



Ministero degli Affari Esteri  
e della Cooperazione Internazionale



# AFRICAN WORLD HERITAGE YOUNG LEADERS WORKSHOP

20-25 May 2022  
Cape Town, South Africa



## **African Youth Declaration on World Heritage Convention In Africa: The next 50**

Cape Town, 25 May 2022

We, the participants of the African World Heritage Young Leaders Workshop held from 20<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2022 in Cape Town, South Africa, express our utmost appreciation to the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) and the Government of the Republic of South Africa for granting us the opportunity to learn and take part in such life changing workshop.

This enabled us to reflect on the past 50 years of the 1972 World Heritage Convention while charting a way forward for the youth to plan and envision themselves as the future custodians of World Heritage in Africa.

With the attendance and active participation of 28 young leaders coming from 17 African countries, the workshop gave us an opportunity to interact and exchange ideas with young people from diverse backgrounds, fields and perspectives which enhanced our understanding of the current state of the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in Africa.

In line with the aspirations of the Africa Union's Agenda 2063: "The Africa We Want", which promotes an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force on the world stage, it is critical to adopt a multi-pronged approach based on the active participation of its youth for an "Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics" (Aspiration 5).

Young people have a key role to play in the processes of the World Heritage Convention in Africa as innovators, creators, and agents of change by serving the continent through capacity building programmes, inter-state cooperation, and intergenerational collaboration.

### Therefore, we recommend :

1. Encouraging intergenerational dialogue to increase youth involvement in decision making processes related to World Heritage;
2. States Parties taking into account the existence and willingness of young citizens to become more involved in the development and implementation of policies to identify, safeguard and enhance cultural and natural heritage assets;
3. Providing youth with capacity building opportunities, platforms and adequate resources, including finances, to equip them to preserve, protect, conserve and manage their heritage;
4. Ensuring that community involvement and engagement does not remain a theoretical activity but a practical reality that encompasses traditional management systems;
5. Prioritizing youth and local communities living in and around African World Heritage sites in the management, conservation and revenue generating activities;
6. Enhancing inclusive digital literacy skills and accelerating the use of digital tools including social media, new technologies and modern infrastructure-software and hardware for heritage identification, management, protection and promotion;
7. Shaping a sustainable future in line with the 2030 Agenda by reconciling heritage conservation, development, tourism and entrepreneurial activities through the promotion of sustainable practices;
8. Fostering synergies in the implementation of the six UNESCO Culture Conventions and other instruments in Africa to better reflect the specificities of African heritage assets and reinforce their protection.

# ACTION PLAN

*We call upon African States Parties, heritage institutions and all the relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention to:*

1. Develop and support the establishment of a Pan-African network of young World Heritage ambassadors recognized at both national and international levels;
2. Increase and avail mentorship, internship, capacity building and job opportunities, and institutionalize collaboration between young professionals and senior experts;
3. Enhance national legislations to reinforce youth participation in decision-making bodies and initiatives in favour of World Heritage;
4. Support youth associations, foundations and NGOs working actively in heritage in the implementation of their respective activities, by providing them with technical and material resources and by allocating them substantial budgets;
5. Encourage and provide community education and practical training to create effective community awareness in heritage issues with focus on traditional knowledge and management systems;
6. Ensure adequate representation of youth and local communities living in and around African World Heritage sites in employment and activities related to these sites based on fair and equitable selection criteria;
7. Reinforce the implementation of the AU Digital Transformation for Africa Strategy (2020-2030) by incorporating heritage identification, protection, management and promotion through digital mediums;
8. Create digital databases of our World Heritage to enhance accessibility of the information, for protection and conservation (for instance, by using cutting-edge technology such as GIS, photogrammetry and 3D modelling and Laser Scanning, Remote Sensing Applications);
9. Deliver on their commitments to achieve a sustainable future in line with the UN 2030 Agenda by developing inclusive strategies and initiatives to reconcile heritage conservation, tourism development, and entrepreneurial activities;
10. Increase and expand the establishment of heritage hubs and its activities to make them accessible to all young people;
11. Ensure communication between the African members of different subsidiary bodies of heritage related programmes and conventions through regular meetings involving the youth.

