

# What's News?

## THE ICOMOS-EPWG AFRICA MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### Edito

Dear Readers,

The year 2022 marks the 50th anniversary of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, or “1972 Convention”.

From the outset, this Convention had a special relationship with the African continent. Indeed, it was with the Nubia campaign led by UNESCO from 1960 to 1980 in Egypt that the notion of World Heritage was born, this idea that there are cultural or natural sites in the world whose value is universal, and which all humanity must protect. Among the first three sites inscribed on the prestigious List in 1978 the Island of Gorée in Senegal stood out. A site sadly famous for its history marked by slavery, like so many other places on our continent.

So, 50 years after its birth, what is Africa's place today in this Convention?

This key year represents a real opportunity for us, young African heritage professionals, to take stock of the last 50 years of implementation of the Convention in Africa, but also and above all to imagine its future. It is up to all of us to ask ourselves the right questions; to (re)appropriate this international text for the benefit of better preservation, management and promotion of this heritage which is so dear to us, both to us and to the rest of humanity; and ensure its sustainability for future generations.

These are the thoughts that have guided us throughout this special issue, and that we intend to pursue throughout this very special year.

We wish you a good read!

**Alyssa K. Barry**  
Coordinator ICOMOS EPWG Africa



The Great Mosque, Ivory Coast © Alyssa K. Barry, 2021

## 50 YEARS OF THE UNESCO WHC : FLASHBACK TO 1972...

The temples of Ramses II at Abu Simbel and the sanctuary of Isis at Philae are treasures of the civilization of ancient Egypt located in an archaeological area with admirable monuments. As they were threatened with disappearance following the decision to build the Aswan dam in Egypt, UNESCO launched, in 1960, an international campaign of safeguard following a call for help from the Egyptian and Sudanese governments. Campaign which thus favored the realization of archaeological research in order to dismantle, move and reassemble these wonders with a view to protecting them. The mobilization of the States Parties during the said campaign was impressive: it amounted to 80 million dollars, half of which came from donations from around fifty countries. This situation thus demonstrated the importance of sharing responsibilities between countries, with a view to preserving cultural sites of outstanding universal value. This mobilization encouraged other conservation campaigns, notably for Venice and its lagoon in Italy or the archaeological ruins of Mohenjo Daro in Pakistan...

Later, the idea of reconciling the conservation of cultural and natural sites was born during a conference at the White House in Washington, D.C in 1965, where the creation of a "World Heritage Foundation" was proposed. which would encourage international cooperation to protect "the most extraordinary places, landscapes and historic sites for the present and the future of all humanity". In 1968, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) formulated proposals which were presented to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972. These proposals found unanimous agreement among its Member States and gave birth to the Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on November 16, 1972. By considering these heritage aspects, both cultural and natural, the Convention reminds us of the interaction between man and nature, and the fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two.

The Convention has eight chapters divided into thirty-eight articles. By signing the Convention, each State undertakes to ensure the identification, protection, conservation and enhancement of the cultural and natural heritage present on its territory. It encourages States Parties to raise public awareness of the values of World Heritage properties and to improve their protection and conservation. State Parties that ratified the Convention are encouraged to train qualified personnel and provide services to inscribed sites, conduct scientific and technical studies on conservation and take measures to give this heritage a function in the daily lives of citizens. By ratifying the Convention, the State Party marks its membership to an international community which appreciates and safeguards properties of universal importance, embodying a set of exceptional examples testifying to the diversity of culture and the richness of nature. A property inscribed as World Heritage confers prestige and a label, while assigning to the State Party duties to ensure the preservation of the outstanding universal value thanks to which these properties have been inscribed. The State Party must also maintain the role of these sites by ensuring their cultural and economic enhancement in favor of national development and the well-being of the populations. Being a member of the Convention also gives access to the World Heritage Fund and other forms of assistance aimed at ensuring the protection of World Heritage.

***Avenir G. Meikengang***

# 50 YEARS OF THE UNESCO WHC : THE VOICE OF THE YOUTH...

My aspiration for the next 50 years for African heritage is captivated by the reflections of the Agenda 2063, on the need to empower youth amongst other vulnerable groups. It is through one of its aspirations, "*A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development*" that I wish for an innovation of World Heritage Skills Summit, targeting youth and other young people, equipping them with the required skills to meet the demand for heritage skills in the management, conservation and promotion of our African heritage. I aspire to see the African countries committing in developing strategic priority needs for emergent skills needs in heritage. There is a need to upgrade the skills of youth currently in heritage jobs and those out of employment, so that they can seize new employment opportunities and those which will develop over time, hence improving the socio-economic labour potential of youth population in our continent. I believe that my aspiration for the World Heritage Skills Summit, played by relevant and committed stakeholders, will ready our youth for future economic revolutions and even extend far beyond the aspired 50 years.

*Tsholofelo Goabaone Kenathetswe (Botswana)*

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My aspirations for the next 50 years for African heritage are that which resembles a dream finally coming to fruition, the visions, and ideas the present-day youth have for African heritage being finally a tangible reality. This reality is an epitome of youth voices on African heritage not only being heard but also implemented, such will reflect youth active and practical representation on all decision making and implementation stages as well as levels. African heritage cannot by any means be separated from its people, as such I aspire to see this heritage being practically and not theoretically managed and researched with the help of its people who in turn form the local communities. African heritage 50 years from now should be treated by African States Parties as a national priority and should be backed by strong legislative frameworks which put it at the centre of every national development. More intergenerational dialogues and activities aiming at the sustainable use of African heritage should be initiated within all African State Parties levels i.e., grassroots to the top. The next 50 years for me are not tomorrow or 50 years from now but it starts today, it's here, and it starts with us!

*Tatenda Tavingeyi (Zimbabwe)*

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As a young heritage enthusiast, I aspire to see myself and many other Africans contributing to raising and supporting awareness on fighting climate change as climate change has become one of the most significant threats to African World Heritage properties. If organizations, communities, and governments can work together in reducing human contributions to climate change, this could lead to reduced impacts of climate change on our sites which endangers and put them at risk of being removed from the UNESCO World Heritage List. As a museum professional, I am now shifting focus from solely having programmes and exhibitions that focus specifically on museum collections, but rather the focus is also on using the museum space to help address the current issues that are threatening our heritage resources, and one such issue is climate change. It doesn't help to encourage African State Parties to identify more sites of Outstanding Universal Value while there is not much effort put into conserving and preserving the sites that we currently have on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Not only does climate change threatens our heritage but also our lives and livelihoods.

*Livhuwani Mulaudzi (South Africa)*

# 50 YEARS OF THE UNESCO WHC : THE VOICE OF THE YOUTH...

My aspirations as a professional heritage conservator and manager can be defined as follows in the next fifty years, having it as a guide the treaties signed by all State Parties to the 1972 Convention on preservation of heritage properties which included African ones :

- To acquire more knowledge in the field of Heritage conservation, whereby holistic global standard methods of preservation, and management shall be adopted in maintenance of all heritage sites in Africa. This will increase the life span of the heritage sites in Africa and help in easy transformation of the great heritage to next generations.
- To be acquitted with the knowledge of nomination dossier for universal assessment of most of Africa heritage sites/monumental structures to help in discovering the possibility of having the blue-print requirements of the ten features that a heritage site should possessed, which is comprised of cultural and natural entities, before being enlisted as UNESCO World Heritage site.
- I wish to be a recognized heritage consultant in the field of heritage conservation and protection, where this will help in the maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value of our dear African Heritage: chains from the past to the present and links [historical sites, monumental buildings, sacred shrines and temples, ruins of the existence of past ancestors and natural heritage properties] to the incoming progenies in Africa.
- To disseminate/fostering campaigns across African countries and beyond to create awareness on the importance of the heritage properties in our community and the need to protect them because they are our reference point in our state of existence.
- To help in rehabilitating/rescue some of our great heritage/monumental sites that are in critical state of collapse or going into extinction in line with the protection treaties of the 1972 Convention.

In the next fifty years I wish to see African heritage sites as fascinating great center of tourist attractions and effective sustainability of the pacesetters of the African cultural settings in general with full implementation of the 1972 Convention across all countries in Africa in collaboration with NCM, and other State Parties to the convention.

*Surajudeen Niyi Awoyera (Nigeria)*

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For the next 50 years, I aspire that:

- The cultural development policies of African countries are scrupulously modeled on the various international conventions related to heritage ;
- The protection of heritage is included among the objectives of sustainable development ;
- The cultural and natural assets of all African countries are inventoried ;
- Protection measures are considered and applied for a good conservation of the cultural and natural assets of African territories ;
- The elements of the intangible heritage are listed and measures are taken for their safeguard ;
- Local communities and young people are more involved in the processes of identification, management, conservation and safeguarding of heritage ;
- Awareness of the importance of heritage is to such an extent that local communities have the possibility of initiating themselves the process of registering the properties of their localities on the UNESCO World Heritage List ;
- The values, local languages and good practices of intangible heritage are promoted in the different States
- Heritage is a factor of economic and social development, of bringing African peoples closer together.

*Raïmi Bassitou Nouatin (Benin)*

## 50 YEARS OF THE UNESCO WHC : THE VOICE OF THE YOUTH...

- More representativeness of African cultural properties on the World Heritage List and fewer properties inscribed on the List of Heritage in Danger ;
- An emphasis on the “Valuation” of goods. That we insist on the will to promote our heritage on the national and international levels ;
- The implementation of programs to promote our cultural potential such as the Route des Chiefdoms program in each country and in each region or community ;
- The development of “intra-tourism” or even internal tourism. Every African must know the different sites of their country, otherwise how would you value what you do not even know ?
- Getting into the spirit of marketing, heritage marketing. We must be able to sell ourselves through our heritage. Africa needs to offer an image where, through a look, we can create a universe that we will want to discover, not an image of perpetual conflicts, but one of peace and sharing ;
- Better collaboration between the private sector, local communities and decision-makers for better development of cultural policies.

*Maeva Dolores Pimo (Cameroon)*

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Heritage is a resource centre that contributed to the reflection on the role of cultural development, cultural and creative industries and is now widely known as a strategic resource and an efficient tool in Africa, which offers regular and useful services in its field of competence. The youth has potential and an increasingly important role to play as leader of tomorrow and it is in this regards that it is crucial to:

- Enhance and support meaningful approaches in heritage education (primary, secondary, higher education, lifelong learning, etc.) and in training materials, including arts and culture in order to improve knowledge in cultural heritage from an early age.
- Encourage and support the integration and approaches of creators (Cultural and creative players) in a perspective to secure equal access for all to heritage and ensure its sustainability.
- Encourage and support Youth-led initiatives by fostering cooperation and partnership as way to sustain the knowledge-sharing at local, national, regional and international levels through different means (peer-learning, joint projects, awareness-raising campaigns, peer exchanges, online platforms, professional meetings, etc.).
- Map existing youth-leaders and initiatives and develop pragmatic approaches towards effective strategies for a better inclusivity and dissemination/multiplication of good practices.
- Pragmatic approaches towards the effective strategies of outreach communities to inspire, motivate, empower and ensure full integration by scaling up gender balance and diversity, freedoms and rights, full participation in decision making and leadership, embrace public authorities in fostering changes, participatory governance, etc.
- Re-think tourism economy and heritage marketing in Africa properties and towards a more balanced list.
- Strengthen approaches and strategies for restitution, return, illegal trading, cultural property, circulations, provenance and research.
- Capitalize Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and digital media as a source of intelligent answers to the heritage challenges and related issues.

*Maria Manjate (Mozambique)*

## 50 YEARS OF THE UNESCO WHC : THE VOICE OF SENIOR...

The 50th Anniversary should inspire Africans to take a new attitude toward the 1972 Convention concerning the protection of the cultural and natural heritage. This unique moment in the history of this international instrument should encourage Africans to reflect more on how to bridge the current conflictual relationship between conservation and the socio-economic transformation for sustainable development of the Continent. First, it is essential to look again critically at how the 1972 Convention was able to link cultural and natural aspirations with one objective of protecting our heritage. Second, 50 years after the first global conference on environmental issues in Stockholm, Africans should not miss the inherent link between the 1972 Convention, the protection of biodiversity and the promotion of inclusive livelihoods. Finally, as the fastest urbanising region, Africans, more than any other population, should strive to link urbanisation and the protection of biodiversity and promotion of its diversity. All these essential themes in the coming 50 years are already addressed in the 1972 Convention. It is for the African leaders, experts, practitioners, women, youth, and civil societies to create a new vision to make an African identity through the World Heritage List that enriches its diversity for sustainable development.

*Dr Muhammad Juma, Tanzania, Chief of the Africa Unit of the UNESCO World Heritage Centrer*  
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For the next 50 years, I really want to see three things.

The first is that African expertise (academics and professionals) be highlighted on heritage issues in Africa, knowing that 75% of assessment missions are carried out by Africans.

Secondly, I would like to see young people take a more active role in heritage issues, not only at the World Heritage level but rather in general, especially on income-generating projects and projects giving more visibility to communities on field.

The third thing I would really like to see is the existence of viable curricula in our universities on heritage issues.

*Souayibou Varissou, Benin, Executive Director of African World Heritage Fund*  
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Our projection for the next 50 years is related to a couple of key elements. First, the implementation of the Convention in Africa has to be inclusive in terms of gender, involvement of the youth and the communities. Until we have that balance, we will not be able to achieve what we want. The second dimension that comes out is the issue of capacity building. We can do more with capacity building and by empowering ourselves with the knowledge to address issues related to the Convention. That should also be inclusive: capacity building not only for so called experts, but inclusive of indigenous knowledge systems and what the new technologies are offering. Obviously, that entails more involvement of the youth, women.

*Dr Dawson Munjeri, Zimbabwe, Senior expert in World Heritage*

## 50 YEARS OF THE UNESCO WHC : THE VOICE OF SENIOR..

Despite its natural and cultural wealth and the numerous economic opportunities it provides, the contribution of African heritage to the development of the States Parties is still very timid. This state of affairs is linked to management difficulties associated with the absence of a sustainable financing mechanism. In addition, African States are in a process of economic development based on the exploitation of natural resources of all kinds: gas, oil, mining, electricity, whose negative impacts on cultural and natural values constitute the major issues of conservation and enhancement of African heritage for the next 50 years.

In order to reconcile economic development through the exploitation of natural resources with the conservation and enhancement of African heritage, all sectors of economic development should integrate heritage conservation into their development strategy as indicated in the African Union's Agenda 2063.

The analysis of this issue of sustainable development and African World Heritage in relation to climate change, should encourage African States Parties to take community measures, at the policy, legislative and land use planning levels, to transmit this rich heritage to future generations while enhancing it.

*Dr Youssouph Diedhiou, Senegal, Program Manager at IUCN*

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Firstly, we should involve young people more in heritage, especially World Heritage because precisely the present and the future belong to young people and having committed young people is important to guarantee the future. Then we should finally make them more responsible so that they can fully play the role expected of them. Also insist on their training: capacity building because Africans must be better trained, more trained, so that African issues are carried by Africans who know the African context better. I hope that in the next 50 years the face of Africa will change in terms of African World Heritage.

*Dr Franck Ogou, Benin, Director of School of African Heritage*

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I am very happy to see young people participating and being in charge of their heritage on our continent. The future of heritage in Africa depends on young people. These young people will carry it, make it known and value it.

*Hamida Rhouma, Tunisia, Heritage Expert*

## DIARY OF THE MONTH



### ICOMOS Working Group "Our Common Dignity" Initiative - Rights-Based Approaches Monthly Meeting, July 25, 2022.

The Our Common Dignity (OCD) started as an ICOMOS initiative in 2007 and expanded in 2011 as a cooperation for the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Convention (ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN) under the coordination by ICOMOS Norway. For more information, click [here](#).

The Association "**PatriMundus**" organizes the 4th debate-conference of the "Meetings of Young Professionals of African Heritage" on the topic: "**Education and skills development of young African heritage professionals: challenges and issues**" on July 15, 2022 at 15:00 (GMT+2).



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## FEEDBACK OF JUNE

From June 14 to 17, 2022, an international workshop was held in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) on the theme "**African cultural heritage and sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa: state of research and contribution of the social sciences**". This workshop, which was organized by the National Institute of Social Sciences through its Laboratory on Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development, had the major objective of taking stock of the various contributions of researchers and professionals in the field of cultural heritage in French-speaking Africa. More than 60 heritage specialists met to discuss the role of heritage in sustainable development and ways to enhance it. It was also an opportunity for different professionals to share good practices in the conservation of cultural heritage. The group of emerging professionals of ICOMOS for the Africa region was represented by two of its members at this workshop: Mr. Jean-Paul Lawson (Benin) and Mr. Bély Hermann Abdoul-Karim Niangao (Burkina-Faso) made excellent contributions to this conference.

**Bély Hermann Abdoul-Karim Niangao**



## DID YOU KNOW IT?



Photography of "Aapravasi Ghat" World Heritage Site in Mauritius. © Kiraan Jankee & Florentine Okoni. 2021

### **The Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site, Mauritius: history and symbolism of the only indenture site listed as a World Heritage Site**

The Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site, remains of an Immigration Depot built in 1849, is located in Port-Louis, the capital city of Mauritius, where the modern indentured labour diaspora began.

The Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site was inscribed in 2006 under criteria vi as: "The first site chosen by the British Government in 1834 for the great experiment in the use of indentured rather than slave Labour, is strongly associated with memories of almost half a million indentured labourers moving from India to Mauritius to work on sugarcane plantations or to be transhipped to other parts of the World." (World heritage Committee Decision 30COM 8B.33).

The Aapravasi Ghat Immigration Depot received and processed indentured labourers from India, Eastern Africa, Madagascar, China and Southeast Asia to work on the island's sugar estates as part of the 'Great Experiment'. This experiment was introduced by the British Government, after the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1834, to demonstrate the superiority of 'free' over slave labour in its plantation colonies. The success of the 'Great Experiment' in Mauritius led to its adoption by other colonial powers from the 1840s, resulted in the migration of more than two million indentured labourers worldwide, of which Mauritius received almost half a million.

For Mauritians, Aapravasi Ghat is an important site of memory playing a crucial role in strengthening our national unity, preserving our cultural values, and contributing to the crucial process of nation building.

Since the listing of the Aapravasi Ghat as a World Heritage Site in 2006 and the opening of the Beekrumsing Ralallah Interpretation Centre in 2014, the number of visitors, both locals and foreigners, is constantly increasing. The visit of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site starts with a visit of the Beekrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre followed by a visit to the World Heritage Property. The Centre is one of the rare places dedicated to indenture in the world. Through its dynamic and modern exhibition, the Centre presents the establishment and development of the indentured system as well as the experience of indentured labourers at the Aapravasi Ghat Immigration Depot in Mauritius.

To discover more about this exceptional heritage of humanity, please visit our website: <https://aapravasi.govmu.org/>.

*Vijayalutchmee Beejadhur-Poteah*



Goree Island, Senegal © Alyssa K. Barry. 2020

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## LATEST OPPORTUNITIES

- **17th International Summer School Youth and Heritage (Sarajevo-Mostar-Stolac)**

The participants of the ISSYH are encouraged to think about how socially cohesive, but fundamentally open communities can be developed and maintained, as well as about the importance of combining diversity with strong roots in local heritage. Find out more at [stolacsummerschool@gmail.com](mailto:stolacsummerschool@gmail.com). Deadline: 06 July 2022.

- **Call of Abstracts Scientific Symposium ICOMOS GA Sydney 23**

The Scientific Symposium Committee welcomes the submission of abstracts for the ICOMOS 21st General Assembly and Scientific Symposium (ICOMOS GA2023) to be held at the International Convention Centre, Sydney, Australia from 31 August – 9 September 2023. To apply, click [here](#). Deadline: 15 August 2022.



Takienta of Chief Antoine, Kouammdiou, North Benin © Alyssa K. Barry. 2021