

AFRICAN WORLD HERITAGE FUND

Report for the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee

Reporting period: July 2023 to June 2024

1. General Information

Name of the Centre	AFRICAN WORLD HERITAGE FUND (AWHF)
Name and contact information of the Director/Head	Dr. Albino Jopela Executive Director Email: jopsj@dbsa.org Tel: +27 11 313 3911
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Website (if available)	www.awhf.net

2. Institutional and Operational Structure of the Centre

(e.g. Governing Board, staffing, operational funding and premises)

The African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) consist of two main organs, the Board of Governors and the Secretariat. The Secretariat is hosted by the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) in Midrand, South Africa. AWHF is also supported by Patrons appointed by the Board to promote the Fund on the international stage, including the participation in fundraising and advocacy events. AWHF Board is made up of a core group of five (5) members representing the five regions of the African Union (Southern, Eastern, Central, Western and Northern Africa). The Board also includes three non-regional representatives chosen for their professional competencies, a UNESCO representative appointed by the UNESCO Director General and a representative appointed by the Africa Union Commission (AUC). South Africa, the host country has three (3) permanent members as trustees of the Fund represented by the Director General of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, the Deputy Director General of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (the Focal Point for the World Heritage Convention) and the Permanent Delegate of South Africa to UNESCO. The DBSA, and Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee (ICCROM, IUCN and ICOMOS) are Observers on Board. AWHF operation and programme activities are funded by contributions from the African State Parties and other technical and financial partners. In the reporting period, South Africa, Rwanda, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Norway, the United Arab Emirates, Serbia, Azerbaijan, Saudi Arabia and South Korea (through WHIPIC) provided financial support to the Fund.

3. Updates on the Management of the Centre

(e.g. meetings of the Governing Board and key decisions adopted)

Two (2) board meetings were held in the reporting period. The 33rd Board meeting was held on 26th July 2023 in Midrand, South Africa. The Board examined the report on

activities implemented in the past financial year 2023/2024. The 34th Board meeting was held in Kampala, Uganda on 6th December 2023 hosted by the Government of Uganda. The Board examined and approved the Fund's activities and budget for the 2024/2025 financial year. In both meetings, the Board also approved the appointment of new Board members. The current Board is composed of representatives from Burundi, Egypt, Uganda and Namibia as well as representatives of UNESCO and the AUC. The term of Burkina Faso expired in December 2023 and the new representative for West Africa is being appointed. The 35th and 36th Board meetings are planned to take place in August 2024 in South Africa and December 2024 in Burundi. The evaluation of AWHF as a UNESCO Category II Centre was implemented between November 2023 and January 2024 with full participation of key stakeholders including AWHF Board.

4. Main Programmes and Activities

(implemented since July 2023 and planned for the current year)

Since July 2023, the AWHF undertook the following activities in line with three key objectives of its Strategic Plan (2022-2027) which is aligned with the Action Plan for World Heritage in Africa (2021-2027) and UNESCO Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022 – 2029:

a) Objective 1: Contribute to a better representation of African properties on the World Heritage List

- Through its upstream support program, the AWHF provided technical and financial support to eighteen (18) African properties during various stages of their World Heritage nomination processes. Six (6) properties were successfully inscribed on the World Heritage List (Massif Forestier d'Odzala-Kokoua in Congo, the Gedeo Cultural landscape and Bale Mountains National Park in Ethiopia, Memorial sites of the Genocide and Nyungwe National Park in Rwanda and Djerba Island in Tunisia) and two (2) proposed major boundaries modifications/extensions (Koutammakou in Benin and Andrefana Dry Forests in Madagascar) were approved during the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia from 10 to the 25 September 2023. Through its Nomination Grants the AWHF provided financial assistance to the State Parties of Uganda and Burkina Faso for the development of transboundary nomination dossier for Geometric Rock Art of Lake Victoria (including Kenya and Tanzania) and for strengthening the protective mechanism for the buffer zone of the proposed Royal Court of Tiébélé property respectively.
- As part of the follow-up of its capacity-building program on World Heritage nomination for advanced dossiers the Fund continued to provide technical assistance to five (5) proposed World Heritage properties which nominations files were successfully submitted to the World Heritage Centre to be considered by the World Heritage Committee in its 46th session in July 2024. These include the Historic Town of Gedi (Kenya), Melka Kunture and Balchit Archaeological and Paleontological Site (Ethiopia), La Cour Royale de Tiébélé (Burkina Faso), the Emergence of Modern Humans: The Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa, and Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites (South Africa). As a direct result of the AWHF ongoing technical

assistance to African States Parties, three (3) World Heritage nominations files were submitted to World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2024 i.e. Mount Mulanje Cultural Landscape (Malawi), Maputo National Park (Mozambique) and Diy-Gid-Biy Cultural Landscape (Cameroon).

b) Objective 2: Contribute to improving the management and conservation of World Heritage Properties in Africa

- Together with ICOMOS the AWHF initiated the *Strengthening Capacities of World Heritage Professionals in Africa* programme aiming at improving the implementation of the Convention through skills development of heritage practitioners in Africa. Having successfully completed the initial phase (i.e., capacity-building workshop held in South Africa in May 2022), the Fund has supported the follow up phase of the programme (between July 2023 - March 2024) focusing on effective integration of African professionals within the networks and processes led by ICOMOS. In this regard, three (3) African professionals (from Botswana, Mauritius, and South Africa) were integrated into the *ICOMOS-led Evaluation of World Heritage Nominations* that took place in between September and October 2023 in South Africa (for the Emergence of Modern Humans of South Africa), Kenya (for the Historic Town of Gedi) and Saudi Arabia (for the Cultural Landscape of Al-Faw Archaeological Area).
- The Fund organized an *Orientation Workshop for African Members of the World Heritage Committee* held online between 17 - 19 July 2023 aiming at improving the Africa experts' understanding of the 1972 Convention's Operational Guidelines and that of the Rules of Procedure of the World Heritage Committee. Sixty-seven (67) participants attended the workshop including representatives from UNESCO, the Advisory Bodies, African Permanent Delegations at UNESCO, World Heritage Committee members (Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Zambia) and other African heritage professionals.
- The orientation workshop was followed by the *6th Preparatory African World Heritage Experts Meeting* held in Kigali Rwanda from 14th – 18th August 2023. The meeting was organized by the Permanent Delegation of Rwanda to UNESCO and the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement of Rwanda in partnership with the AWHF and facilitated by the State Party of South Africa as the Chair of the Group 5A. The meeting brought together forty (40) participants and it strengthened the technical capacity of African experts and enabled them to contribute substantially to the discussions on the implementation of the 1972 Convention around the world during the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee.
- Each year, AWHF provides conservation grants to African State Parties to implement projects and activities which focus on improving the sustainability and state of conservation of World Heritage properties. During the reporting period the Fund provided conservation grants to the States Parties of Ghana (to support a structural renovation at Asante Traditional Buildings), Malawi (to support biodiversity conservation and promote sustainable community livelihoods at Lake Malawi National Park), Lesotho (to support the community conservation of the Sehlabathebe National Park), Mauritius (for the documentation of the buffer zone of the Aapravasi Ghat), and Madagascar (to

support the setting up of an eco-volunteer program to help conserve Ranomafana National Park). In addition to the conservation grants, the Fund awarded an Emergency Grant to the State Party of Kenya for the restoration of Thimlich Ohinga Archaeological Site impacted by natural disaster. The projects in Mauritius, Lesotho, Madagascar, and Kenya will be implemented between April 2024 and March 2025.

- The AWHF also offers Moses Mapesa Educational Research Grant aiming at encouraging young academics to produce good dissertations and thesis for their Masters and Doctoral research in the field of World Heritage in Africa. Three grants were completed: Masters project on *Community-Based Conservation in Protected Area of Okapi Wildlife Reserve* (Democratic Republic of Congo), Doctoral project on *Tourism development in the Ruins of Loropéni* (Burkina Faso), and Doctoral project on the *Effect of Climate Change on the Savanna Dynamics at Comoe National Park* (Côte d'Ivoire). Three additional grants were awarded to young African professionals for research projects to be implemented between April 2024 and March 2025 in Central Africa Republic (Doctoral project on *Gender and issues of participatory management of protected areas in the CAR*), Cote d'Ivoire (Doctoral project on *Modeling the reconstitution of the vegetation of former agricultural areas in the Tai National Park*) and Mozambique (Master's project on *Cultural Heritage Management in the Quirimbas Archipelago*).
- Together with the International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites (WHIPIC) and the National Heritage Council of Namibia the AWHF organized a *Workshop on World Heritage Interpretation and Presentation in Africa* held online between 19th and 23rd October 2023 and in-person between 30th October and 2nd November 2023 in Twyfelfontein or /Uii//aes, Namibia. The workshop strengthened the capacities of twenty (20) African site managers and heritage professional by enabling them to develop tools and strategies to improve the interpretation and presentation of World Heritage sites through participatory processes and engagement of local communities across Africa.

c) Objective 3: Stimulate the inclusion of World Heritage properties in sustainable growth for local communities, particularly women and the youth.

- In partnership with ICCROM and the Great Zimbabwe University of Zimbabwe, the AWHF organized the *7th edition of the African World Heritage Youth Forum* held online from 15th – 19th January 2024 and in person from 4th – 8th March 2024 in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. The workshop brought together African young leaders to share their perspectives, experiences, and solutions for addressing the challenges posed by climate change for the effective conservation and management of World Heritage properties in Africa.
- From 29th January to 2nd February 2024, AWHF organized a *Workshop on Entrepreneurship at World Heritage Sites in Africa* held in Maputo, Mozambique, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Mozambique and ICCROM. The workshop aimed at empowering African young professionals through training and mentorship and equip them with innovative

and creative entrepreneurship skills in the field of heritage (e.g. business opportunity identification and evaluation, business management, financial resources mobilization, financial sustainability and innovation, entrepreneurial mindset skills, communication, and networking). The workshop provided a platform for the creation of networks, exchange of knowledge, sharing of experience and success stories between and among the 25 young professionals representing various African countries.