

THE AFRICAN WORLD HERITAGE FUND

**DONORS' CONFERENCE
& LAUNCH 4-5.05.06**

NEWSLETTER



With the support of UNESCO's
World Heritage Centre

PROUD AND PASSIONATE

THE CONTINENT BLAZES A TRAIL



*MR THEMBA WAKASHE,
Deputy Director General,
Heritage, Archives and
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Department of Arts and
Culture, South Africa*

"I am passionate about the African World Heritage Fund. It is living in the context of the renewal of the African continent, the African renaissance. Africa must take a lead in resolving challenges facing the continent. African leadership needs to be there. The AWHF has to be led by Africans and the solutions have to come from Africa.

That is one of the reasons I am so excited. "Another is that it is the first time within the framework of the World Heritage Convention that regional funding is coming out. This has created much excitement within Unesco and other regions are looking at our example. This is a trailblazing exercise. "Our action plan and costing is two months ahead of schedule. We (Africa) can do things that are fascinating." - AWHF Donor's Conference and Launch 2006.

A DATE WITH MRS PLES & **THE PROF**

Delegates to the Launch of the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) were right on schedule for the special guest appearance of the world-famous original fossil, Mrs Ples.

It was one of the rare occasions that the public had the opportunity to see the original fossil which had, up until then, been available exclusively to local and international scientists for research purposes.

Mrs Ples, and Little Foot also on display, are both national treasures. They were on loan to Maropeng, situated within the Cradle of Humankind, one of South Africa's seven Heritage sites.

Mrs Ples's short three-week visit to Maropeng coincided with the AWHF Donor's Conference and Launch.

Delegates from all over Africa and the world also listened to a short lecture by one of the country's great scientists, Professor Philip Tobias, who, for many years, has been a leader in the field of research into the origins of mankind. At age 80, Tobias is a walking library of the origins of mankind and is regarded by many as one of the country's living treasures.

Delegates visited the site where Mrs Ples was discovered. Mrs Ples was born over two million years ago and lived and died in the Cradle of Humankind, explained expert of the fossil and curator of the Transvaal Museum, Dr Francis Thackeray,.

An australopithecine like Little Foot (another famous fossil from the Cradle of Humankind), Mrs Ples was almost human in that she could walk upright, but had a smaller brain, similar in size to that of a modern chimpanzee.

In 1947, Dr Robert Broom and his assistant, John Robinson, discovered her skull buried at the Sterkfontein Caves.

Mrs Ples was originally designated her species as Plesianthropus transvaalensis (near-human from the Transvaal), although she was later identified as belonging to Australopithecus africanus, a distant relative of all humankind.

"The local newspaper in Johannesburg, The Star, nicknamed her Mrs Ples because she was a female Plesianthropus," said Thackeray explaining how the fossil got her nickname Mrs Ples.



Broom's and Robinson's discovery highlighted the possibility that humankind was born in Africa - something many were sceptical of at the time and not very pleased about, said Professor Tobias.

He spoke to delegates at the entrance of the Sterkfontein Caves.

In the 1800s, in search of gold, the area was found to be barren but not "of your kind of gold" Tobias told delegates. In 1895 the site was blasted through and revealed a fairytale of stalactites and stalacmytes. One of the first fossils was found in the cave where delegates sat and listened to Tobias.

Tobias also explained how the Cradle of Humankind came to be listed on the World Heritage sites.

"In 1994, at the birth of democracy, one of the first things Mandela's government did was to apply for South Africa to come back to Unesco."

"The country had so many demands in terms of things like housing, schooling and electricity yet it still had the mind for the cultural impact of Unesco. It was accepted back into the fold unanimously so we could start nominating sites.

"I first put this site up (Sterkfontein Caves) but was told 'why stop there?' that the whole surrounding area could also be included.

"Dawson Munjeri from Zimbabwe was sent to inspect the site and he gave it a positive report back.

"We put together a mammoth application. In 1998 we took it to Paris (it was wheelbarrows full of documentation) and on December 1, 1999 in Marakesh this site, along with Robben Island and Wetlands St Lucia, were all accepted to much applause and dancing. Government encouraged the development of new applications."

THE NEXT 6 MONTHS



A number of recommendations (10 in all) came out of the lively debate and discussions around the African World Heritage Fund on Thursday, May 4, the second day of the AWHF's Donor Conference and Launch.

The areas that needed to be considered and further developed in the next six months were:

1. The Board of Trustees: Its size, technical profile of board members and the regional origin had to be addressed (Heritage, legal and financial expertise).
2. The management structure: identify what expertise is needed in each phase; the management structure cost is very important to streamline; importance of having the right people with the right skills;
3. Accountability: mechanisms for transparency and reporting will have to be considered;

It was important to have heritage experts but it was also important to get other skills on the board, otherwise it would be lopsided. This was also important for transparency.

It was also important to keep in mind the potential of the African Diaspora. Many were in the upper economic rungs of society abroad and many would want to leave a legacy of the preservation of African heritage behind.

Rapulane Mogototoane of the Development Bank of Southern African who were given the job of costing the Fund, said it was important that the structures were streamlined and not bloated. "We want an effective fund, not a bloated one."

4. Regulatory framework: Codes of conduct for the Fund (and also for staff and board members, et.) and guidelines in dealing with potential conflicts of interest; criteria for projects selection and evaluation.
5. Financial issues: Have a clear strategy in terms of financial sustainability including ethical standards for partners selection;

'Demon Donors' were troubling. How should one deal with them? They include donors from the

tobacco, gambling and arms industries. It was important that donors/partners comply with Unesco partnerships. It was not an exorcistic operation but guidelines had to be set. Some participants felt that it matters not where the money comes from but what is done with it while others felt that one had to maintain one's integrity.

6. Relationship with other organizations: Unesco, Advisory bodies, African training institutions, Nepad, etc. How will the Fund relate to these institutions?
7. Strategic plan for the Fund: Develop a short-term and mid-term action plan for the Fund within the general Action Plan;
8. Transition period between the launch of the Fund on 5/5/06 and its becoming operational: Need to establish benchmarks and timeframe for the different phases;

The Fund will take a number of years to be established. How to start it, who develops it, when will it be bigger, what are the benchmarks and timeframes of transition? These were questions that needed answering.

9. Communication strategy: invite prominent personalities from a variety of sectors to support and promote the Fund;

It was important to get the right people's faces to support the Fund. It was an important marketing strategy. Governments look at that and it was necessary to have the right image. Chirac, the Italian president, for instance gave his name to EPA.

Meanwhile Nobel Laureate and environmental campaigner Professor Wangari Maathai has already given her support to the launch of the AWHF. "...As the Goodwill Ambassador for the Congo Basin Forest Ecosystem, I call upon all local and international partners to join national governments and the African Union to make this (the AWHF) possible."

10. Develop a strong brand for the Fund: suggest the "Africa: fragile, handle with care" logo used at the launch be adopted as the Fund's brand.

ALL PROTOCOL OBSERVED



INA MARCIULIONYTE

She's the Lithuanian chairperson of the 30th World Heritage Committee, but not many could get their tongue around Ina Marciulionyte's surname. It caused much confusion and much tongue fumbling among delegates.

Finally, Ina wrote it out the way one says it and South Africa's Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture, NGW Botha, got to say it perfectly, the first time someone on stage had managed to do it.

The Minister of Arts and Culture, Dr Pallo Jordan, gave others an easy way out. "In West Africa they have invented a phrase so that everyone is recognised. The phrase is 'all protocol observed'. They use it to avoid difficult names and in order not to leave anyone out."

"All Protocol Observed" became a popular phrase used by speakers at the conference.



FROM THE GOOD TO THE BAD,

OUR PAST TEACHES US A LOT ABOUT BEING A HUMAN

Excerpts from speeches by South Africa's Minister of Arts and Culture, Dr Pallo Jordan, at the Cradle of Humankind, May 4 and 5, 2006

The heritage on this entire continent is testimony to past achievements of the African people - it is contained in the culture and natural history on the continent.

We are fortunate we can look back and draw lessons; fortunate also to trace back how we lived in the past and how we've evolved. We have a better idea who our ancestors were.

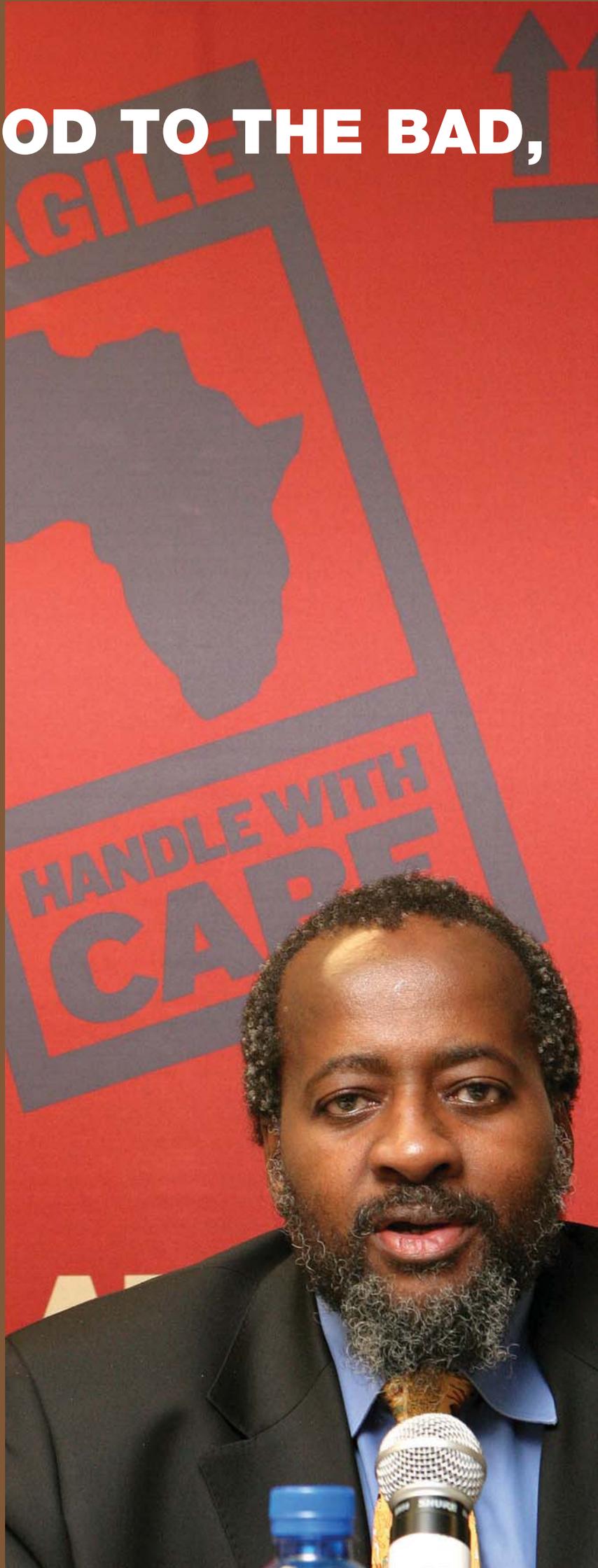
Even though Africa is the birthplace of the human species it took 30 years before a World Heritage Committee meeting was held on the sub Saharan continent (the 29th session was held in Durban in 2005).

South Africa's world heritage sites tell us a lot about ourselves. We have the Cradle of Humankind where our ancestors first started walking on two feet and evolved as homo sapiens and in the north we have Vredefort Dome (the oldest and largest meteorite site in the world formed two billion years ago when a giant meteorite hit the earth).

Our heritage demonstrates aspects of homo sapiens such as the capacity to make tools, to travel and to spread themselves across the globe and even into outer space. At the other extreme, another heritage site, Robben Island (in the Western Cape) testifies the other dimension of this species - that it is equally capable of brutality and some of the darkest deeds of humankind.

The two faces of humanity are all here in the borders of one country. When Robben Island was registered, it was not so much a record of our darkest side but to reaffirm the positive side - that as much as we are capable of inhumanity and brutality we can triumph over that - that good can triumph over evil, justice over injustice.

The World Heritage Convention is a means to preserve natural and cultural heritage so that our descendents can have a glimpse of our past and enjoy and preserve the natural environment that shapes humanity and that it is shaped by.



THE ROAD TO THE AFRICAN WORLD HERITAGE FUND



THEMBA WAKASHE EXPLAINS THE JOURNEY

The African World Heritage Fund emanates from the African Periodic Report of 2002 which looked at the state of conservation on all regions of the African continent.

It highlighted the challenges facing the continent in terms of financial and human resources. It also showed that Africa had the most number of sites on the World Heritage List in Danger. It was decided then to start looking at establishing the AWHF. We came up with a strategy response to the Periodic Report in the African Position Paper but also needed an action plan to address the challenges. That is what the 10-year action plan is - practical ways to respond to the challenges. One of the ways to respond is the Fund. The AWHF and the African Position Paper were accepted at the 29th World Heritage Committee meeting last year. We costed the Fund. Initially to start up would be US\$10 million. The fund was launched on May 5, 2006.

AFRICA WALKS TALL



FRANCESCO BANDARIN, WHC director,

Two months ahead of schedule, the launching of the African World Heritage Fund on May 5 this year in the Cradle of Humankind left even its biggest sceptics in awe

The launch was a tribute to the men and women of Africa and the world who put their passion and their hard work behind the Fund, said WHC director, Francesco Bandarin.

Speaking at its launch at the Cradle of Humankind, Bandarin said: "It would have just been wishful thinking if not for the great commitment shown by Africa and the AWHF's catalyst, Themba Wakashe who chaired the committee and worked intensely on it."

Giving the Fund WHC backing, Bandarin said: "We'll support it and help turn it into a major actor in World Heritage Conservation."

Ina Marciulionyte, chairperson of the 30th session of the World Heritage Committee, congratulated Africa. "I am amazed, when we discussed it not so long ago, it was just a vision. And now we see it happen."

Professor Michael Omelewa, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Nigeria to Unesco, said the AWHF was "an important step in preserving Africa's heritage sites. It has been hard work. We are very grateful to the ministers behind the process as well as our friends from all over the world who have joined us."

Themba Wakashe described it as "a Fund led by Africans. It is Africa taking the lead, resolving her own challenges. The solutions will come from Africa and we will join with international partners."

The 10-year action plan for Africa states as one of its objectives to increase sites on the World Heritage list and decrease sites on the Danger List.

The Fund was a collective response to these objectives and was the first step to improving the management and the conservation of "our common heritage for the benefit of all mankind", said South African Minister of Arts and Culture Dr Pallo Jordan.

AFRICA WALKS TALL



PROFESSOR MICHAEL OMELEWA, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Nigeria to Unesco and NM SIBANDA-THUSI, SA ambassador in France

"The Africa continent faces huge challenges and is battling with the consequences of one-sided distribution of wealth. It battles also with threat of exploitation of natural resources and people, the scourge of HIV and Aids, the ravages of war and by nature itself.

"These concerns raised calls for a holistic approach - a continental one.

"The Fund will be one of the building blocks of partnerships at a regional level and also with the rest of the world. The AWHF will contribute very directly to the millennium developmental goals.

NM Sibanda-Thusi, SA ambassador in France, permanent delegate, Unesco, said: "The Fund will be a stimulus for both cultural and natural growth in Africa. Now the work has just begun."

The first phase – to set up the Fund – has been allocated a two-year period.

To initially start up it up US\$10 million was needed, said Wakashe. This figure was derived from a costing and feasibility study undertaken by the Development Bank of Southern Africa. China, India, the Netherlands and Israel financially contributed to the feasibility study of the Fund undertaken by the Development Bank of Southern Africa.

The initial monies will come from compulsory donations from the Continent and then from international donor funding.

South Africa has contributed R20 million (US\$3,5 million) to the realisation of that figure.

Eighteen countries have pledged their support and further pledges are expected.

Many foundations including ICOMOS, ICCROM, the UN Foundation, the MTN Foundation and the Nordic World Heritage Foundation gave support to the Fund and said they would help where possible.

AFRICA WALKS TALL

Rapulane Mogototoane of the DBSA said the amount that each African state party had to contribute was calculated from a certain percentage from the GDP of the different countries. "We need to start somewhere. We need to start with ourselves to show that we are making a commitment by putting our money where our mouths are. We cannot go with a cap-in-our-hand mentality.

"We all approved the structure and we've achieved legislation - now it is up to us to implement it and to ensure that we capitalise the fund as soon as possible so that it can be started," said Mogototoane.

Bandarin said there had been several meetings and "some very creative moments to identify needs and potential solutions. We have to be realistic - it will take hard work and discipline to get there.

"But it will happen (the AWHF) - it is the right idea and it has many energies behind it on the continent and around the world.

"We all need to invest in the process. To save and preserve heritage is more difficult on this continent because in many areas there is

conflict, war and other bad things that affect heritage. The Africa continent has the largest number of sites on the danger list. But with international solidarity it can work.

"It's been a long route to come up with the proper framework concept for the launch. If I look back at the work I see how every passion and every technical skill was mobilised.

"Last year in Durban the fund was discussed, the proposal was approved, (it is an additional source to what we already have) and follows the long tradition of work in the continent which we at WHC have always considered a priority

"It is easy to have a dream but you have to have vision to see it through in the long term. It will be an autonomous and self-supporting fund but it will be linked to Unesco which will view it as one of its sister institutions."

The Fund will be based in South Africa but it is an African Fund sensitive to the need of the different regions, he added.

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