

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

Our Ref. GB/TA/1723/IR

Charenton-le-Pont, 20 December 2023

Ms Nthabiseng Makuwa
Minister, Deputy Permanent Delegate, Chargé
d'Affaires a.i.
Permanent Delegation of the Republic of
South Africa to UNESCO
Ambassade d'Afrique du Sud
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World Heritage List 2024

The Emergence of Modern Humans: The Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa (South Africa) – Interim report and additional information request

Dear Ambassador,

As prescribed by the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* and its Annex 6, the Advisory Bodies are requested to submit a short interim report for each nomination by 31 January 2024. We are therefore pleased to provide you with the relevant information outlining issues related to the evaluation procedure.

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission to “The Emergence of Modern Humans: The Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa” was carried out by Mr. Charles Musiba (Tanzania) in August 2023. The mission expert highly appreciated the availabilities and support provided by the experts in your country for the organisation and implementation of the mission.

On 4 October 2023, an additional information letter was sent by ICOMOS to request further information regarding the nomination strategy, documentation, development, factors affecting the nominated property, boundaries, legislative protection, interpretation and presentation, as well as visitors and tourism. Please convey our thanks to all the officials and experts for the additional information you provided on 10 November 2023 and for their continued cooperation in this process.

At the end of November 2023, the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel evaluated the cultural and mixed properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List in 2024. The additional information provided by the State Party, together with mission and desk review reports were carefully examined by the Panel members. This process will conclude in March 2024.

We thank you and your Delegation for your availability and your participation in the meeting held on 24 November 2023 with some representatives of the ICOMOS Panel. The exchanges during this meeting were of great help for the third part of the ICOMOS Panel meeting. During this last part of the meeting, the Panel has identified areas where it considers that further information is needed.

Therefore, we would be pleased if the State Party could consider the following points:

Management

While the nomination dossier details the management system, it seems that some of the entities referred to do not yet exist, and some of the management documents have reached the end of their use-life. ICOMOS would be pleased if the State Party could explain what steps are still necessary and what is the timeframe for the establishment or completion of the management system with the relevant management plans.

Site ownership

ICOMOS understands that the nominated component parts and buffer zones are in private hands (nomination dossier, p. 157). According to the additional information submitted by the State Party in November 2023, a heritage agreement was signed with the Diepkloof Rock Shelter owners in 2020, an agreement is being found with the Pinnacle Point Site Complex owners, and the Sibhudu Cave site is in the process of being acquired by the Sibhudu Trust (p. 23). ICOMOS would appreciate if the State Party could indicate what are the advances of these plans and what is the timeframe for their finalisation. Could the State Party please provide more information on the terms of the heritage agreements?

Monitoring

According to the nomination dossier, different entities are in charge of the monitoring process. Very few of the indicators that are mentioned help to measure the changes in the state of conservation of the attributes of the nominated component parts. The risk management section does not suggest how to measure the potential impact of the risks listed. ICOMOS would appreciate if the State Party could explain how the monitoring process will be organised and what indicators will help to identify and measure changes in the state of conservation of the archaeological sites (including, but not limited to, water seepage, erosion and rock falls, humidity, plant growth, burrowing rodents or insects).

Buffer zones and wider setting

As ICOMOS discussed the size of the buffer zones of Pinnacle Point Site Complex and Sibhudu Cave, it would be appreciated if the State Party could explore the potential extension of the buffer zone of Pinnacle Point Site Complex to include part of the ocean to the south of the component part, and the potential extension of the buffer zone of Sibhudu Cave in order to shield it from the planned Driefontein mixed development zone. ICOMOS would like to better understand what is the internal zoning for all three buffer zones of the nominated component parts – with detailed maps and a description of the permitted and restricted activities. Finally, ICOMOS would appreciate to receive detailed cartographic information on the Driefontein development zone, including its exact extension, location, and planned infrastructure (including access roads, electricity cables, etc.).

Funding

As stated in the nomination dossier, funding has been made available for some of the activities at the three component parts, and some other activities will depend on tourism-generated income (pp. 187-192). ICOMOS would be interested in receiving additional information on the activities that have regular funding and how the funding for the nominated property is secured in the middle and long term.

Research and Conservation Plan

ICOMOS noted that various researchers and institutions were involved in the investigations at the three component parts. ICOMOS would be pleased to receive information on the middle and long-term research and conservation programme for the nominated property.

We look forward to your responses to these points, which will be of great help in our evaluation procedure.

We would be grateful if you could provide **ICOMOS** and the **World Heritage Centre** with the above requested information by **28 February 2024 at the latest**, the deadline set out in paragraph 148 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* concerning additional information on nominations to be received. Please note that any information submitted after this statutory deadline will not be considered by ICOMOS in its evaluation for the World Heritage Committee. It should be noted, however, that while ICOMOS will carefully consider any additional information submitted within the statutory deadline, it will not be possible to properly evaluate a completely revised nomination or a large amount of new information submitted at the last minute. ICOMOS would therefore be grateful if the State Party could keep its response concise and respond only to the above requests.

We thank you for your support of the World Heritage Convention and the evaluation procedure.

Yours faithfully,



Gwenaëlle Bourdin
Director
ICOMOS Evaluation Unit

Copy to Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)
 Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, Western Cape Government
 UNESCO World Heritage Centre