

**AFRICAN WORLD HERITAGE DAY CELEBRATIONS**

**MAY 2024**

**UNESCO Headquarters**

**Safeguarding Africa’s Heritage through Education**

**Draft Concept Note**

**Context**

African World Heritage Day is celebrated every 5 May in recognition of the continent’s rich heritage as a source of identity, pride, respect for diversity and economic opportunities. Through diverse activities around the world, the emblematic Day raises awareness of culture’s contribution to inclusive, sustainable development – notably in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063 (The Africa We Want). Since its proclamation in 2015, the empowerment of youth, junior experts and women has been at the core of the annual celebration, as they are seen as the future leaders of heritage safeguarding on the local, regional and global level.

Building on this spirit, the theme of the 2024 celebrations is **“Safeguarding Africa’s Heritage through Education”.** Intergenerational transmission and youth-led safeguarding of natural and cultural heritage will be on the forefront, with an emphasis on effective educational practices and mechanisms. UNESCO’s decades-long expertise in upskilling young African professionals, as well as encouraging creativity and innovation in safeguarding heritage, provides the backbone. It also draws on the African Union theme of the Year 2024 “Education”[[1]](#footnote-1) as well as contributes to the Continental Education Strategy for Africa[[2]](#footnote-2) which recognizes the pivotal role of education and training in achieving the human and economic goals at all levels.

Furthermore, this year’s African World Heritage Day responds to the ongoing UNESCO Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029 “Fostering Cultural Heritage and Capacity Development”[[3]](#footnote-3). It is also one of the first occasions in which the new UNESCO Framework for Culture and Art Education, adopted in Abu Dhabi in 2024, will be implemented.

UNESCO, in collaboration with the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) and their partners, will organize three major activities to celebrate the 2024 African World Heritage Day:

* **African World Heritage Day High-level Webinar** led by the African World Heritage Fund
* **Film screening** at UNESCO Headquarters during the Africa Week

In addition to the commemorative events above, various activities will be organized in sub-regions across Africa, including in Côte d’Ivoire and Senegal for Western Africa region, and South Africa for Southern Africa region.

**ACTIVITY 1: African World Heritage Day Webinar – “Safeguarding Africa’s Heritage through Education” led by the African World Heritage Fund (Monday, 6 May)**

This High-Level Webinar (online debate) under the theme **“Safeguarding Africa’s Heritage through Education”** will bring together wide range of African World Heritage stakeholders including governments, educational, academic and research institutions, local communities and traditional leaders, civil society organizations, teachers and students, site managers and heritage practitioners, youth organizations, private sector and others to reflect on ways education contributes towards the safeguarding and promotion of Africa’s heritage. The webinar will gather over 200 participants from Africa and around the world and is designed to inform the development of strategies that can help stakeholders identify opportunities for innovative approaches to safeguard and promote Africa’s heritage through education as way to ensure suitability of World Heritage in Africa.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

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| **Organiser** | **African World Heritage Fund (AWHF)** |
| **Time (SAST)** | 6 May 2024 **(14:00 – 15:30)** |
| **14:00 – 14:05** | **Welcome by Dr Ishanlosen Odiaua** President of ICOMOS Advisory Committee & Programme Director  |
| **14:05 – 14:10** | **Opening Remarks by Mr Vusithemba Ndima**Chairperson of the Africa World Heritage Fund (AWHF) |
| **14:10 – 14:15** | **Message from Mr. Muhammad Muhammad Juma** on behalf of Mr. Lazare Eloundou Assomo, Director of UESCO World Heritage Centre Chief of the Africa Unit of UNESCO World Heritage Centre  |
| **14:15 – 14:20** | **Message from H.E. Jose Maria Pereira Neves** President of the Republic of Cabo Verde & African Union Champion for the Preservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage (pre-recorded video)  |
| **14:20 – 14:25** | **Message from H.E. Amb. Minata Samate Cessouma**Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development of the African Union  |
| 14:30 – 15:00 | **Roundtable Discussion: *Safeguarding Africa’s Heritage through Education*****Prof Munya Manyangaga** Executive Dean of Great Zimbabwe University, School of Heritage and Education: & UNESCO Chair for African Heritage (Zimbabwe)**Dr Avril Joffe** UNESCO Chair, Cultural Entrepreneurship and Policy, Wits School of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa)**Dr Khalid El Harrouni**UNESCO Chair on Education and Research in Sustainable Bioclimatic Urban Planning and Architecture at the National School of Architecture (Morocco)**Dr Susan Keitumetse**UNESCO Chair in African Heritage & Sustainable Development, University of Botswana (Botswana)**Mentor & Mentee**Joint presentation by a pair of mentor and mentee from the Mentorship Programme for African World Heritage professionals |
| 15:00 – 15:25 | **Engagement Session** (*Debate, Questions and Answers*) led by Programme Director  |
| **15:25 – 15:30** | **Closing remarks:** H.E. Mr François NkulikiyimfuraAmbassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Delegate of Rwanda to UNESCO and Chairperson of the Africa Group |

**ACTIVITY 2: Film projection and reception (Thursday, 23 May)**

During the UNESCO Africa Week, an annual flagship event of the Africa Group at UNESCO that brings together the Member States of the African continent, two 15-minute films will be projected presenting African World Heritage property ‘Nubian Monuments from Abu Simbel to Philae’ (Egypt) and ‘Serengeti National Park’ (Tanzania), followed by a 30-minute Question and Answer session over specific topics regarding the above properties.

The film projection will be presented with the support of UNESCO Archive at the UNESCO Cinema.[[4]](#footnote-4)

By the end of the activity, participants will be invited to a reception prepared by the State Party of XXX at the ground floor (TBD).

1. To re-galvanize its member states towards the achievement of CESA, the African Union has highlighted Education as the Theme of the Year 2024 with a focus on development and implementation of effective, long-lasting, system-wide transformational strategies for education in Africa, and recovery from COVID-19, building resilience and transformation, riding on the global momentum. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) was adopted to provide the framework that links education to the human resource needs of Agenda 2063 and the SDGs, as well as national development goals. It was developed with the fundamental knowledge that Education and Training plays a pivotal role to achieving the human and economic goals set by national, regional, and continental frameworks and strategies. The frameworks and strategies ensure that the appropriate skilled population with the needed knowledge, armed with the right social and cultural values for engendering peaceful co-existence and creation of wealth, are produced. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. At its 45th session, in Decision **45 COM 5C** (Riyadh, 2023), the World Heritage Committee endorsed the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa to implement the Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029, and in particular, its Flagship Programme 3 on “Fostering Cultural Heritage and Capacity Development”, adopted its 41st session of the General Conference in 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Links to the above films:

Nubian Monuments from Abu Simbel to Philae (Egypt):

<https://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/document-111>

Serengeti National Park (Tanzania):

<https://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/document-109> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)