**REPORT ON THE NARA WORKSHOP HELD ON 8 – 9 JULY 2014 IN CAPE TOWN, HOSTED BY THE ROBBEN ISLAND MUSEUM AND THE AFRICAN WORLD HERITAGE FUND**

The 1994 Nara Document on Authenticity was conceived in the spirit of the Charter of Venice of 1963 in response to the expanding scope of cultural heritage concerns across the world. … Aspects considered under authenticity may include form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, spirit and feeling, other internal and external factors…. Overall the Document provides a broader technical framework for authenticity analysis and assists in practical decision-making in the heritage conservation field worldwide. (Herb Stovel, 2009)

Background and objectives of the seminar

A seminar was held recently entitled ‘From Himeji (Japan) to Robben Island (South Africa); the future of the Nara Document in Africa. Celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Nara Document (on authenticity) and Democracy in South Africa.

Co-hosted by the Robben Island Museum and the African World Heritage Fund the seminar was attended by a number of participants including experts and scholars of heritage from a number of African countries as well as representatives from some of the world heritage sites in South Africa. Representatives from the DAC, DEA, ICOMOS SA, ICOM and the NHC were also present.

The objective of the seminar was to review and discuss the future of implementing the Nara document on Authenticity in the context of World Heritage on the African continent on this, the occasion of the (joint) 20th anniversary of the Nara Document and democracy in South Africa. The outcomes of the seminar include a number of recommendations as to how to improve the implementation of the Nara Document in Africa, these detailed draft outcomes and resolutions have been attached to this short report.

Broadly the intention of the seminar was to reflect on the experience of and future for the implementation of the Nara principles on the African continent. Throughout the two- day seminar emphasis was placed on:

* The impact that the document has had on the management of sites on the continent;
* The integration of local and global values that inform the authenticity and significance of heritage on the continent;
* Understanding the intricate relationship between authenticity and integrity especially as to how they relate to the practice of heritage management in Africa;
* The assessment of the credibility of sources used to determine authenticity;
* The development of processes, tools and frameworks that can facilitate community participation in the negotiation of management strategies for heritage sites in Africa;
* The integration of the cultural dimension into the discourse on sustainability and the extension of heritage management systems beyond traditional planning concepts and existing governance strategies.

These recommendations will form the African contribution to the debates around the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Nara Document and will be presented at a further international meeting to be held later in the year (in Japan); this meeting is intended to be a follow-up to the Himeji workshop held in Japan in 2013, which was entitled “Heritage and societies, towards the 20th anniversary of the Nara document and beyond identified”. It is further understood that the resolutions will also be tabled at the upcoming ICOMOS General Assembly to be held in Florence, Italy in November 2014.

Over the course of the two days a number of presentations were made by the delegates; these focussed mainly on the experience and challenges faced by site managers responsible for a number of World Heritage Sites on the continent. Topics included the maintenance of authenticity when faced with challenges relating to visitor numbers, repairs/restoration of the property and the further deepening of the understanding of the significance of the sites. On day two a number of parallel sessions were held during which groups interrogated issues arising from the presentations and developed recommendations that were intended to feed into the final recommendations coming out of the seminar as a whole. Many of the issues are encapsulated within the draft recommendations and will not be covered here however it is worth noting that there was emphasis placed on the human rights approach to heritage (this was referenced by both the Deputy Minister in her keynote address as well as several other speakers), the placing of people at the centre of cultural heritage, particularly within the African context (the concept of building an African authenticity), and research as a key informant to the development of an understanding of significance.

The quote below, drawn from the draft recommendations of the seminar seem to me to best encapsulate the overarching outcome of the approach to authenticity in the African context and the response to the further celebration of the Nara Document in the year of its 20th anniversary.

*In an African context, form and spirit, tangible and intangible, authenticity of the object and authenticity of the experience is one inseparable entity and must be considered in its entirety. If the Nara Document is to be truly adopted* (on the African continent*) it must move away from its fixation with materiality of our sites and begin to reflect an understanding that the physical fabric is sustained by its intangible values and its spirituality. There is a need to redefine authenticity as ‘progressive’ to account for changes and evolutions in values and physical fabric over time, especially as it applies for the transmission of heritage between generations*

Recommendation 1.2.3.4, Pg 6, Draft Robben Island Nara seminar, July 2014

Laura Robinson

ICOM SA/ICOMOS SA

September 2014

Attendees:

Pascall Taruvinga Robben Island Museum (RIM) (Chief Heritage Officer,organiser/host)

Webber Ndoro African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) (Director-organiser/host)

Patrick Abungu Fort Jesus, WHS, Kenya

Shadreck Chirikure University of Cape Town (UCT)

Eloi Coly Goree Island WHS, Senegal

Alissandra Cummins Director Barbados Museum and Historical Society

Christina Jikelo National Heritaeg Council (NHC)

Hermione Boko Koudakossi University of Parakou, Benin

Thabo Manetsi Dept of Tourism SA

Nobu Luroda Japan

Sibongseni Mkhise RIM Chief Executive Office

Khwezi Mpumlwana NHC

Tawanda Mukwende Matobo WHS, Zimbabwe

Cecilene Muller RIM

Dawson Munjeri Deputy Permanent delegate of Zimbabwe to UNESCO

Rose Mwanja Director National Museum, Uganda

Ndukuyakho Ndlovu ICOMOS SA, University of Pretoria

Ntsizi November Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA)

Jean Butoto Nsanabandi World Heritage portfolio, Rwanda

Laura Robinson ICOMOS, ICOM SA

Philip Segadika Head of Archaeology and Monuments, Botswana

Victor Syatyoka Barotse Cultural Landscape, Zambia

Sibusisu Xaba AWHF – Board Chairperson

Invited guests: Mitsuru Murase - Consul-General Embassy of Japan, Thokozile Xhasa- Deputy Minister Dept of Tourism RSA