ICMP) should be identified in Strategic Plan
4. Identification of **responsibility for interpretation at a senior level** is needed immediately and an appropriate identification of long term responsibility and action in the Strategic Plan.
5. A fundamental requirement for World Heritage Site is a **Disaster Preparedness Plan**. This has been mentioned in previous missions, but no progress appears to have been made in developing such plans either for the collections or for the island itself, both of which are extremely vulnerable. For example, the Mayibuye Archives (paper based) is held in a (sprinkler-fitted) building. The current drought and lack of landscape maintenance has increased the risk of fire on the island, yet no disaster preparedness plan to guide priority action has been developed, or listed in the Strategic Plan. The Disaster Preparedness Plans should be developed and trialled within 12 months.
6. A **use plan for the built heritage, based on detailed architectural survey, documentation, and condition assessment**, is needed. The conservation architect should be requested to conduct this work and supported with the needed equipment.
7. It is pleasing to note that a conservator has now been appointed; however, there has been no further development of the draft **collections management policy**. Completion of

moveable objects catalogue of items on island, in Defence areas, separation of RI provenanced collections from props purchased for exhibitions is needed within 6 months.

8. Consultation and definition of the role of **EPPs as "living artefacts of the site"** in site management and interpretation is needed, including a clearer structural relationship between reference group/CEO and management. Discussion should commence immediately.\
9. **Develop a clear role for SAHRA** in the management of the OUV of RIM, perhaps as ex-officio member of the RIM Council, or as an adviser/party to the SLA with DPW regarding conservation and maintenance or by reactivating the existing MOU for the Heritage Advisory Committee. An MOU for the excellent maritime archaeology programme has been developed but SAHRA also has a role to assist in corporate continuity of conservation more generally for RIM. Linkages with other local heritage bodies such as the Cape Town Heritage Trust and ICOMOS South Africa may be similarly helpful to RIM, for example as professional development.
10. **Develop a relationship with Cape Nature** to sensitivity map and develop guidelines for management of cultural landscape of RI.
11. **Urgent intervention work** is needed at the limestone quarry and to the Garrison Church harling. An assessment of the value of locating RIM heritage and conservation staff in island offices should be undertaken.
12. **Include ICMP as a reference** in all relevant tender documents and contracts pertaining to maintenance and building/ infrastructure works on the property to ensure tenderers and workers are fully aware of the conservation values of the site.



A view of Robben Island village and its main church

6. ■ Annexures



Robben Island landscape

ANNEXURE 1

UNESCO Mission March 2011 Itinerary and programme

- 13/03/11** Arrival at Cape Town International Airport, Cape Town, South Africa
Visit to exhibition at Jetty 1
Departure from Nelson Mandela Gateway to Robben Island
Check in at accommodation on Robben Island
- 14/03/11** 08:30 – 09:00 Presentation of the purpose of the Monitoring Mission
09:00 – 16:00 Ground inspection and visits
18:00 – 21:00 Reception function hosted by the Minister of Arts and Culture
- 15/03/11** 09:00 – 13:00 Review of progress of implementation of the ICMP
14:00 – 17:00 Decisions of the WHC' tee and areas to be assessed
Progress achieved since submission of the state of conservation
Identification of gaps and way forward
- 16/03/11** 08:30 – 10:00 Meeting with Ex-Prisoners
11:10 – 15:30 Meeting with Robben Island management
15:40 – 17:00 Meeting with Robben Island Board
- 17/03/11** 08:00 – 12:00 Meeting with Regulatory Authorities
13:00 – 15:00 Tour around Mayibuye Archives
15:00 – 17:00 Meeting with Mayibuye Archives management and representatives
from UWC
- 18/03/11** Meeting with DG of Environmental Affairs

Composition of mission team

The mission has been undertaken by Ms Sheridan Burke (ICOMOS) and Mr Lazare Eloundou (UNESCO World Heritage Centre).

ANNEXURE 2 - PHOTOGRAPHS



Main building of maximum security prison



Inside maximum security prison



One of the cells which used to have many Prisoners



Renovated window of the maximum security prison



View of the maximum security prisons' kitchen



Equipment used by prisoners at main quarries



Equipment used by prisoners at main quarries



Public open space at Robben Island village



View of Robben Island village residential area



View of Robben Island Governor's residency



Main street at Robben Island village

Annexure 4 – Ex-political prisoners initiative 2011

EX-POLITICAL PRISONERS CONFIGURATION OF PARTICIPATION IN VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS

PRESENTATION FOR UNESCO DELEGATION 16 MARCH 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our long experience of having worked for Robben Island Museum has been characterised by negative attitudes of managers towards ex-political prisoners. Only the trade union would be mentioned as the main stakeholder of the site. Twice have that happened towards the end of 2010 done by the current Senior Marketing Manager in RIM public staff general meetings. We have noted with great seriousness the fact that most of the managers, did not understand the space the importance and the workings of heritage institution. We discovered that they were even ignorant of the founding principles of Robben Island Museum. When each wanted to introduce changes that we felt would affect the site irreversibly and confronted by our opposition and concerns attitudes would harden even worse. It is, therefore, in this regard that the Robben Island Museum Employed Ex-Political Prisoners Forum (hereafter referred to as RIMEEPPF) felt that in their form of organisation they have to have sub – committees along the lines of all the Departments of Robben Island Museum. This initiative was borne out of the fact that we could not be spectators whilst our heritage sinks because of the disinterested managers.

Our responsibility is also to contribute into the education of those managers about the significance of the space and instil a deep sense of its understanding. We believe in the rehabilitative rather than punitive justice. Another purpose of setting up those sub-committees is to assist the current CEO, CFO and the Council to put RIM back in track. We have developed strong confidence in the Executive.

POSITIONING FORMER POLITICAL PRISONERS IN DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS

We envisage ourselves playing watchdog role also in managerial roles in all the departments either as assistant or senior managers. In preparation for the medium to long – term sustainability of the institution we believe that RIM should empower former political prisoners so that they can play even more meaningful role than they do at the moment. Skills and expertise should be injected in various fields like CONSERVATION METHODOLOGIES. There are Conservation Institutions in S.A. offering a wide range of heritage Conservation Courses like Paper, Metal and Crockery Conservation. We hope to pass these with passion to the next generation. It has always been our view that the management approach to conservation has been shortsighted dominated by restorative rather than preventive methodology, a subject of regular conflict between the management and former political prisoners hence they always speak of “minimal intervention.”

Our most profound objective is to help the current positive Council and CEO take the institution forward by getting an opportunity to interact and influence the management have deeper and broader understanding of the space and what needs to be done to enhance its heritage and maintenance.