

The Pacific Heritage Fund

WHC Meeting. Christchurch New Zealand, June 2007

Following adoption of the decision 31COM.11C by the World Heritage Committee, a meeting was organized between representatives of the South African delegation who have been instrumental in establishing the African Heritage Fund and representatives of the Pacific Island State Parties to discuss the issues and processes the PICS need to consider in establishing their own Pacific Heritage Fund. Of particular interest to the PICS was whether the African Heritage Fund could provide a model or at least a starting point towards developing a structure for the Pacific Heritage Fund.

This paper summarises the main points of the discussion and based on this proposes an initial model of where the Pacific Heritage Fund may be located within existing regional organizations in the Pacific.

Background

In 2004 South Africa was given Chairmanship of the World Heritage Committee. In 2005 the Chair decided that he wanted to leave a legacy of having been Chair not just for South Africa but for all of Africa. This initiated a continent-wide State of Conservation report that highlighted the following challenges:

- Like the Pacific, Africa was under-represented on the World Heritage List.
- Africa had the highest proportion of Sites on the Danger List of any region
- Africa lacked financial and other resources to address the first two points.

On the basis of these findings, the concerned African State Parties under the auspices of the African Union drafted an African Position Paper which was submitted to the World Heritage Committee along with a ten-year Action Plan that was drafted from the paper.

It was recognized that Assistance funding through the WHC was never going to be sufficient to remedy this situation and a decision was taken to establish an African Heritage Fund.

The ten-year Action Plan was taken to the Development Bank of South Africa who assisted in costing each action in the plan. Bringing in the Development Bank created a vital link between heritage conservation and development.

The Bank costing came up with the figure of \$US10 million to fund the Action Plan. This was to be sought over two years. After a year they have \$US4.7 million.

At the outset, three main challenges for the Fund were identified:

1. Accountability and transparency were critical for donors to feel secure in donating to the Fund. This required a legal framework where this was possible.
2. Good governance was also critical, requiring careful consideration of the composition of the Board of Trustees and the policies for appointment to this Board.
3. Financial budgeting: The Auditor General of South Africa was approached to be the annual auditor of the accounts to ensure the financial accountability of the Fund.

A further key challenge was to have programs that are seen to deliver, especially in the initial stages so that donors can see the results. The programs have to be feasible (not too large) and visible especially in the first 2 – 5 years (Big projects cost a lot and use many resources. Big projects are risky and would leave the fund more exposed).

A further critical issue was maintaining visibility within the World Heritage Committee and Centre.

To achieve this it was decided:

- To provide an annual report on the fund to each WHC meeting
- To have the Centre represented on the Board of Trustees as a permanent observer.

During the establishment of the Fund, prior to the appointment of a Director or other staff, there needs to be someone with time and resources to play a strong advocacy role especially in building partnerships with regional organizations and ngo's. In the African heritage fund this was an employee of South African Government which allowed his time for this role. The benefit of having an in-country facilitator who could knock on the door of the minister of finance when necessary was stressed.

The Development Bank of South Africa was asked to assess the feasibility of various kinds of structure for the fund to come up with the most viable model within the South African legal framework which is based on the British system. They found that a Trust would be the best model - a small structure that would not become too bureaucratically large, unwieldy and eating up resources to operate.

The Mandate for the African Fund was developed in accordance with

- the aims of the Global Strategy (e.g. better representivity of the WH list)
- principles of sustainable development (Agenda 21)

- principle of Complementarity: The Fund does not seek to replace other funding. The fund must complement and should not be seen to replace the World Heritage Fund. The fund is to be 'gap-filling as far as possible. To make this clear a position paper was written clarifying the role of the Fund as being to assist State Parties with TLs, nominations and in the African context, those sites on the in Danger List.

Structure

The African Fund will have

- a Board of five Trustees that are ultimately responsible for the Trust. There is one Board member for each of the five African Union Regions. The Board members selected by the regions must be Experts in heritage (not political). The terms will be 3 – 5 years
- a staff consisting of Director, Assistant Director and 3 – 4 Technical experts. The Director and Assistant Director are responsible for the day to day management of operations and programs

The African Heritage Fund is located in the Development Bank of South Africa. It is critical to locate the fund within an existing structure that can provide administrative, infrastructure, archiving, office space, hr and I.T. support. A fee is paid to the Development Bank for this service.

The fund will have an Endowment Investment structure, that is, the funds will be invested by an investment company that will be appointed shortly through a tender for provision of investment services.

Getting the Funds

A methodology for getting funds needs to be clearly thought through. The fund does not want to be donor dependent – the African State Parties must take responsibility in the first place.

Not all African States are equally wealthy. Therefore a sliding scale of initial State Party contribution was created by looking at the GDP of each State Party against the GDP of the whole of South Africa as a percentage and this proportion was used as a basis for the relative contributions State Parties were requested to make. This provides the core of the funds but doesn't have to be the main source of funds.

As a means of persuading State Parties to contribute, for each project approved for funding, the African Heritage Fund contributes 60% of costs but the State Party must find the other 40%.

Only those who have signed the Convention can contribute to and use the Fund

Prioritising projects

- Projects must be feasible and visible (human resources development, nomination dossiers, tentative lists).
- Project must not drain resources but in the long term contribute to growth
- The staff will see what is on the ground and what money is already available

In conclusion

The World Heritage Centre assigned an officer for 6 months to assist with the establishment process.

The African Heritage Fund is still developing its constitution and is using the Operation Guidelines to the World Heritage Convention as a framework. The African Heritage fund is happy to send copies of this and other documents to the PICS once they have official status.

WORKING MODEL OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE PROPOSED PACIFIC HERITAGE FUND AND REGIONAL AGENCIES IN THE PACIFIC.

