

Coffee book journey through Africa, celebrating World Heritage Convention 40th anniversary

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From the north, where the might of the pharaohs began civilisation, to the south, where humanity took its first steps, the continent of Africa is rich in cultural and natural resources that are revered and treasured by its people and the world.

Known as World Heritage Sites, these are protected under the 'Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage', which was ratified on 16 November 1972 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation World Heritage (UNESCO WH). This organisation encourages the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage sites around the world that are considered to be of outstanding value to humanity.

In celebration of its 40th anniversary, the South Africa government, in collaboration with the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) and the UNESCO WH, has planned an international conference on 'Living with World Heritage in Africa'.

This conference will be a part of the worldwide celebration of the anniversary under the theme 'World Heritage and Sustainable Development: the role of local communities'. It will bring together high-level decision makers from international and African governments, corporates, heritage institutions, local communities and development sectors.

Coffee table book to celebrate African World Heritage Sites

There are currently 126 World Heritage Sites in Africa across 38 of the 54 countries on the African continent. The State Parties of the African Union (AU) have all signed the 1972 WHC.

Supporting the implementation of the UNESCO WHC on the African continent, the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) is an inter-governmental organisation, formed by UNESCO-WH and the AU, which works for the effective conservation and protection of Africa's natural and cultural heritage and increases the presence of African sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

In conjunction with the AWHF, Litha Communications is producing a high value, glossy coffee table book, exploring the marvels of these proclaimed sites.

"The conference being held in South Africa offers the AWHF a unique occasion to produce a meaningful gift for the dignitaries that will attend the function," explains Teresa Jenkins, MD of Litha Communications.

The book is a visual expedition, taking the reader through a selection of the "unmissable" places of outstanding universal value to all humankind in Africa. Many see Africa as the Cradle of Humankind and a compelling hotspot of biodiversity in the world. This extensive collection of images will transport them through the scale and grandeur of our continent by celebrating our African World Heritage Sites, both cultural and natural, showing them in a new light, giving us many moments of delight from places we already know to be astonishing.

Also included will be exclusive extended comment provided by the patrons of the AWHF and individuals who have played a role in championing African people, places and stories.

"The proceeds from book sales will be used to support the sponsorship and fundraising drive of the AWHF spearheaded projects in Africa," adds director of the AWHF, Dr Webber Ndoro.

Sites at risk

Dr Ndoro recently spoke on an *Earth Watch* video explaining the need for business skills support from corporates to assist these places of outstanding universal value to all humankind in maintaining their significance and splendour (www.earthwatch.org/europe/our_work/corporate/shell/bswh_intro/). Many of the cultural sites are at risk, as conflict continues in such areas as Mali, threatening the ancient medieval collections of Arabic thought in the legendary Timbuktu (www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18674596).

Sponsorship opportunities

This limited edition book also offers Southern African corporates the opportunity to support the work of the fund and further the knowledge of these sites, 16 of which are in Southern Africa, through sponsorship, advertising and the purchase of customised dust jackets.

"The diamond sponsor would receive 500 books with a logo on the first page, a double page advertorial spread and a customised dust cover. This is an excellent opportunity to visibly support cultural and heritage issues to 5000+ readers, as these books continue to grace the reception areas of international embassies, businesses and homes," concludes Jenkins.

For advertising opportunities and sponsorship offers, email Stephen Watkins at stephen@lithacommunications.co.za or teresa@lithacommunications.co.za or tel 27 (0)11 480 4922.

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