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AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

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Item 11 of the Provisional Agenda: Periodic Reports

11C   Progress report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Periodic
Report for Africa 2002-2005 and AFRICA 2009

African position paper

SUMMARY

This document presents the Africa Position Paper which is a result of the decision of the Africa
Group representatives on the World Heritage Committee and observers to address problems in
the implementation of the 1972 *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and
Natural Heritage* in Africa. It will be presented subsequently to the Council of Ministers of
Culture of the African Union (September 2005); the General Assembly of States Parties to the
World Heritage Convention (October 2005); the African Union Summit (January 2006).

AFRICA POSITION PAPER

presented to the
29th Session of the World Heritage Committee, July 2005,
Durban, South Africa

I.   BACKGROUND

1. This Africa Position Paper presented to the 29th Session of the UNESCO World Heritage
    Committee in Durban, South Africa from 10 - 17 July 2005 and subsequently to the
    Council of Ministers of Culture of the African Union (September 2005); the General
    Assembly of States Parties to the *World Heritage Convention* (October 2005); the African
    Union Summit (January 2006) is a result of the decision of the Africa Group
    representatives on the World Heritage Committee and observers to address problems in
    the implementation of the 1972 *Convention concerning the Protection of the World
    Cultural and Natural Heritage* (*World Heritage Convention*) in Africa. The Decision of
    the 28th Session of the World Heritage Committee in Suzhou, China, that South Africa
    would chair and host the 29th Session of the Committee in 2005 gave an opportunity to
    review progress in the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* in Africa. The
    Africa Position Paper captures the views, reports, observations, decisions and resolutions
    from various fora, including, *inter alia*, the *Periodic Report Africa: Periodic Reporting
    Exercise on the World Heritage Convention* (2002).

2. The Africa Periodic Report adopted by the 26th Session of the World Heritage Committee
    in 2002 has identified some shortcomings in the implementation of the 1972 *Convention*,
    particularly, with respect to the nominations, conservation and protection of World
    Heritage sites in Africa. The Report notes that Africa is the most underrepresented
    continent accounting for only 7% of properties on the World Heritage List. There are
    many African States Parties to the *Convention* which do not yet have sites on World
    Heritage List. More than 30 years after its adoption by UNESCO there are still a few
    countries that have not ratified the *Convention*. By 2002 almost a quarter of the World
    Heritage sites in Africa were on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Of the thirty five
    sites currently on that List, fourteen are in Africa, thus constituting 40% of properties on
    the List of World Heritage in Danger. Among the issues that explain this state of affairs
    are inadequate resources, weak institutional frameworks, inadequate training and capacity
    building, low level of information and awareness raising, poor networking, low levels of
    local participation, and inadequate regional and international cooperation.

3. In 1994 the World Heritage Committee adopted a Global Strategy for a balanced and
    representative World Heritage List. Its aim is to ensure that the List reflects the world's
    cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value. With regard to Africa, as a
    follow up to the Global Strategy decision, several Experts' meetings were conducted
    between 1995 and 2000. These meetings were aimed at enhancing the understanding of
    the perception of African cultural heritage. Among the outcomes of these meetings were
    recommendations for the identification, study, protection and promotion of the

archaeological, architectural, technical and spiritual components of African cultural heritage. In addition, the Experts' meetings called for a concept of cultural heritage that transcends that of monumentalism.

4. As part of the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002, a Workshop, entitled *World Heritage in Africa and Sustainable Development* was held to address the issues raised above. The *Johannesburg Declaration on World Heritage in Africa and Sustainable Development*, which emanated from the Workshop recognized, *inter alia,* that:

    the management of heritage is an important tool for the promotion of sustainable development and poverty alleviation; and that World Heritage status can make a distinct and valuable contribution to sustainable development in African countries.

5. Participants at the Workshop acknowledged the heritage management problems facing the continent, including the severe constraints that African countries continue to face. They urged African Governments to reaffirm their political commitment to the promotion of heritage management; reinforce efforts to tackle the issues threatening heritage sites and heritage management in Africa, including wars, famine, disease, and lack of education; introduce legal and policy frameworks which link nature and culture; intensify efforts to raise awareness among decision makers in-and-out of Africa of the crucial role of heritage in promoting sustainable development and in poverty alleviation; devote resources to heritage management; highlight the crucial role of local communities in the management and ownership of heritage and to continuously empower communities to remain at the centre of heritage management.

6. The Africa Position Paper was conceptualized within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Union (AU) strategic programme for 2004-2007. It thus aligns itself with, *inter alia,* the following objectives of NEPAD: to eradicate poverty; place African countries, both individually and collectively on a path of sustainable growth and development; halt the marginalisation of Africa in the globalisation process and enhance its full and beneficial integration into the global economy; and to accelerate the empowerment of women. The Africa Position Paper also aligns itself with the AU's 2004-2007 sectoral plan for culture which adopts a continent wide agenda as a springboard for Africa's cultural renaissance.

7. In order to address all the above issues, the Africa Position Paper proposes a 10 year Action Plan (*Appendix I*), comprising 8 strategic objectives and several expected outputs. These objectives are:

    ➢ To ensure that natural and cultural heritage contribute to sustainable development and poverty eradication.
    ➢ To improve institutional, policy and legal frameworks for effective and efficient heritage conservation in general and implementation of *World Heritage Convention* on the continent in particular.
    ➢ To establish in accordance with the Africa Periodic Report (2002) an African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) and other financing mechanisms drawing from experiences of other organizations in order to facilitate effective and efficient heritage conservation, in general and implementation of *World Heritage Convention* on the continent, in particular.

- To increase and strengthen human resource capacity for the protection, conservation and management of heritage through education and training and awareness raising.
- To establish a mechanism for information and knowledge exchange about tangible and intangible African heritage.
- To conduct an audit and update national inventories and tentative lists of cultural and natural heritage.
- To increase inscription of new sites by ensuring that African nominations are in conformity with the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* and to reduce and eventually remove all African properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger.
- To strengthen heritage protection, conservation and management, particularly in conflict, post- conflict and natural disaster situation.

8. In order to address the foregoing challenges through the 10 year Action Plan in accordance with Article 17 of the *World Heritage Convention* which states:

The States Parties to this Convention shall consider or encourage the establishment of national public and private foundations or associations whose purpose is to invite donations for the protection of the cultural and natural heritage as defined in Articles 1 and 2 of this Convention;

and in line with the Africa Periodic Report, which recommends the setting up of an African Heritage Fund, the Africa Position Paper urges the establishment of such a Fund, to raise new and additional resources from Governments, bilateral and multilateral donors, non-governmental organisations and the corporate sector active on the continent in order to address some of the challenges faced by African countries in identifying, protecting and managing World Heritage properties.

II. PREAMBLE

The Africa Group:

(1) *Appreciating* previous efforts to have African cultural and natural heritage put on an equal footing with the rest of the World, notably through the Global Strategy for a Balanced and Representative World Heritage List;

(2) *Noting* that, notwithstanding the efforts mentioned above, Africa continues to be disadvantaged in terms of representation on the World Heritage Committee, World Heritage List and yet is overrepresented on the List of World Heritage-in-Danger;

(3) *Recognizing* the *Africa Periodic Report 2002* calling for measures to address the above anomalies;

(4) *Realizing* that cultural and natural heritage has the potential to improve the quality of lives, this being consistent with, among others, Article (5a) of the *World Heritage Convention*, NEPAD, WSSD Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);

(5) *Noting* that due to the low priority given to cultural and natural heritage, inadequate resources are availed by Member States, UNESCO and others;

(6) *Recognizing* that NEPAD calls upon African States to be masters of their own destiny by working in partnership with those better endowed with means and resources;

(7) *Regretting* that the outcomes of the UNESCO and World Heritage Centre Pre-WSSD Summit on World Heritage in Africa and Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg from 19 to 23 August 2002, in particular the Declaration on the World Heritage in Africa and Sustainable Development, were not factored into the WSSD Plan of Implementation;

(8) *Realizing* that there is a marked gap between policy makers and other stakeholders, for example local communities, and policy implementers, in their understanding and appreciation of cultural and natural heritage;

(9) *Accepting* the importance of bridging the communication gap;

(10) *Appreciating* the contributions made by the World Heritage Fund (WHF), Funds-in-Trust from benefactors and other bilateral and multi-lateral sources;

(11) *Underscoring* the need for capacity building for African cultural and natural heritage as per the Cairns Decision (2000), the *Budapest Declaration* (2002) and the *Africa Periodic Report 2002;*

(12) *Recognizing* the need to have all Stakeholders involved through participatory management, but equally noting that local communities continue to be marginalized;

(13) *Emphasizing* that adequate and up to date policies and legislation are *a sine qua non* for cultural and natural heritage preservation and promotion;

(14) *Noting* that in 2005, South Africa is hosting the 29th Session of World Heritage Committee, that the African Union Member States are revising the Africa Charter for Culture, and that in January 2006 the AU will hold a summit whose focus is on culture and education;

(15) *Supporting* the recommendation of the *Africa Periodic Report 2002* to set up an African Heritage Fund;

(16) *Noting* the inadequacies of the policy, legislative, institutional and resource frameworks, in particular, lack of integrated approaches and fragmentation of the cultural and natural heritage sector;

(17) *Noting* the absence of strategic assessments with respect to human resources and inadequate involvement of women, youth and other disadvantaged groups in the heritage sector as well as patterns of employment that do not reflect the demographics of Member States;

(18) *Realizing* the need to introduce in the cultural and natural heritage sectors strategic planning and management skills;

(19) *Noting* the negative impact that fundamentalism, particularly religious, can have on cultural heritage;

III. ACTIONS

The Africa Group calls upon:

African Member States to:

(1)   *Ratify* the *World Heritage Convention*;

(2)   *Develop* and update inventories of natural and cultural heritage within their territories;

(3)   *Develop* and update Tentative Lists;

(4)   *Produce* Nomination Dossiers that take cognizance of the recommendations of the Global Strategy meetings and other decisions of the World Heritage Committee also guided by the NEPAD and other African initiatives;

(5)   *Develop* conservation and management plans for heritage sites within their territories;

(6)   *Develop* and update their policy, legislative and institutional frameworks relating to cultural and natural heritage;

(7)   *Raise awareness* about policies and legislation relating to cultural and natural heritage;

(8)   *Develop* the capacities of heritage institutions and organs at all levels (local, provincial and national) to implement policies;

(9)   *Support* all initiatives towards integration and coordination of the heritage sector both within their boundaries and among Member States;

(10)   *Conduct* skills audits of personnel and of institutions involved in cultural and natural heritage;

(11)   *Develop* strategies and programmes to improve skills both quantitatively and qualitatively;

(12)   *Broaden* their skills development approaches to embrace strategic planning and project development and management;

(13)   *Widen* their human resource base and capacity by employing and developing women, youth and other disadvantaged groups;

(14)   *Provide* adequate resources for the development and management of cultural and natural heritage at all levels;

(15)   *Adopt and develop* economically and socially sound measures that act as incentives for the conservation, protection and sustainable use of World Heritage sites and their resources;

(16)   *Devise* ways and means to demonstrate the contribution of natural and cultural heritage to the Gross Domestic Product;

(17)   *Support* the establishment of the African World Heritage Fund and to contribute to the Fund;

(18)   *Draw* National Action Plans;

(19)   *Establish* National World Heritage Committees;

(20)   *Integrate* heritage into overall national development plans;

(21)   *Ensure*, with the assistance of World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, that heritage incorporated into national educational curriculum;

(22)   *Identify and document* heritage taking cognisance of, and utilizing Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS);

(23)   *Adopt* a holistic approach to ensure wider representation of heritage, including spiritual heritage.

The World Heritage Committee to:

(1)   *Note* that the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* has not yielded optimum results in Africa;

(2)   *Recognize* and act on the fact that previous efforts to redress the disadvantaged position of Africa's cultural and natural heritage have not yet produced the desired effect on the status and condition of that heritage; in particular the *Africa Periodic Report 2002*; Pre-WSSD World Heritage in Africa and Sustainable Development and the four Global Strategy meetings held in Africa;

(3)   *Proactively rectify* the above situation by, *inter alia*, having active strategies for implementation according to the Action Plan as set out in this Africa Position Paper;

(4)   *Recognize and adopt* the African initiative captured and enunciated in the Africa Position Paper and *request* that the Position Paper together with the recommendations of the 29th session of the Committee be presented to the General Assembly of States Parties of the World Heritage Convention in October 2005;

(5)   *Support* the establishment of the African World Heritage Fund;

(6)   *Implement* the Suzhou-Cairns Decision with respect to Capacity-building for States Parties underrepresented on the World Heritage List;

(7)   *Assist* African States Parties in reducing and eventually eliminating the number of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger;

(8)   *Assist* African States Parties in setting up and improving policy, legal and institutional frameworks necessary for the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* in Africa;

(9)   *Ensure* that all efforts are made to complement the efforts of African States Parties in fulfilling the goals and objectives of this Africa Position Paper;

(10)   *Assist* States Parties to draw national action plans;

(11)   *Compile* and keep a directory of experts and practitioners out of which a possible African think tank and resource pool could be formed;

(12)   *Assist* in the promotion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems through indigenous languages.

Strategic Partners to:

(1)   *Support* the Africa Position Paper;

(2)   *Support* the process of undertaking a feasibility study for the establishment of the African World Heritage Fund;

(3)   *Support and contribute* to the African World Heritage Fund.

The Advisory Bodies to:

(1)   *Assist* African States Parties in the development of Tentative Lists;

(2)   *Assist* African States Parties in the pre-evaluation of nomination dossiers (without compromising advisory body objectivity);

(3)   *Continue* to undertake comparative, thematic and regional studies that are necessary in the identification of sites of outstanding universal value;

(4)   *Assist* African States Parties in the management and conservation of African World Heritage properties;

(5)   *Develop* in close collaboration with African States Parties, appropriate training programmes necessary for the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*.

Finally

The Africa Group calls upon all Parties cited herein to note that the implementation of the Africa Position Paper will address the current challenges in the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* in Africa. However, this will depend on the support rendered by Parties and the process should be fully inclusive of all parties at all levels.