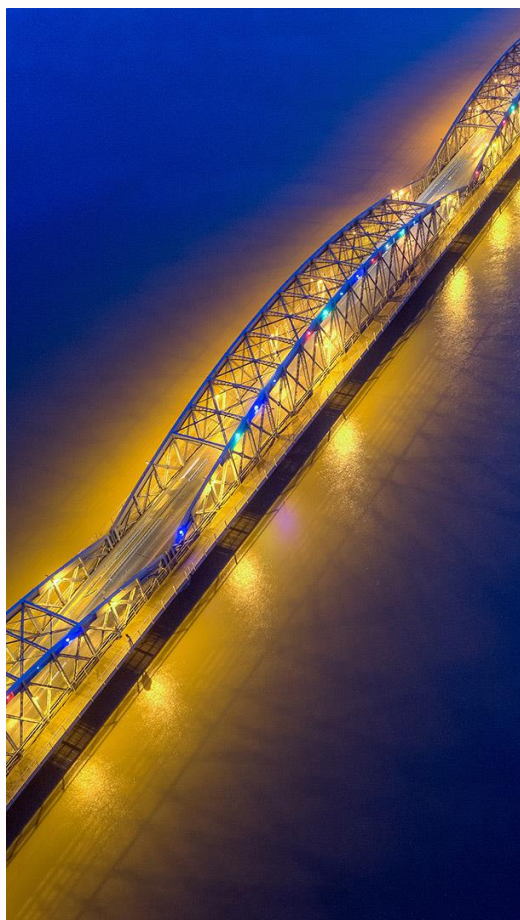


The Next 50

CONCEPT NOTE

**Round Table with Young People and World Heritage Site Managers
from West Africa on the 50th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention**

**9th – 10th November 2022
*Saint-Louis, Senegal***



Theme: the next 50 years - World Heritage as a source of resilience, humanity and innovation.

Sub-theme: youth engaged with World Heritage site managers in West Africa for innovative actions.

Organisers:

UNESCO Regional Office for West Africa-Sahel in close collaboration with the UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for West Africa in Abuja and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

In Collaboration with:

- Ministry of Culture and Historical Heritage of Senegal
- Ministry of the Environment, Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition of Senegal
- Université Gaston Berger of Saint-Louis
- International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural

Property (ICCROM) through the Youth.Heritage.Africa program

- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- African World Heritage Fund (AWHF)
- School of African Heritage (EPA)

I. Background and Justification

World Heritage is a designation given to places or properties, identified and recognized throughout the world (1154 properties inscribed today) as having outstanding universal value¹. As such, they are inscribed on the World Heritage List to be protected, promoted and preserved for future generations.

In order to ensure the appropriate identification, protection, conservation and presentation of the world's heritage, UNESCO member states adopted, in 1972, the

¹ Outstanding universal value means cultural and/or natural significance that is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity. As such, the permanent protection of this heritage is of the utmost importance to the entire international community. The Committee defines the criteria for the inscription of properties on the World Heritage List. [See Operational Guidelines, paragraph 49.](#)

Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, commonly known as [the World Heritage Convention](#).

Thus, in 1978, three African properties, namely the Island of Gorée (Senegal), the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela (Ethiopia) and the Simien National Park (Ethiopia), were part of the first series of twelve inscriptions on UNESCO's World Heritage List. Africa thus accounted for a quarter of the first inscriptions on the World Heritage List. This is a recognition of Africa's strong and plural cultural identity, its common heritage, values and ethics, based on its centuries-old history as the cradle of human civilization.

[The year 2022 marks the 50th anniversary of this unique UNESCO standard-setting instrument](#), which today unites 167 States around a common objective: the proper management of cultural and natural heritage to ensure its transmission to future generations.

However, despite the efforts made in recent years by the international community to ensure the protection and conservation of these properties of outstanding universal value, many obstacles weaken their preservation, including in Africa.

The celebration of the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention is taking place in an international context marked by the Covid-19 crisis where the world is assessing the extent of the damage caused to the economic, social and cultural life of its citizens. We can also add to this the acceleration of environmental degradation and the aggravation of social division.

It is in this sense that the international theme of this celebration, **"The Next 50 Years: World Heritage as a Source of Resilience, Humanity and Innovation"**, raises questions about our most fundamental values as individuals, as a society and as an international community.

As a laboratory of ideas, UNESCO has a responsibility to seize this opportunity to bring education, science, information and culture to the forefront of the discussion. This is why an important step will be devoted to a year-long interdisciplinary reflection on the future of World Heritage, going well beyond the celebration of achievements.

Thus, all activities undertaken as part of the "Next 50 Years" project will address one of the following five priorities:

- **Climate Change and Heritage Preservation**
- **Digital Transformation**
- **Post-Covid-19 Recovery**
- **Sustainable Tourism**
- **Balanced representation of listed sites**

However, the African continent remains the least represented region on the World Heritage List with 98 sites inscribed in 2022 representing 8.49% of the total number of inscribed properties. Likewise, Africa is faced with many challenges in terms of

preservation of the sites already inscribed. These include: the effects of climate change; rapid urbanization which encourages large-scale development works; rampant insecurity characterized by the resurgence of armed attacks, particularly in West Africa, and the displacement of populations, as well as the destruction and looting of certain sites; trafficking of all kinds; the increased need to strengthen the capacities of heritage professionals in the face of these contemporary challenges; the lack of training curricula adapted to the real needs in terms of African world heritage management, etc.

Moreover, it is necessary to reinforce awareness and communication about world heritage sites among the populations living nearby. Misinformation and poor knowledge of heritage are major obstacles to ensuring the protection of these unique places.

Communities, women and young people need to reconnect with the history and importance of this shared heritage in order to both understand its potential and ensure its better protection, safeguarding and promotion for future generations.

To help meet these challenges, UNESCO, through its field offices in Africa, has initiated several actions in recent years alongside Member States, including the [establishment of training programs in heritage professions in African universities](#), [capacity building of protected area agents in the field of ecological monitoring and data processing with a focus on the use of new technologies](#), actions for the protection of sites facing climate change, the promotion of West African world heritage sites through innovative initiatives, such as [the development of mobile applications](#), [exhibitions](#) or photographic contests, support to national partners for the development or updating of site management plans, to name but a few.

This commitment of UNESCO to the protection and conservation of world heritage in the Sahel was done with the participation of site managers and young people in West Africa.

However, it seems essential to strengthen the engagement of young people with site managers for conservation and innovation around World Heritage. On the occasion of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention in West Africa, it is therefore necessary to engage in a common reflection on the following key questions: *"How to engage young people with site managers in the face of contemporary challenges, including climate change and the post-Covid-19 era, for a better protection and management of world heritage sites? How to encourage creativity and innovation of young people through digital transformation around World Heritage? What strategies should be put in place to facilitate entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism at these sites?"*.

These reflections will allow West African countries to join this international initiative launched on the occasion of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of World Heritage through debates between young people and site managers that will specifically address the following areas:

- **Climate change and heritage preservation;**
- **Digital transformation;**
- **Sustainable tourism.**

Thus, the sub-theme of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention in West Africa is: **"a youth committed alongside World Heritage site managers in West Africa for innovative actions"**.

II. Objectives

The celebration of the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention marks a unique opportunity to **reflect on the actions undertaken and to initiate new reflections on the sustainable management of World Heritage sites in West Africa**. In collaboration with its local, national and regional partners, UNESCO will bring together key actors and heritage professionals, including site managers and young heritage professionals. A constructive dialogue will be conducted in order to define together innovative actions and priorities that promote the implementation of the **Operational Strategy for Priority Africa** (2022-2029) whose objective is to embody a new vision of African World Heritage within the framework of the Flagship Programme 3 **"Fostering Cultural Heritage and Capacity Development"**.

The specific objectives of this celebration are in line with the fight against climate change, youth innovation through digital transformation and sustainable tourism through initiatives such as entrepreneurship. Through this celebration in West Africa, the following objectives will be set:

- **Raise awareness** among young people in West Africa on the World Heritage Convention and its concerns;
- **Encourage** the involvement of young people with site managers to promote creativity and innovation around African world heritage;
- **Raise awareness** among managers on the importance of involving young people in the sustainable management of sites;
- **Encourage** youth entrepreneurship around World Heritage sites in the Sahel.

III. Dates of the Event: 9th – 10th November 2022

IV. Participation Format

The celebration will be organized over two days from November 9th to 10th, 2022 with, first, a sub-regional round table in a hybrid format that will bring together nearly 150 participants from West Africa and from other regions in Africa. Following the

roundtable, two parallel activities will also be organized in Saint-Louis (Senegal) and will focus on: a discussion around the management of two World Heritage sites, [the Djoudj National Bird Park, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1981](#), and the [Island of Saint-Louis, inscribed in 2000](#). A site visit to the Djoudj National Bird Park will also take place.

Connection link to follow online: https://unesco-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_VFJfQsjvQku9aSmB-wXc6w

V. Provisional Programme

❖ **9th November 2022**

Round table: Youth committed to innovative actions alongside World Heritage site managers in West Africa.

This roundtable will bring together site managers from West Africa and nearly **100 young participants from the region**. Its format will be hybrid, with an opening ceremony and a preliminary note to be delivered on the island of Saint-Louis in Senegal. This dialogue will provide an opportunity to exchange on the topics discussed above and to draft an action plan for young people in the Sahel for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the next 50 years, in line with the theme of this 50th anniversary: *"The Next 50"*.

Programme:

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME		
Time	Activity	Speaker
Wednesday 09/11/2022, Centre de Recherche et de Documentation du Sénégal (CRDS), Island of Saint-Louis		
8:30 - 9:00	Arrival & Installation of participants	Moussa Wele Alyssa Barry, UNESCO Dakar
9:00-9:30	Opening ceremony (5 minutes per speaker) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Fatima FALL NIANG, Director, CRDS • Mr Aliou LY, Secretary-general of the Senegalese National Commission for UNESCO • Mr Aliou FAYE, Regional Director for West and Central Africa, UICN • Dr Dimitri SANGA, Director of the UNESCO Regional Office for West Africa - Sahel 	Moderated by: Prof. Abdoul Sow / UGB

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Oumar BADIANE, Director of Cultural Heritage of Senegal 	
Panel 1: Introducing the World Heritage Convention and its context in the Africa region Moderated by: Ms Adele Nibona / Mr Victor Ajaegbo Ifeanyi (UNESCO)		
9:30-9:45	Preliminary note on African World Heritage in the context of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention	Dr Muhammad Juma MUHAMMAD, Chief of the Africa Unit, World Heritage Centre, UNESCO
9:45-10:00	Presentation of the World Heritage Convention and its implementation in Africa	Dr Youssouph DIEDHIOU, World Heritage Programme Manager, UICN Regional Office for West Africa
10:00-10:15	The place of youth in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and the Youth.Heritage.Africa program	Mr Espéra DONOUVOSSI, Youth Heritage Africa Programme Manager, ICCROM
10:15-10:30	Looking back, going forward: #TheNext50	Mr Albino JOPELA, Programme Manager, Africa World Heritage Fund (AWHF)
10:30-11:00	Discussions	
11:00-11:15	Coffee break	
Panel 2: Youth committed to innovative actions alongside World Heritage site managers in West Africa Moderated by: Dr Franck Ogou, Director, School of African Heritage (EPA)		
11:15-11:45	Intervention of the site managers on the theme: Youth committed alongside the managers of World Heritage sites in West Africa for innovative actions	Network of West African site managers
11:45-12:15	Intervention of some young people of the region on the existing initiatives in the field of commitment and entrepreneurship around world heritage	Young professionals and heritage students
12:15-12:45	Discussions and wrap-up	
12:45-14:00	Lunch break	

Side-event 1: Debate on the world heritage of Saint Louis

A debate will concern exclusively the heritage students of the Université Gaston Berger of Saint-Louis as well as youth associations of Saint-Louis. This debate will allow these young people and heritage actors to learn about the conservation issues of the two world heritage sites in their area, [the Djoudj National Bird Park, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1981](#), and the [island of Saint-Louis, inscribed in 2000](#). It will be an open discussion with managers and resource persons involved in the management of these World Heritage sites in Senegal.

This debate, which will focus on world heritage conservation issues in Saint-Louis, will be an opportunity to revisit the challenges related to the management of the Djoudj National Bird Park, as well as the protection of the historical heritage of the island of Saint-Louis. Recommendations for the attention of the competent Senegalese institutions will be developed by the participants.

Intergenerational Roundtable: World Heritage Conservation Issues in Saint-Louis		
Moderated by: Prof Abdoul SOW, UGB / Ms Alyssa K. BARRY, UNESCO		
15:00-15:30	<p>Opening remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Ousmane THIARE, Rector of the Université Gaston Berger • Dr Dimitri Sanga, Director of the UNESCO Regional Office for West Africa - Sahel • Mr Amadou Mansour FAYE, Mayor of Saint-Louis (TBC) • Mr Lazare ELOUNDOU ASSOMO, Director of World Heritage (TBC) • H.E. Jules Souleymane DIOP, Ambassador of Senegal for UNESCO and President of the Africa Group (TBC) • H.E. Aliou SOW, Minister of Culture and Historical Heritage of Senegal (TBC) 	
15:30-16:45	<p>Conservation issues of the island of Saint-Louis and the Djoudj National Bird Park (PNOD) and experience-sharing regarding other sites in the sub-region</p>	

	1. Climate change and environmental issues: what problems and solutions?	<p>Mr Moustapha NDIAYE, Site Manager of the Island of Saint-Louis</p> <p>Commander Cheikh DIAGNE, Manager of the PNOD</p> <p>1 representative of the civil society</p> <p>1 heritage student from the UGB</p> <p>1 young participant from the sub-region</p>
	2. Tourism and job creation: what potential for youth?	<p>1 representative of the Network of West African Site Managers</p> <p>1 representative of the Saint-Louis local tourism organisation</p> <p>1 representative of the civil society</p> <p>1 heritage student from the UGB</p> <p>1 young participant from the sub-region</p>
16:45- 17:00	Review of the discussions and UNESCO's point of view	Dr Muhammad Juma MUHAMMAD, Chief of the Africa Unit, World Heritage Centre, UNESCO
17:00- 17:15	Synthesis and Presentation of the Draft Action Plan of the young participants from the Sahel	Ms Alyssa K. BARRY, UNESCO

17:15-17:30	<p>Closing Ceremony</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H.E. Mr. Aliou SOW, Minister of Culture and Historical Heritage (TBC) 	
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❖ **10th November 2022: Side-event 2:** visit to the Djoudj National Bird Park

This visit to the Djoudj National Bird Park (Senegal) will be led by the Senegalese institutions in charge of World Heritage management (National Parks Directorate, Cultural Heritage Directorate), UNESCO Dakar, the IUCN Regional Office for West and Central Africa and the Université Gaston Berger of Saint-Louis. It will be an opportunity for participants to exchange with the site manager on the conservation issues of this protected area and to review the recommendations of the last monitoring mission conducted by the World Heritage Centre and IUCN in February 2022.



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Time	Programme
9h-15h	Visit of the participating officials to the Djoudj National Bird Park and exchanges around the recommendations of the last monitoring mission of the World Heritage Centre - IUCN in February 2022.

VI. Expected results

The following results are expected at the end of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention in West Africa:

- R1:** Young people in West Africa are sensitized on the World Heritage Convention and take ownership of the issues of protection and promotion of inscribed properties.
Means of verification: development of recommendations by young people for the next 50 years.
- R2:** Capacities of West African site managers on the effective implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the sub-region are strengthened.
Means of verification: Development of recommendations from site managers for the next 50 years.
- R3:** Young people in the region are engaged with site managers in the Sahel.
Means of verification: Reflections are underway on the establishment of a

network of young people committed to the protection/promotion of world heritage in West Africa.

- **R4:** Creativity and innovation around World Heritage sites are strengthened.
Means of verification: Reflections on the implementation of new initiatives have been initiated following discussions on world heritage sites, particularly in the tourism and sustainable entrepreneurship sectors.

VII. Participants

Total: 150 participants

Details: 19 experts, 31 site managers, 100 young participants of West Africa.

VIII. Partners

- Ministry of Culture and Historical Heritage of Senegal
- Ministry of the Environment, Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition of Senegal
- Université Gaston Berger of Saint-Louis
- IUCN/Youth.Heritage.Africa Regional Office for West and Central Africa
- International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)
- African World Heritage Fund (AWHF)
- School of African Heritage (EPA)

IX. Communication strategy



This celebration of the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention will be accompanied by an important digital awareness campaign aired during the month of October. This initiative aims to encourage the younger generations and communities to commit themselves and act daily in favor of the protection and conservation of world heritage and thus encourage the inscription of new sites.

More precisely, the 1972 Convention will be revisited through the portraits and messages of West and Central African site managers, but also drawing the perspectives for the next 50 years. This will be done through short video interviews with FR/EN subtitles.

The digital platforms of UNESCO and national partners, as well as the media, will be mobilized to ensure wide dissemination.

The use of influencers in the field of heritage is also to be foreseen for a better impact, especially among youth.



Air and Ténéré Natural Reserves, Niger © Hamissou Halilou Malam Garba

