



The Side Event for the 46th  
Session of the World Heritage Committee

# “The Understanding of Heritage Interpretation Strategy and Its Case Studies ”



**UNESCO WHIPIC**

International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation  
of World Heritage Sites under the auspices of UNESCO

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# “The Understanding of Heritage Interpretation Strategy and Its Case Studies ”





# EVENT OVERVIEW

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This booklet contains the main contents, including thematic presentations and Q&A sessions, from the side events of WHIPIC during the 46th Session of the World Heritage Committee, which was convened in India on July 25, 2024.

- **Event Name :** The Understanding the Heritage Interpretation Strategy and Its Case Studies
- **Date / Time :** Thursday 25th, 2024, 13:00 ~ 15:00
- **Venue :** Conference Room, New Delhi, India
- **Participants :** The World Heritage Committee and member states
- **Event Details :** Opening, thematic presentations, Q&A sessions and discussions



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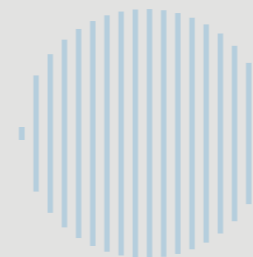
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# I . Opening Remarks

## Mr. Chang-nam Hong

Director General of WHIPIC

Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. I am Chang-nam Hong, the Director-General of the International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites.

It is my great pleasure to host the side event 'The Understanding of Heritage Interpretation Strategy and Its Case Studies'. I would like to deliver my deep appreciation to Dr. Jyoti Hosagrahar the Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre and all the speakers.

I would also like to express my gratitude and congratulation to Dr. Albino Jopela the Director of the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF), Mr. Rashad Faraj the Director of the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH), and all the staff who have been involved in planning this event. This event is a result of a longstanding collaboration between WHIPIC, AWHF and ARC-WH. Under the mission to understand World Heritage interpretation, we successfully conducted capacity-building workshops in Namibia and Bahrain.

During the capacity-building workshop, I realised that while many people understand the importance of heritage interpretation, they struggle with how to implement it effectively. Today's seminar is designed to meet these expectations. Our three organisers aim to share the knowledge and the expertise we have gained on heritage interpretation concept, procedures and the methods through our collaboration and research. I hope this will be a meaningful time for all of you.

Once again, thank you for your participation.



# II . Congratulatory Remarks

## Mr. Ebrahim Al Khalifa

Deputy Director of ARC-WH

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, this is a great honour for me to be with you here today. It is great to see the spectrum, a reflection of the importance of interpretation and presentation of World Heritage Sites on a global stage. It shows the commitment of member states and observers to safeguarding and protecting our common heritage.

As the Arab Regional Centre for World heritage, a Category 2 centre based in the Kingdom of Bahrain, we were pleased to partner with our colleagues at the African World Heritage Fund and the International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites (WHIPIC), in hosting and organising a Regional workshop from the 28th to 30th of April this year in Manama. This workshop was specifically targeting heritage site managers in our region, looking into priorities that were previously identified, during the third cycle of the periodic reporting exercise in the Arab states.

The workshop aimed to ensure the sustainable management of World Heritage sites in our region. And in order to achieve this, it is essential to strengthen the capacities of key stakeholders in developing sustainable tourism policies, strategies and plans, including for presentation and interpretation through participatory approaches and engaging local communities in all activities concerning the protection, conservation and promotion of World Heritage Sites.

The objectives of the workshop were to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of the interpretation and presentation of sites, emphasising its role in the sustainable conservation and management of these sites. And also, we facilitated a comprehensive assessment of values attributed to their heritage sites, identified key issues related to the interpretation and presentation of World Heritage Sites in our region, and enhancing the representation and promotion of sites to ensure their visibility and recognition.

Through the site visit to the Pearling Path, a World Heritage Site in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the participants had the opportunity to discuss local community engagement at the Pearling Path, explore the living heritage found on the site, and brainstorm an integrated approach to intangible and tangible heritage for the action plan regarding the interpretation of the site.

So, I think it shows that together as regional partners in the Arab and the African regions, and globally, we can work together to ensure that our sites are represented and presented in a way that protects our history and safeguards them for the future.

I would like to thank you all again for your attention and wish you all the best.





# Congratulatory Remarks

## Ms. Flora Mokgohloa

Trustee on Board of Trustees of AWHF

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, esteemed colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon to you all.

I'm honoured to speak at this collaborative event, which brings together three UNESCO Category 2 centres, namely the International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites that is, WHIPIC, the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF), of which I am a trustee board member, and the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH) under the theme 'The Understanding of Heritage Interpretation Strategy and Its Case-Studies'

The AWHF is an intergovernmental organisation that was created in 2006 by the African Union and UNESCO to address challenges faced by the African state parties in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention of 1972. Specifically, to address matters related to the underrepresentation of African sites on the World Heritage List and the insufficient conservation and management of these site. The fund is hosted by the government of South Africa on behalf of the African continent.

There is a growing demand for effective heritage interpretation strategies, and I am happy that the Category 2 centres from different regions are collaborating to respond to this particular need.

I need to further emphasise that in interpretation, we need to tell our stories in a manner in which we know them, in which we understand them, and in a way in which the world can then understand our stories. Our shared goal is to promote and showcase cultural and natural heritage by striving for improved interpretation and presentation of these World Heritage Sites and providing a platform for the exchange of best practices.

Effective heritage presentation is therefore essential for fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of these sites, ensuring that they are not only preserved but also meaningfully communicated to the global audience. We believe that collaboration among inter-regional Category 2 centres is crucial for the advancement of the implementation of the convention, and today's event is a testament to the power of collaboration, as my colleague from the Arab Regional Centre has indicated. By bringing together representatives from different regions, we can learn from each other and develop innovative approaches to heritage interpretation and presentation. And through these efforts, we aim to enhance the visibility and understanding of the World Heritage Sites in Africa, Asia, the Pacific region, and the Arab states.

In 2023, the AWHF and WHIPIC signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen collaboration among the states I mentioned earlier. And this agreement marks a significant step in our efforts to foster international cooperation and ensure that our heritage interpretation strategies are informed by a diverse range of perspectives and experiences. And this year, in 2024, the AWHF and ARC-WH signed a similar MoU to strengthen the collaboration with the Arab region. And this partnership underscores our commitment to working together to address common challenges and opportunities in heritage conservation.

These partnerships exemplify our commitment to fostering interregional collaboration and sharing expertise in heritage interpretation and presentation. And by working together, we can develop and implement strategies that resonate with diverse audiences, ensuring that World Heritage Sites are not only preserved but also appreciated and understood by all.

As we delve into the various case studies and explore the strategies that will be presented, I encourage you to engage actively and to share your experiences, and explore opportunities for further collaboration. Together, we can make significant strides in enhancing the interpretation and presentation of our shared heritage. I thank you.



## Congratulatory Remarks

### Mr. Peter Ngure

Permanent Delegate of Republic of Kenya to UNESCO

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, following established protocols, please receive my warm greetings. It is really a pleasure to join you at this special occasion, where we celebrate our collaborative ventures with the Arab states, specifically through the three C2C that have already been named.

At the outset, I would want to express my deepest gratitude to each one of you, many of whom have probably skipped lunch or opted for managing their weight, and as you do this, we manage our brains too. Because in such sessions you can be sure that they are very enriching on matters of interpretation and presentation.

What comes to my mind is the ability to express yourself and thinking about interpretation and presentation, it is more of a combination of both quantitative and qualitative skills. In Africa, where I come from, and specifically in African universities, we are still grappling with an acute shortage of qualitative researchers. I would say, without any fear of contradiction, that we still suffer from an acute shortage of qualitative researchers — people who can look at situations and without solely looking at the numbers, tables, and formulas, and who can be able to tell the story.

I think the shortage is not occasioned by the fact that we are not good storytellers, but rather it is a deficit in terms of deploying the appropriate tools for interpreting the story. And I think this is part of what we are looking forward to in this very unique session. And stories are better told when you have variety. The collaboration between the African states through the AWHE, together with the Arab states, presents to us with an opportunity to hear different stories and to appreciate different ways of interpreting and deploying the stories.

So, sit back, enjoy and learn how to tell and interpret stories. Thank you very much.



## Congratulatory Remarks

### Dr. Jyoti Hosagrahar

Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre

Your Excellency, Madame Sang-mi Park, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Korea to UNESCO, Your Excellency, Mr. Peter Ngure, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Kenya to UNESCO, dear distinguished representatives of WHIPIC, ARC-WH and AWHE, it is my great pleasure today to welcome you to this side event organised as a part of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee in New Delhi, and to welcome you on behalf of UNESCO.

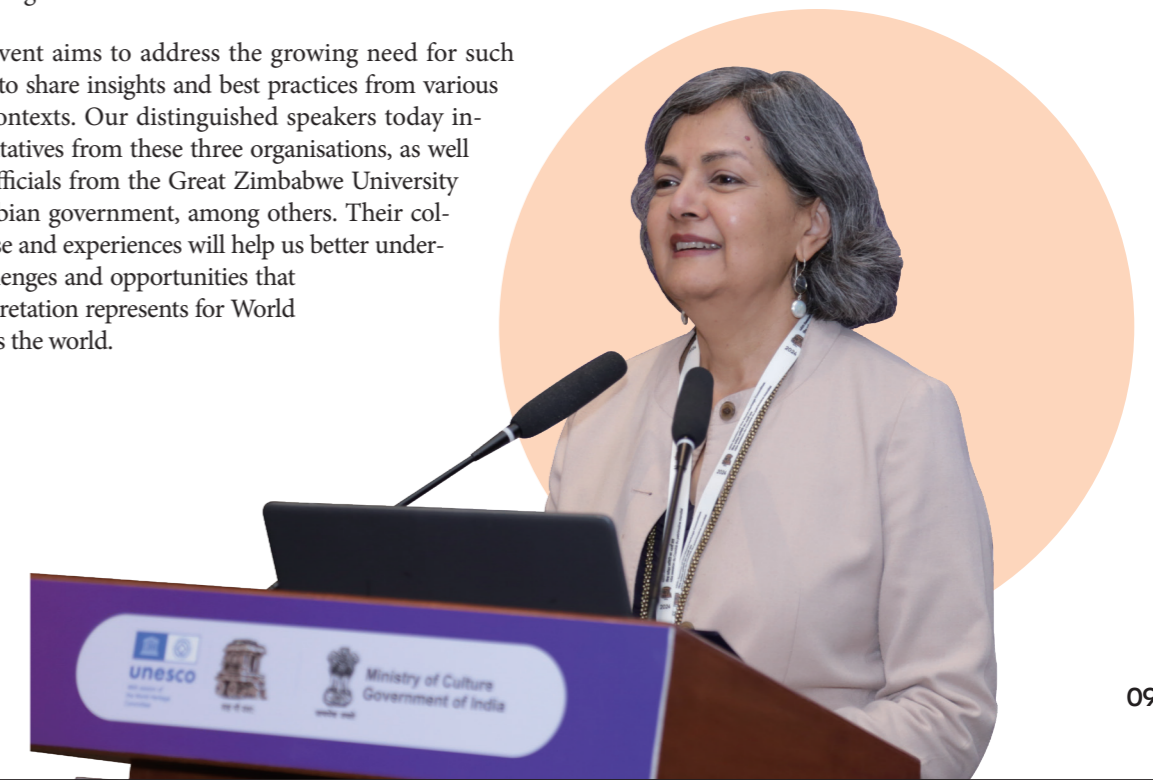
Our gathering today is made possible by the collaborative efforts of three Category 2 centres under the auspices of UNESCO working on World Heritage, the International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites (WHIPIC), the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF), and the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH), which are all very close collaborators with UNESCO. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to these institutions for your dedication and commitment to advancing our collective understanding of heritage interpretation.

The essence of World Heritage has evolved remarkably since the establishment of the World Heritage Convention in 1972. Our approach has transitioned from focusing mainly on the preservation of cultural properties to a more people-centred approach, where heritage truly plays a role in the lives of communities around the world.

Today, we recognise that heritage is not merely about conserving monuments and natural wonders; it is about engaging people, fostering appreciation, and ensuring that heritage is actively engaged in a manner that involves and benefits the communities around it.

Heritage interpretation is a vital component of this modern approach. Effective interpretation strategies enable us to connect with diverse audiences, communicate the value of heritage sites, and foster a sense of stewardship among local and global communities.

This side event aims to address the growing need for such strategies and to share insights and best practices from various regions and contexts. Our distinguished speakers today include representatives from these three organisations, as well as esteemed officials from the Great Zimbabwe University and the Namibian government, among others. Their collective expertise and experiences will help us better understand the challenges and opportunities that heritage interpretation represents for World Heritage across the world.





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One of the primary goals of this event is to raise awareness about the importance of heritage interpretation and to facilitate the exchange of good practices as we explore various case studies that highlight innovative approaches to interpretation and discuss how these can be adapted and applied in different contexts. We will also learn from each other by openly sharing our experiences. We can develop more effective strategies that resonate with diverse audiences and promote a deeper understanding of our shared heritage, so that it may be cherished and passed on to future generations as it was passed down to us.

By openly sharing our experiences, it is crucial to recognise the role of local communities and heritage interpretation. Communities are not just passive recipients of heritage; they are active participants and custodians of their knowledge, traditions and stories that are integral to the narrative of heritage sites. Engaging local communities in the interpretation processes ensures that their voices are heard, and that their perspectives are reflected in the way heritage is presented and managed. This inclusive approach not only enriches the visitor experience, but also fosters a sense of pride and ownership among community members.

Today, we will discuss various models of community engagement and see how we can empower communities to take a role in heritage interpretation. We will look at successful examples from different parts of the world and identify practical steps that we can take to enhance community involvement.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to WHIPIC, which is our youngest Category 2 centre that is specifically dedicated to interpretation of World Heritage, for its constant support since its establishment and for hosting this important event. The Centre's commitment to promoting cultural heritage and fostering international cooperation is truly commendable.

I also wish to extend my thanks to the co-organisers of this event, ARC-WH and AWHF, with whom we have had a long and fruitful collaboration. Many thanks also to the distinguished speakers and panellists.

And in conclusion, I want to reaffirm the importance of our collective dedication to safeguarding our shared heritage through effective and inclusive interpretation strategies. By working together, we can ensure that World Heritage Sites continue to inspire, educate, and bring people together around our shared heritage of humanity across the world. Thank you very much.

## III . Presentation

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### 1. World Heritage Interpretation: Why and How?

### 2. The Heritage Interpretation Framework of the Great Zimbabwe National Monument World Heritage

### 3. World Heritage Interpretation and Presentation in the Arab Region - Case Study: Pearling Path, Bahrain

### 4. Key Considerations for the Heritage Interpretation for the Africa Region and the Case of Twyfelfontein

## Presentation 1

# World Heritage Interpretation: Why and How?

| Ms. Haeree Shim Head of the Education and Networking office at WHIPIC



Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for joining our event. I will be presenting on the topic of World Heritage Interpretation: Why and How?

UNESCO WHIPIC was established in 2022, to focus solely on heritage interpretation. Over the last few years, we have received many requests from World Heritage Sites to enhance their interpretation. To meet their needs, we have done many research and also carried out capacity building projects.

Regarding the research, we have focused on values and attributes, and we have also developed heritage interpretation principles. And we also have research on sites of memory and dissonant heritage.

Regarding the capacity building programmes around the world, we collaborate with the African World Heritage Fund and also the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage. We have been carrying out many capacity building workshops for the site managers in the different regions.

My presentation will be composed of four parts:

- What is heritage interpretation?
- Why is it important?
- How it's done?
- And I will wrap up my presentation with the three case studies.

First, what is heritage interpretation and presentation?

It didn't emerge from nowhere. Freeman Tilden, who worked for the United States National Park Service, was one of the first people to set down the principles and theories of heritage interpretation in his 1957 book, 'Interpreting Our Heritage.' In his book, he introduced six principles of interpretation, which is still inspiring generations of interpreters and site managers across the world to this day. His main question was how to connect heritage to people, how to deliver, and communicate heritage values to the visitors.

All these discourses developed into the ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites, or what we call the Ename Charter. And it was able to suggest the definitions for interpretation and presentation.

Based on this research and discussions, WHIPIC and its international working group were able to suggest a new definition of heritage interpretation and presentation. Heritage interpretation is a meaning-making process through communication, participation and experience. And it increases understanding and promotes connections between people and heritage places. Whereas presentation is a range of methods for delivering interpretation that enhances experiences, raise awareness and understanding, and inspire engagement with heritage places.

An infographic titled 'A New Definition of Heritage Interpretation and Presentation' from UNESCO WHIPIC. It features a central image of a book cover titled 'Definitions and Concepts of Heritage Interpretation and Presentation 2023'. To the right of the book cover, there are two text boxes. The first box defines 'Heritage Interpretation' as a meaning-making process through communication, participation and experience, which increases understanding and promotes connections between people and heritage places. The second box defines 'Heritage Presentation' as a range of methods of interpretation delivery, for enhancing experience, raising awareness and understanding and inspiring engagement for heritage places. At the bottom right, there is a circular graphic indicating the period '2022 ~2023'. The UNESCO and WHIPIC logos are in the top right corner.

How is it different from the past definitions?

In the past, heritage interpretation was considered somewhat unidirectional because much focus was on the educational functions. Therefore, it had to be expert centred. But now, the new definition indicates that anyone can be the



subject of the heritage interpretation and the dialogue between the heritage and people is important. We try to embrace different perspectives through participatory approaches, involving diverse communities and stakeholders. And also, it is saying that it is a process, not an event.

Why do we need heritage interpretation?

From the tentative list to the inscription on the World Heritage list and even after the inscription, we are continually asked to be involved in interpretation. That includes preparing nomination dossiers, conducting attribute mapping, values and attribute research, and also writing up the Statements of Outstanding Universal Values (SOUV) as well.

Also, the committee sometimes requests that sites to develop a heritage interpretation strategy as part of their management plan, which may also include visitor centres and museum exhibitions. But why is it important now? Because as you are experiencing or as you are observing that managing World Heritage Sites in 21st century is not an easy job. We now face new issues and different challenges as the concept of heritage and conservation is evolving. And beyond the physical preservation, the recognition of the social and intangible aspects of heritage is becoming more important. And what we discussed in the committee on securing balance between the development and conservation is important. Also, seeking sustainable tourism and rehabilitation of communities is something what we want to try to achieve through the interpretation. And of course, we now have more and more sites of memory and dissonant heritage, which require a multi-layered understanding of heritage.

Through WHIPIC's regional heritage interpretation programmes, we were able to identify some of the needs for the heritage interpretation, different needs from different areas. WHIPIC also had a chance to analyse the use of interpretation in decisions regarding the state of conservation and the nomination process from 2020 to 2023, revealing a significant increase in its application. And also, the meaning of interpretation in these decisions has evolved from simple statements usually integrated with the tourism to a more diverse understanding that now encompasses new keywords such as participation and education. And the interpretation is now associated with many different notions.

How do we plan and implement heritage interpretation?

WHIPIC's research on heritage interpretation strategies is currently in progress. It is in a very provisional state, but I could share with you some of the concepts.

First, an interpretation strategy is a higher-level plan that provides an overview of different elements and perspectives, whereas an interpretation plan details the process of executing the strategy in a specific context. And the interpretation framework outlines the actual mechanisms of interpretation and how it works, including themes and narratives. And the interpretation concept is the core idea of your interpretation.

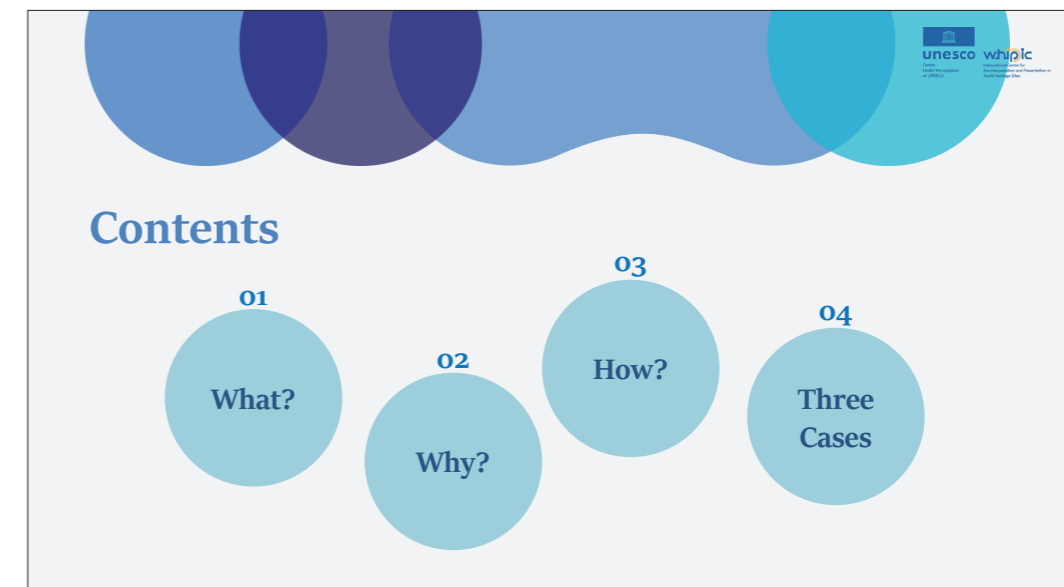
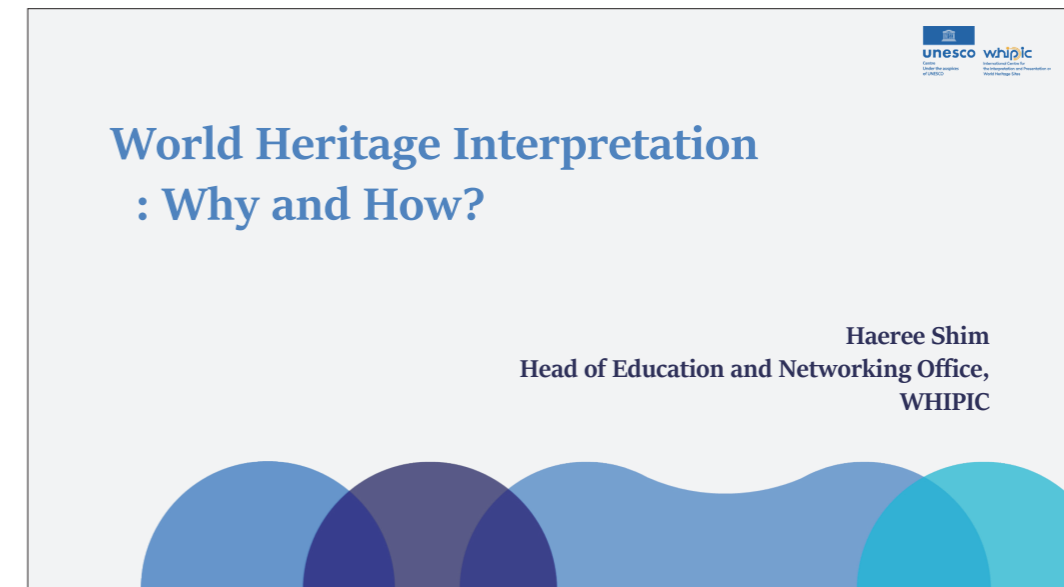
So, to provide practical references for site managers around the world, we are developing guidelines for the heritage interpretation process. This is still provisional, and I want to stress that it is open-ended, so that you can use it differently or use it in a different context. Basically, it is composed of five phases.

Now I want to briefly introduce the three presentations that will follow mine.

- The Great Zimbabwe National Monument World Heritage Site: In collaboration with WHIPIC and Great Zimbabwe University, we worked on the interpretation for two years, and Professor Manyanga will be delivering the presentation right after mine.
- Pearling, Testimony of an Island Economy in Bahrain: We also conducted the site managers workshop with the Arab Regional Centre in April in Bahrain. And during our visit, we were overwhelmed by its beauty and the advanced interpretation.
- And finally, we and the African World Heritage Fund, organised a site managers event last year at Twyfelfontein site in Namibia. And there was many interesting discussions and our colleague Mr. Alpheus will be also delivering the presentation.


Thank you very much for your attention.

## | Presentation Slides |

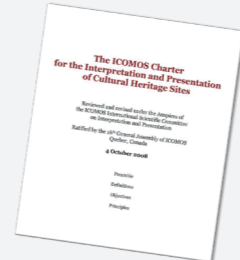




# O1 What is Heritage Interpretation and Presentation ?




## The ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage sites



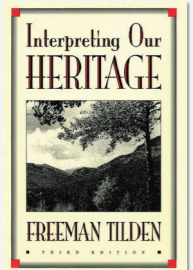
**Interpretation** refers to the full range of potential activities intended to heighten public awareness and enhance understanding of cultural heritage site.

**Presentation** more specifically denotes the carefully planned communication of interpretive content through the arrangement of interpretive information, physical access, and interpretive infrastructure at a cultural heritage site.

2008



## Freeman Tilden 'Interpreting Our Heritage'



### Six Principles of Interpretation

- 1 Interpretation must relate to the visitor's personality or experience to be effective.
- 2 Interpretation is not just information; it reveals deeper meanings.
- 3 Interpretation is an art that combines various arts and can be taught.
- 4 The main goal of interpretation is to provoke, not instruct. It should stimulate action.
- 5 Interpretation should present a whole picture, explaining relationships between things.
- 6 Interpretation for children should be fundamentally different from that for adults, addressing their specific needs.

1957



## A New Definition of Heritage Interpretation and Presentation



**Heritage Interpretation** is a meaning-making process through communication, participation and experience. It increases understanding and promotes connections between people and heritage places.

**Heritage Presentation** is a range of methods of interpretation delivery, for enhancing experience, raising awareness and understanding and inspiring engagement for heritage places.

2022 ~2023



### A New Definition of Heritage Interpretation and Presentation

The diagram shows a transition from a light blue circle on the left to a larger light blue circle on the right, connected by a double arrow. The left circle contains the text 'Heritage Interpretation in the Past' and a list of three items: 'Unidirectional', 'Educational Activity', and 'Expert Centred'. The right circle contains the text 'A New Definition' and a list of four items: 'Anyone can be the subject of heritage interpretation', 'The dialogue between heritage and people', 'Embracing different perspectives', 'Participatory approach of diverse communities and stakeholders', and 'It is a process, not an event'. The UNESCO WHIPIC logo is in the bottom right corner.

Heritage Interpretation in the Past

- ✓ Unidirectional
- ✓ Educational Activity
- ✓ Expert Centred

A New Definition

- ✓ Anyone can be the subject of heritage interpretation
- ✓ The dialogue between heritage and people
- ✓ Embracing different perspectives
- ✓ Participatory approach of diverse communities and stakeholders
- ✓ It is a process, not an event

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## 02 Why do we Need Heritage Interpretation ?

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### What is Heritage Interpretation in World Heritage Management

The diagram shows a flow from 'Tentative List' to 'After Inscription' via a wavy arrow. Below this is a horizontal bar with four chevron-shaped segments pointing right. A list of five items with checkmarks is positioned below the bar. The UNESCO WHIPIC logo is in the bottom right corner.

Tentative List

After Inscription

- ✓ Preparing Nomination Dossier
- ✓ Heritage Interpretation Strategy
- ✓ Management plan including Interpretation
- ✓ Interpretation plan within a tourism development plan
- ✓ Visitor Centre and Museum Exhibitions

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### Managing World Heritage in 21st Century

- ✓ The concept of heritage and conservation changes
- ✓ Beyond the physical preservation, the recognition of the social and intangible aspects of heritage becomes important
- ✓ Securing Balance between development and conservation
- ✓ Seeking Sustainable tourism and rehabilitation of community
- ✓ Sites of memory require a multi-layered understanding of the heritage

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### The Needs for Heritage Interpretation - WHIPIC's regional Heritage Interpretation programmes

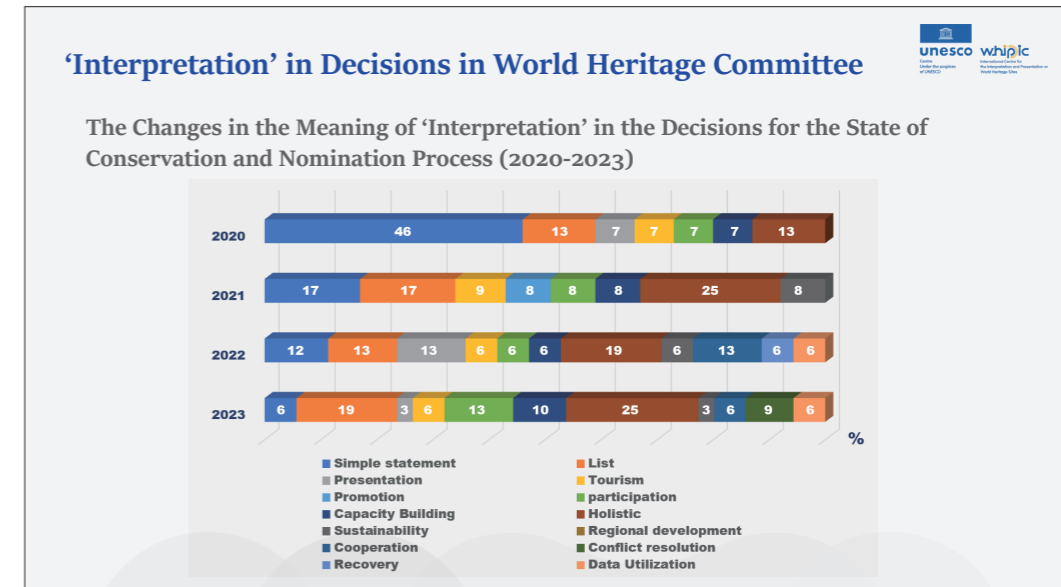
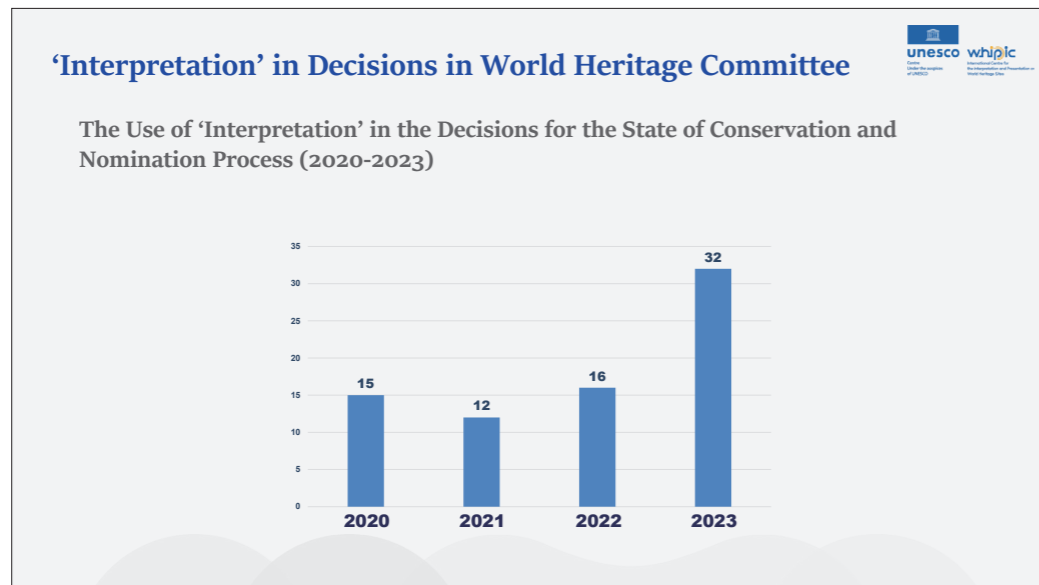
**Sustainable tourism**  
Integrated heritage interpretation strategy

**Post-colonial perspective**  
Improving the quality of life of the local

**Holistic approach to heritage including intangible & tangible**

**Community engaged heritage management**

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### The Changes in the Meaning of 'Interpretation' in Decisions in World Heritage Committee

2019 ~ 2023

- ✓ A straightforward statement showing the context of general 'Interpretation' mainly integrated with tourism and conditions for necessary conservation management
- ✓ The meaning of interpretation becomes more diversified
- ✓ The use of 'interpretation' now encompasses new keywords such as participation and education
- ✓ There is a growing trend towards proposing comprehensive and holistic interpretive strategies, including the 'consideration for a full history'
- ✓ The 'interpretation' is now associated with different notions: conflict resolution, integrated management, cooperative approach, and social issues, etc.

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## 03 How do we plan and implement the Heritage Interpretation ?

**World Heritage Interpretation Concepts**

✓ <b>Interpretation Strategy</b>	A high level plan, an overview of different elements and perspectives; Purpose, direction, Process, Outcome
✓ <b>Interpretation Plan</b>	Detailed process of executing the strategy in a specific context; Designs, Budgets, Timelines
✓ <b>Interpretation Framework</b>	The mechanism of how interpretation works; Main themes and sub themes, relevant narratives, ways to engage, enhancing visitor experiences
✓ <b>Interpretation Concept</b>	A core idea that forms the strategy; An overarching narrative that binds many disparate elements







## A Guideline for Planning World Heritage Interpretation - A Summary

**Phase 1: Identifying the necessary people and the relevant context - Interpretation Strategy**


- 1.1. Create the heritage interpretation team
- 1.2. Identify and analyse the actors and context connected to the heritage



## A Guideline for Planning World Heritage Interpretation - A Summary

**Phase 2: Understanding the heritage place through data collection and analysis - Interpretation Plan**


- 2.1. Desk-based research of heritage
- 2.2. Analyse the management context
- 2.3. Visitor studies/audience development



## A Guideline for Planning World Heritage Interpretation - A Summary

**Phase 3: Developing the interpretation themes and narratives - Interpretation Framework**

- 3.1. Identify and select interpretation themes and narratives
- 3.2. Create a heritage interpretation framework
- 3.3. Review the interpretation plan (framework) with relevant actors
- 3.4. Create interpretation contents



## A Guideline for Planning World Heritage Interpretation - A Summary

**Phase 4: Presenting the themes and selecting the methods - Presentation**

- 4.1. Select presentation methods/media
- 4.2. Evaluation (front-end)



## A Guideline for Planning World Heritage Interpretation - A Summary

Phase 5: Follow-up and maintenance

5.1. Periodic monitoring and maintenance after implementation




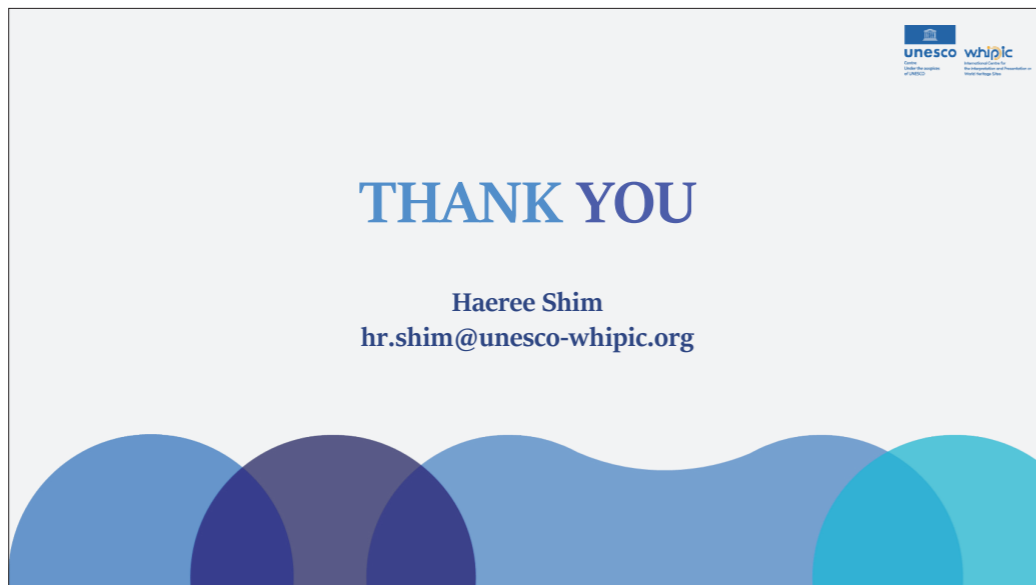
## 04 Three Cases of Heritage Interpretation

01  
Great Zimbabwe  
National Monument  
World Heritage  
Interpretation  
Project



02  
Pearling,  
Testimony of an  
Island Economy  
and its  
Interpretation





## Presentation 2

# The Heritage Interpretation Framework of the Great Zimbabwe National Monument World Heritage

| Prof. Munyaradzi Manyanga GZU(Great Zimbabwe University)

Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, my presentation will focus on the case study of Great Zimbabwe.

I think many of us may be asking the question: why an interpretive framework for such a well-known site like Great Zimbabwe? What are the issues? We know a lot about this particular site, so my presentation will show the need for an interpretation framework.

Here, we are dealing with the whole process of meaning-making, which is complex. It involves individuals and groups of people. And because of that, you realise that we are coming up with different interpretations and therefore the processes themselves must be participatory, inclusive, and comprehensive.

The Great Zimbabwe was listed on the World Heritage List in 1986 on the basis of three criteria. I won't get into the details in terms of its importance, but I will do that as I proceed with my presentation.

The most outstanding thing about Great Zimbabwe is that it is the largest manmade ancient structure in sub-Saharan Africa. What is outstanding about it is the impressive structures, advanced engineering, and architectural skills that are





demonstrated at this site. Also, it served as the capital of one of the most powerful and influential pre-colonial empires in southern Africa. It is also a symbol of African cultural heritage and a source of national pride. The stunning setting within an environment comprising of granite hills and valleys, adds to its significance. For the scientific community, it provides a lot of information and secrets of this ancient Shona civilization. But most importantly, there are issues of spirituality surrounding Great Zimbabwe, as it is regarded as a sacred site, the dwelling place for ancestral spirits, a strong connection between the land, the living and the dead. A venue for national ceremonies and rituals, a unique spiritual energy and a place for healing. And to others, a place for pilgrimage. And one can also add the key importance of Great Zimbabwe being a regional and international trade centre, which represented a symbol of globalization way back, from about the 11th century to the 17th century.

But in terms of trying to justify this framework, one has to look at the context of Great Zimbabwe. And if one is to look at the narrative that we have about Great Zimbabwe, is that we have always had a prevailing singular official narrative, which marginalised certain voices, especially those of Africans, non-experts and local communities. And on this particular note, I would like to also say that this is probably the case with a number of African and other Asian countries sites, where they have not been that inclusive.

For example, during the colonial period, the official narrative often marginalised certain voices, especially those of Africans, pro African origin, non-experts and local communities, where African communities were mostly reduced to labourers during excavations. So, they had no role to play in interpretation, they had no opportunity to express themselves and also to relate with this particular place. And, this was the sort of thinking that prevailed during the colonial period.

Following independence, there was this idea that we need to correct that unitary narrative and to provide new perspectives and new histories. And also, quoting one of the leaders who once said 'it is now time to set the record straight and to seek out and to renew our past.'

And again, we proceed to look at the kind of revisionist scholars to do with Great Zimbabwe, where basically the issues largely focused on academic narratives that tended to neglect local stories, traditions and cultural processes associated with the Great Zimbabwe and therefore the narratives did diminish the rich cultural diversity and the individual experiences that are connected with this site.

So, in terms of trying to talk about the interpretation of Great Zimbabwe, it is very clear from the two contrasting examples that it is actually an interpretation that needs rehabilitation. And the key issues are that when you look at the interpretation, that still very little attempt has been made to correct some of the problems from the past. So, there is need to expand and also to diversify the voices that tells the story of Great Zimbabwe. But not only the fact that we need that narrative, but this also calls for a decolonial, multivocal, and inclusive interpretation, which is focused on the relationship between heritage conservation, development, tourism and taking into account alternative opinions of communities, vulnerable populations, women, the youth and other role players.

And it is in this context now that we had this partnership between Great Zimbabwe University, the International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites (WHIPIC), National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe, UNESCO Regional office, and funded by the African French Development Agency and with the coordination of UNOPS to try to come up with a new interpretation for Great Zimbabwe.

This initiative can be viewed through three key points: firstly, the need to be inclusive and comprehensive. Secondly, the need to adopt digital technologies in the presentation of Great Zimbabwe. And lastly, the whole issue of setting up various themes, that articulate current issues related to Great Zimbabwe and the guiding principles including issues of inclusivity, multivocality, collaboration, dialogue, understanding and empathy.

So, in terms of the process itself, we have already seen that we were focusing on developing the concept and then the framework itself. And I have talked about the issue of inclusivity. And then in terms of the major theme, it revolves around Great Zimbabwe as a great African civilization, where the past and the present meet. We developed a number of themes. And using that particular framework, it guides the visitors on what to see, what to find, how to experience the site, and what to share.

From our research, it is evident that the communities emphasise on the key point that we want to be part of the interpretation and storytelling at Great Zimbabwe. Our lessons from there are that we need to build a framework which is based on local content. We need to accommodate multiple narratives. We need to tone down on hegemonic narratives, which tends to dominate. and we need to work up, with a framework which is guided by best practices, interpretations, and lastly, to use standard toolkits for inclusivity and issues of comprehensiveness.

But if anything, one of the key things that we have learned from this is that many hands make light work. When I ask the question, why an interpretive framework is needed for Great Zimbabwe, the examples that are given were meant to show that we have unfinished business as a post colony. How do we tell a story which is more inclusive, more comprehensive, and gives our visitors a better experience of this World Heritage site. Thank you.

## | Presentation Slides |

# Great Zimbabwe World Heritage Site Interpretation Framework

46th World Heritage Committee  
25 July 2024

New Dehli, India

Prof. Munyaradzi Manyanga  
mmanyanga@gzu.ac.zw  
WhatsApp +263 77 979 1235



## Great Zimbabwe: Criterion for Listing as World Heritage

- ✓ Criterion (i): A unique artistic achievement. The method of construction is unique in African architecture and, although they are examples of similar work elsewhere, none are as distinguished and imposing as Great Zimbabwe
- ✓ Criterion (iii): The ruins of Great Zimbabwe bear a unique testimony to the lost civilisation of the Shona between the 11th and 17th centuries.
- ✓ Criterion (vi): A highly spiritual and sacred site to this day and entire Zimbabwe nation has identified with this historically symbolic ensemble and has adopted as its emblem the steatite bird, which may have been a royal totem.



## Spirituality


Impressive stone structures & Advanced engineering and architectural skills

Capital of a vast, powerful and influential precolonial empire in southern Africa


A symbol of African cultural heritage and a source of national pride

Set in a stunning natural environment comprising granite hills and valleys

Amazing scientific discoveries which continue to uncover the secrets of the ancient Shona civilisation



## Regional and International Trade: A symbol of globalisation





## The Great Zimbabwe Context

- ✓ Great Zimbabwe has always had a prevailing singular official narrative, which marginalised certain voices, especially those of Africans, non-experts, local communities

## Colonial Zimbabwe

“I do not think that I am far wrong if I suppose that the ruin on the hill is a copy of Solomon’s Temple on Mount Moriah and the building in the plain a copy of the palace where the Queen of Sheba lived during her visit to Solomon.....a civilised white nation must once have lived there.”



‘..independence will bestow on us.. a new future and perspective and, indeed, a new history and new past’



Post Independence Zimbabwe



‘...now it is the time to set the record straight, to seek out and to renew our past’

## Revisionist Scholarship





## An Interpretation in Need of Rehabilitation

- ✓ To date very little attempt had been made to correct, expand, or diversify the voices who can tell stories about Great Zimbabwe and its surrounding environs.
- ✓ This calls for a decolonial, multi-vocal and inclusive interpretation focused on the intersection between heritage, conservation, development, and tourism and taking into account alternative opinions of communities, vulnerable populations, women, the youth and other role players.
- ✓ To address these interpretive challenges, Great Zimbabwe University, The International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage sites (WHIPIC), National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe, UNESCO Regional Office of Southern Africa with funding from AFD under the coordination of UNOPs developed an interpretive framework for Great Zimbabwe World Heritage sites.

## Aim and goals of the Framework

- ✓ To put in place the mechanisms for a balanced, comprehensive, inclusive, participatory and holist interpretation of Great Zimbabwe that communicates the significance of the World Heritage site and reconnects local communities and visitors to the site.
- ✓ Address the renewed public interest in Great Zimbabwe providing the much-needed conceptual basis for reimagining the interpretation and presentation of the site and integration of digital technologies in the presentation of its outstanding universal value.
- ✓ To improve the visitor experience at Great Zimbabwe World Heritage site that cater for diverse audiences by setting out various themes for interpretation and storytelling, making connections to contemporary challenges such as climate change, resilience, urbanism and sustainable livelihoods.

## Guiding Principles


- Inclusivity
- Multi-vocality
- Diversity
- Collaboration
- Dialogue
- Understanding
- Empathy



## Developing the Framework: Processes

- ✓ Stakeholder Consultation
- ✓ Visitor consultations
- ✓ SWOT Analysis
- ✓ Interpretation Toolkit on implementing Inclusive World Heritage Interpretation and Presentation
- ✓ Review of documents on Great Zimbabwe (its archaeology, management & world heritage issues)
- ✓ Recourse to good practice from other sites e.g. Torbay and Hadrian's Wall

Inclusive and participatory process that saw academics, community leaders, creatives, and heritage interpretation experts convening to a round table to develop new and innovative narratives for the World Heritage site.

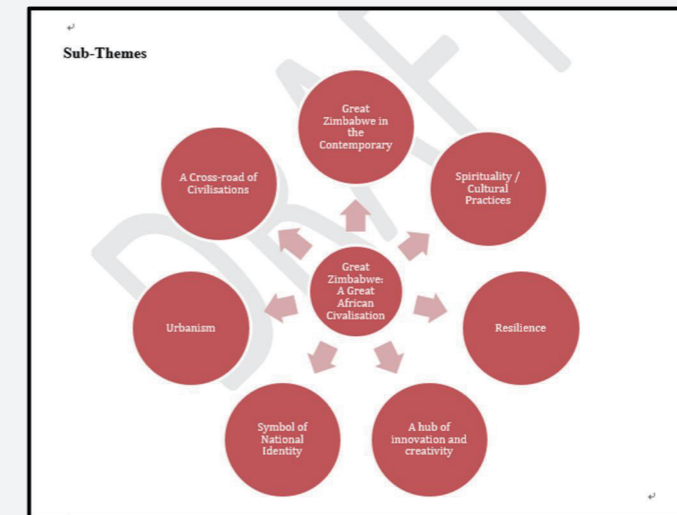



*Routledge Studies in African Archaeology and Cultural Heritage*

**GREAT ZIMBABWE**  
RECLAIMING A 'CONFISCATED' PAST

Shadreck Chirikure

## Great Zimbabwe: A Great African Civilization, Where Past and Present Meet



## Using the Framework

- ✓ WHAT to see? – unique site attributes, which can be expanded based on continued interaction with the site.
- ✓ WHERE to find? – locating attributes on or off-site.
- ✓ HOW to experience? – activities that promote immersion in the “WHAT” attributes at “WHERE.”
- ✓ WHAT to share? – offers various ways of sharing experiences at Great Zimbabwe.
- ✓ Main theme of the framework can be used as a starting point for any interpretive approach taken by various role players and users of the site – managers, visitors, local communities, chiefs, churches and other audiences. This is followed by supporting themes that provide diverse narratives and voices to support the main theme and tell the story of Great Zimbabwe.



'We want to be part of the interpretation and story telling at Great Zimbabwe.'



## Lessons

- ✓ Build the framework based on the local context
- ✓ Accommodate multiple narrative
- ✓ Tone down hegemonic narratives
- ✓ Without a framework and guiding best practices, interpretation can result in a heritage place being misunderstood and misrepresented
- ✓ Use a standard toolkit to allow for
  - Inclusivity
  - Comprehensiveness



## Why an Interpretive framework for Great Zimbabwe

- ✓ To renew, to bring life to a tired, inadequate narrative
- ✓ To rehabilitate a broken narrative
- ✓ To reconnect local people and visitors to the site
- ✓ To make the OUVs understood
- ✓ The past in the present: to bring relevance of the site to contemporary issues
- ✓ To tell a more up to date and comprehensive story
- ✓ To bring social, economic and environmental sustainability





### Presentation 3

## World Heritage Interpretation and Presentation in the Arab Region - Case Study: Pearling Path, Bahrain

| **Mr. Rashad Faraj** Director of the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, friends and colleagues, welcome.

The Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage is a Category 2 centre established under the auspices of UNESCO. It was incorporated in 2010 and began operations in 2012. And it is an autonomous, independent legal entity that represents the 19 Arab member states that are a signatory to the World Heritage Convention.

We began our engagement with WHIPIC through a MOU that was signed in April 2024, which was quickly followed by a workshop on interpretation. Not too long ago, we had 25 participants from 15 countries representing 24 different World Heritage Sites in the Arab region. We hosted this in Bahrain, using the example of the Pearling Path.

The objectives were fundamentally to provide participants with the comprehensive understanding of interpretation and to facilitate that understanding towards their own sites. We aimed to identify the issues that we're facing, both individually in different sites and as a region. And ultimately, which is our role as a Regional Centre is to enhance the repre-





sentation of World Heritage Sites in the Arab region. And to do so through developing concrete steps through an action plan to address the different challenges and provide better solutions for these sites.

The Pearling Path, our second inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list, which was inscribed in 2012. The inscription is titled “Pearling: Testimony of an island economy”, and it is a cultural site inscribed under criterion number three. And it is an ensemble of properties, so it is a serial nomination. This is particularly interesting because it covers the original seashore of Muharraq, the fort that protected it, three oyster beds that are offshore, and about 16 urban properties.

Now, let’s start with the oyster beds. There are three oyster beds (Hayrat in Arabic), which are located on the northern shore of Muharraq. And they represent some of the richest sources of oysters and pearls. So traditionally, boats would be coming from as far as Kuwait and the UAE to dive and extract the oysters that were considered to be the sources of the best pearls.

Alongside that, we have the original shoreline. The shoreline was very important because not only did it serve as the site of departure for a lot of the pearling boats, but also where they would return. The shoreline also was where officials were greeted, functioning like an airport of sorts at the time for the public.

And then we have 17 properties, starting with the fort and then a number of different houses, which represented different parts of the nomination.

Regarding the interpretation, the process started with community consultation, at the very beginning of the inscription process. A large part of it was determining how to interpret such a wide range of different types of structures and different types of interactions? It was really essential to identify how it is that the people of this living city interacted with their past, interacted with the traditions, interacted with the structures that were there, and interacted with the physical sites.

We began the process of the nomination file and conservation plan in 2009, having done a lot of consultation with the community. Data collection was undertaken by an anthropologist, who interviewed local communities to establish context and understanding for how it is that people reacted. And as we began to identify the various elements of the site, more investigation led to more understanding and a deeper level of interpretation of the site. So, the process was a long one and continues as we continue to learn more about the site as we go along.

To present our heritage, we created the Pearling Path. And it’s important to understand that this path is an imaginary path that ties together 17 different components: a seashore, a fort, and 16 urban properties. We had to try to find a way of not only making it interactive, but also creating access to people to these sites. We established two visitor centres: the first at the seashore of Bu Maher, that was inaugurated in 2012 upon inscription, and the second, a visitor and experience centre, sort of halfway around the middle of the path. Alongside the two visitor centres, we also established a pearl museum, which houses some of the tools and equipment, but also showcases how far and wide the pearls that were extracted from the seashore of Bahrain were appreciated, including items from the Cartier collection and other esteemed jewellers. Each of the 16 buildings features a small exhibition related to the activities and the lives of the people who lived there, designed to be as interactive as possible.

Finally, the infrastructure that needed to be built around it, including a pedestrian bridge to cross highways to make the path accessible from the seashore, four multi-story parking, and 17 public spaces shaded by trees, with water fountains and pathways for visitors to follow.

This is the Pearling Path, which begins at the seashore with the original visitor centre and extends to the new visitor centre. It is not a natural linear path but runs across a very dense urban landscape, which created its own challenges in connecting these spaces.

The pedestrian bridge is another example of the connectivity, the infrastructure that was required in order to bring things together because there was a highway to cross.

And then this is an example of the Dana Square. There are 17 of these small squares dotted along the path, where people can congregate, get together, have break points and rest along the way. And these spaces also serve as public spaces for interaction.

Regarding the Presentation methods, we utilize displays as museums normally would, including projections on walls and information panels. One interesting example involves one of the houses, which served as a traditional herbalist or medicinal house. In reinterpreting this house, we planted some of the traditional herbs used to treat pearl divers, creating a living example of continuity.

We also have audio installations of the music performed by the pearl divers and sensory installations that evoke the scents of imported tobacco or the gouge that was used to coat the boats. Live video displays are also part of the experience.

The place is kept alive through guided tours, social media engagement, and the incorporation of intangible cultural heritage as well. Music is a fundamental part of the pearl diving experience. And we had a lot of different types of traditional arts such as Murada Art that women would perform or the Bahri Art.



Community engagement is crucial. This ensures that the site stays alive, traditions are carried forward, and younger audiences and future generations can continue to use the site and interact with it.

The interpretation process is where we encounter the real challenges. This site presents a fantastic opportunity for interpretation because there were so many different perspectives, interactions, histories, and people that we needed to all bring together.

The lessons learned from this were applied on a lot of different sites around the Arab world, with 24 different sites represented in the workshop we hosted with WHIPIC. And that was a great driver towards an understanding of the challenges that we face in the region.

And the final outcomes are that we have identified a path forward. These thematic elements are accompanied by action plans for each area. With WHIPIC, we hope to host more workshops addressing each of these thematic areas and having specific action plans for each of the regions. Thank you.





## | Presentation Slides |



### About the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage

المركز الإقليمي العربي للتراث العالمي

Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH)




ARC-WH is a **Category 2 Center** under the **auspices of UNESCO** and was established in the Kingdom of Bahrain by a Royal Decree issued in 2010.

It is an autonomous and independent legal entity at the service of the **19 Arab States Parties to the World Heritage Convention.**

### ARC-WH Role in the Arab Region





- **Assist the Implementation** of the World Heritage Convention in the Arab States
- Help to **Improve** the Representation of the Arab States on the World Heritage List
- Provide a platform for **technical support** for the effective implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the region
- Support the **Conservation, Promotion & Protection** of Cultural and Natural World Heritage in the Arab Region
- **Build** a Stronger **Network** of World Heritage Professionals in the Arab Region



**Regional Workshop on Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites in the Arab Region**

28-30 April 2024

25 Participants	15 Countries	24 World Heritage Sites
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## Workshop Objectives



Provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of the interpretation and presentation of World Heritage sites, emphasizing its role in the sustainable conservation and management of these sites.



Facilitate participants' comprehension and assessment of values attributed to their heritage sites.



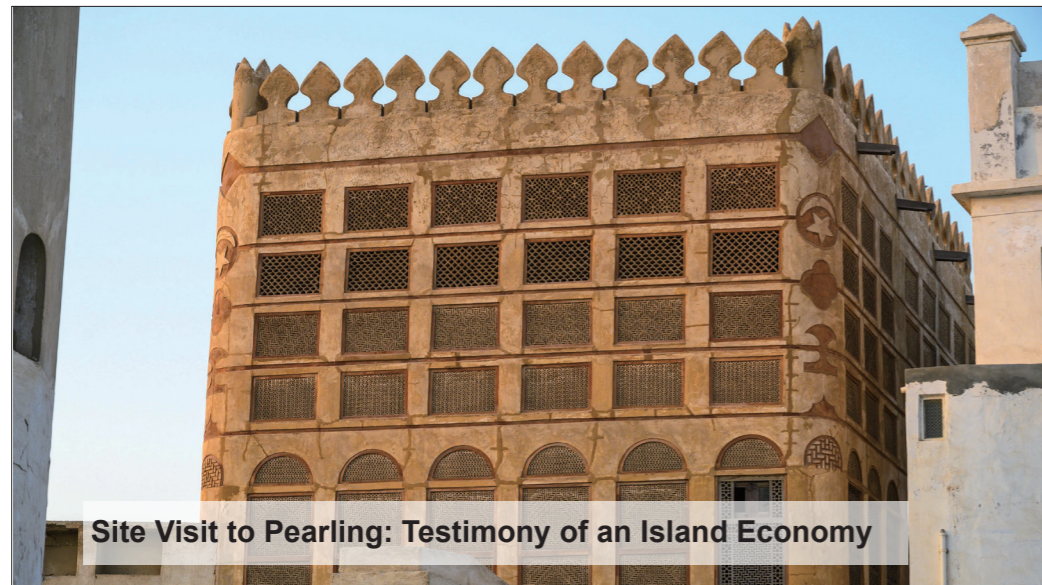
Identify key issues related to the interpretation and presentation of World Heritage in the Arab region.



Enhance the representation and promotion of World Heritage sites in the Arab region, ensuring their visibility and recognition.



Develop an Action Plan addressing the main challenges and solutions for a better Heritage Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites in the Arab Region.



Site Visit to Pearling: Testimony of an Island Economy

### Pearling, Testimony of an Island Economy

**Location:** Bahrain

**Cultural/ Natural Heritage:** Cultural

**Criteria:** iii

**Year of inscription:** 2012

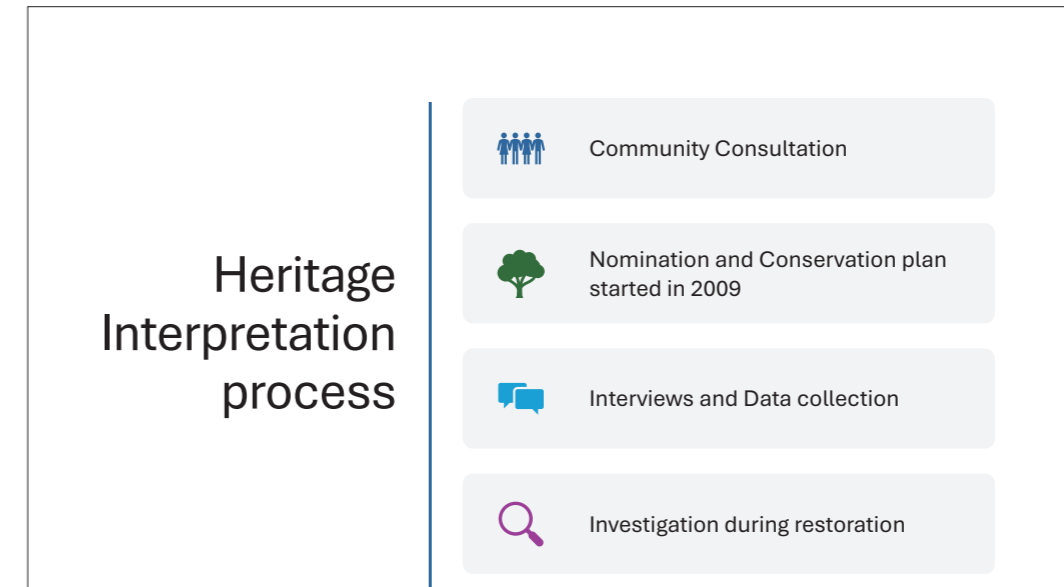
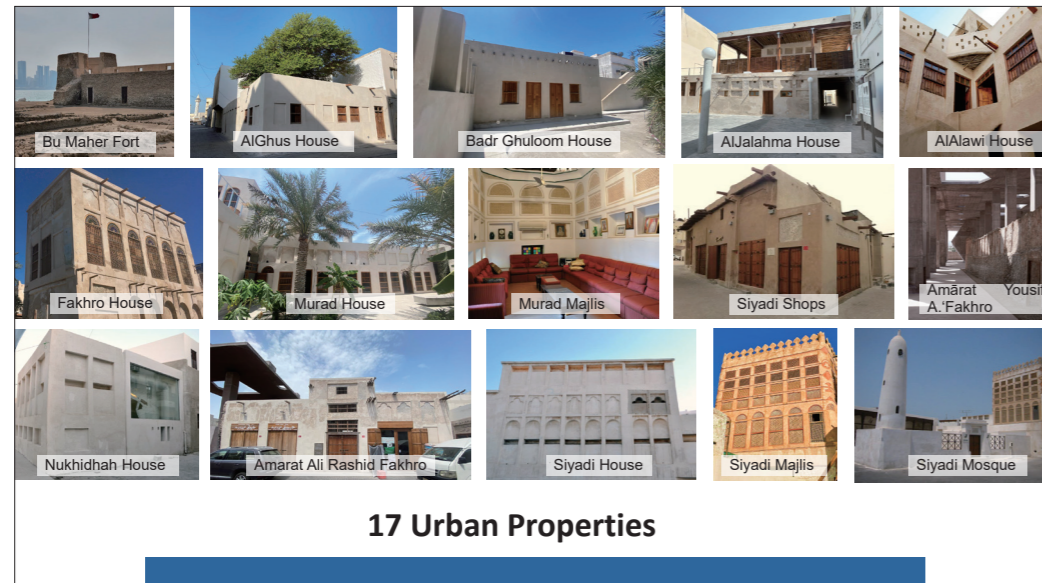
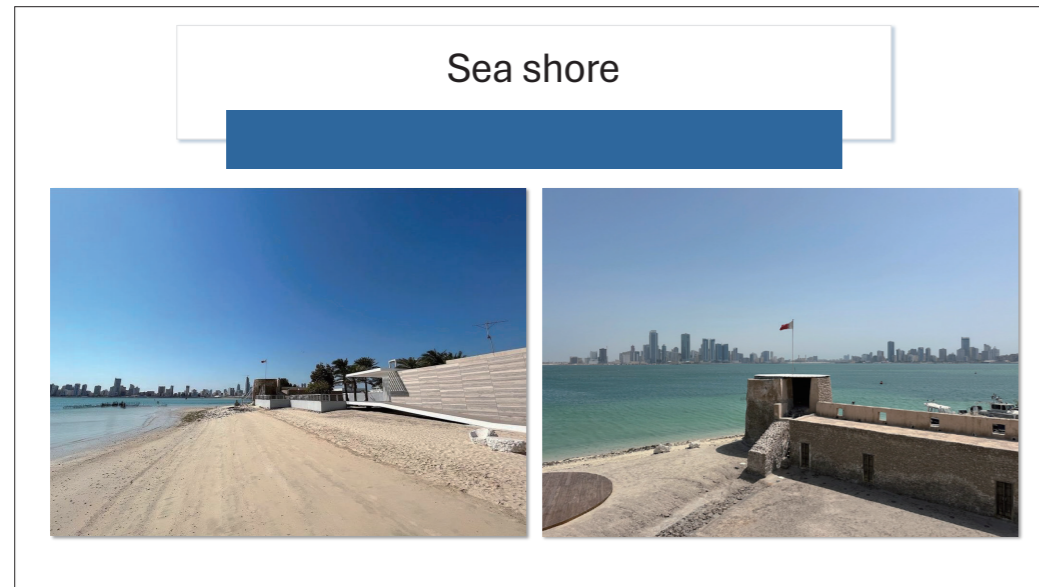


Criterion (iii) The ensemble of urban properties, fort, seashore and oyster beds is an **exceptional testimony to the final flourishing of the cultural tradition of pearling** which dominated the Persian Gulf between the 2nd and early 20th centuries. Although the pearling industry has died, these sites carry the memory of its prosperity and the building traditions that it fostered.



Oyster Beds



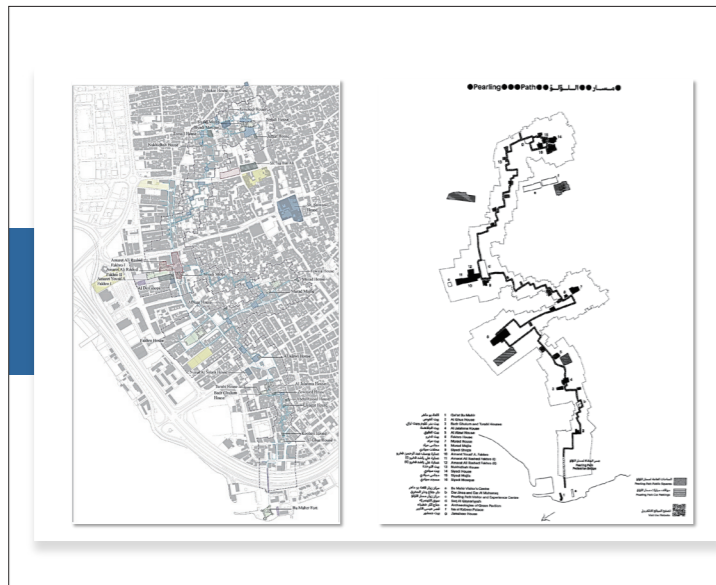






### Heritage Presentation

- Creation of the Pearling Path
- Establishment of 2 Visitor Centres
- Establishment of a Pearl Museum
- Exhibition in each property
- Other Tourism Infrastructures (Pedestrian Bridge, Multi-storey Parking and Public spaces)



### Creation of the Pearling Path



Bu Maher Fort Visitor Centre







Pearling Path Visitor and Experience Centre

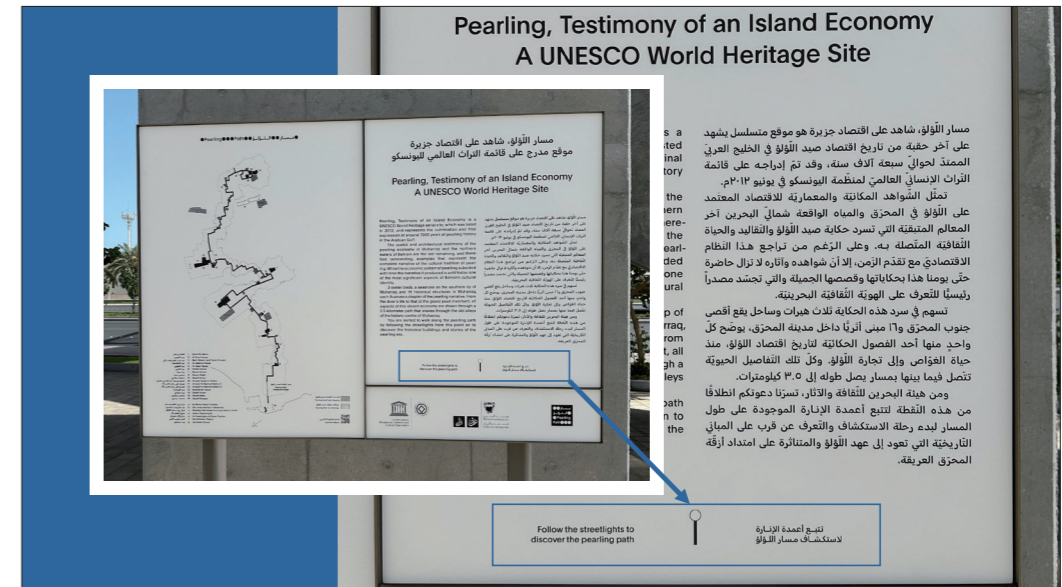


Pedestrian Bridge

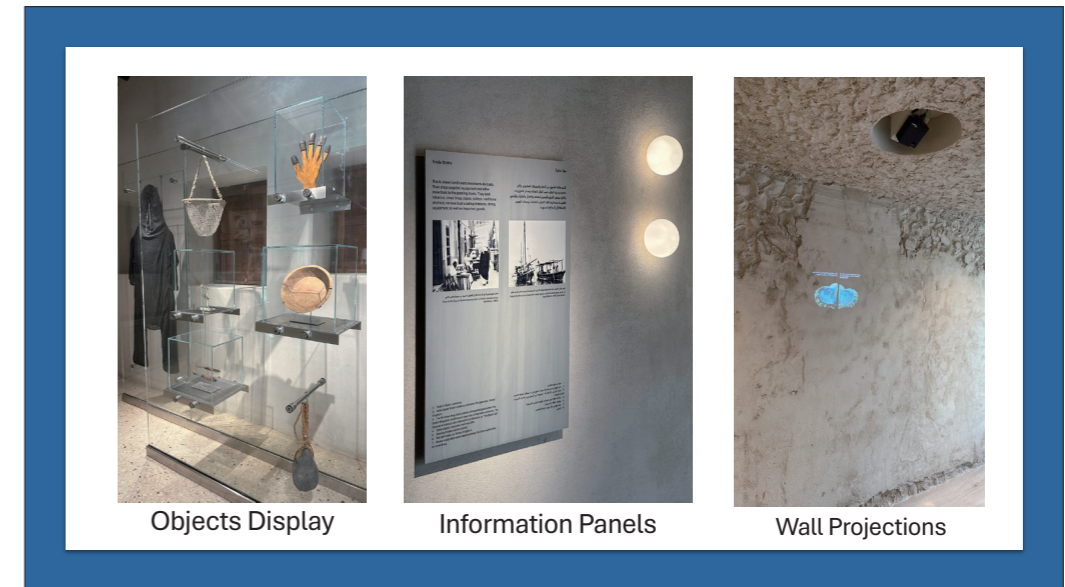


Public Spaces





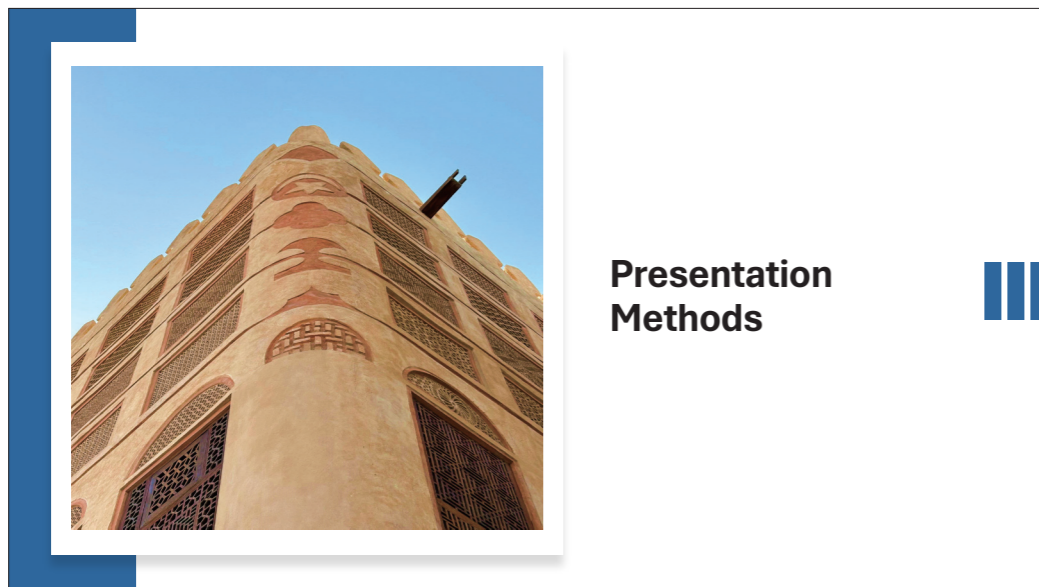




Objects Display

Information Panels

Wall Projections



### Presentation Methods




#### Courtyard of Badr Ghuloom House

- Some of the plants used for treatment are cultivated in the courtyard.



### Stimulating different senses



Audio installation      Smell installation      Video displays

### Storytelling Techniques




Storytelling Techniques

### Temporary Fixtures



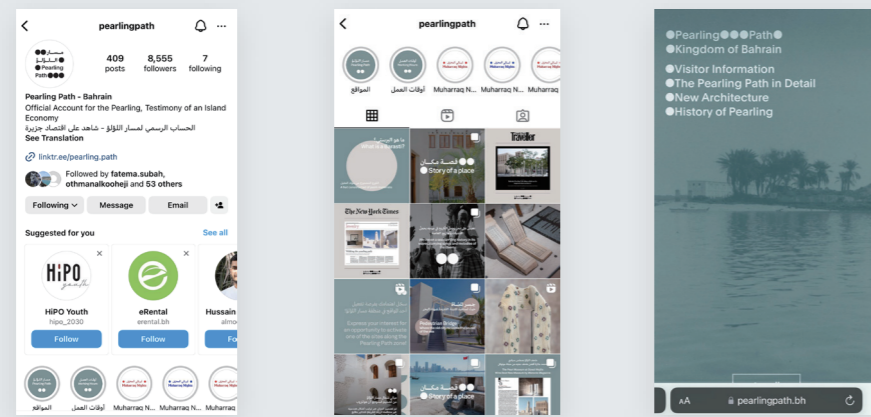
Temporary Fixtures

### Guided Tours



Guided Tours

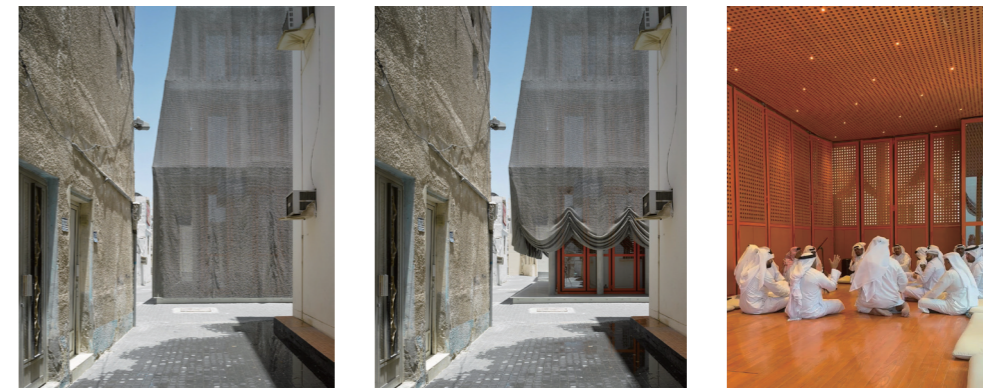
### Website & Social Media



## Intangible Cultural Heritage



### Dar AlMuharraq



فن المرادة  
Murada Art

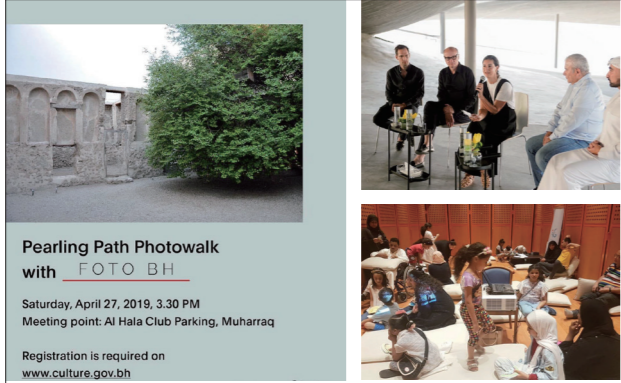


فن البحري  
Bahri Art




فلق المحار  
Oyster Flicking





**Pearling Path Photowalk**  
with FOTO BH  
Saturday, April 27, 2018, 3.30 PM  
Meeting point: Al Hala Club Parking, Muharraq  
Registration is required on [www.culture.gov.bh](http://www.culture.gov.bh)

**Community Engagement**



هيئة الثقافة تقيم سلسلة من النقاشات الحوارية على مسار الؤلؤ



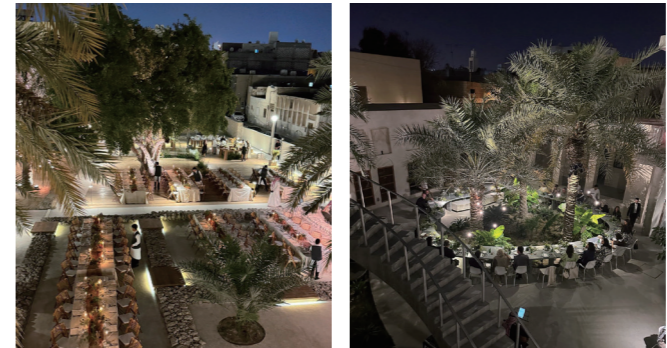
**جَيَّة بِيَّة**  
**HEYA BEYA**  
يوم عرفة 9 ذو الحجة 1444 هـ  
27 يونيو 2023  
5:30 مساءً - قلعة بو ماهر  
Day of Arafah, 9 Dhu Al Hijjah 1444 AH  
27 June 2023  
5:30 PM - Qalat Bu Mahir

**Revival of Traditions**



**Muharraq Nights**

**Activation of houses**








عَبَّرْ عَنْ اهْتِمَامِكَ  
Expression of Interest

فرص للتفعيل الثقافي بالمحرّق  
Cultural Activation Opportunities in Muharraq

culturebah and pearlingpath

### Heritage interpretation and Presentation challenges facing the Pearling Path







-  Circulation: macro and micro scale
-  In general, the presentation needs to be more interactive and innovative.
-  The current presentation of the information in two languages may unintentionally exclude visitors who do not read either of those languages.
-  Presentation is constrained by the architecture and the condition of the buildings, in terms of area sizes and facilities available in each building.
-  Massive urban development of the city; hard for visitors to visualize how the historic city used to be.



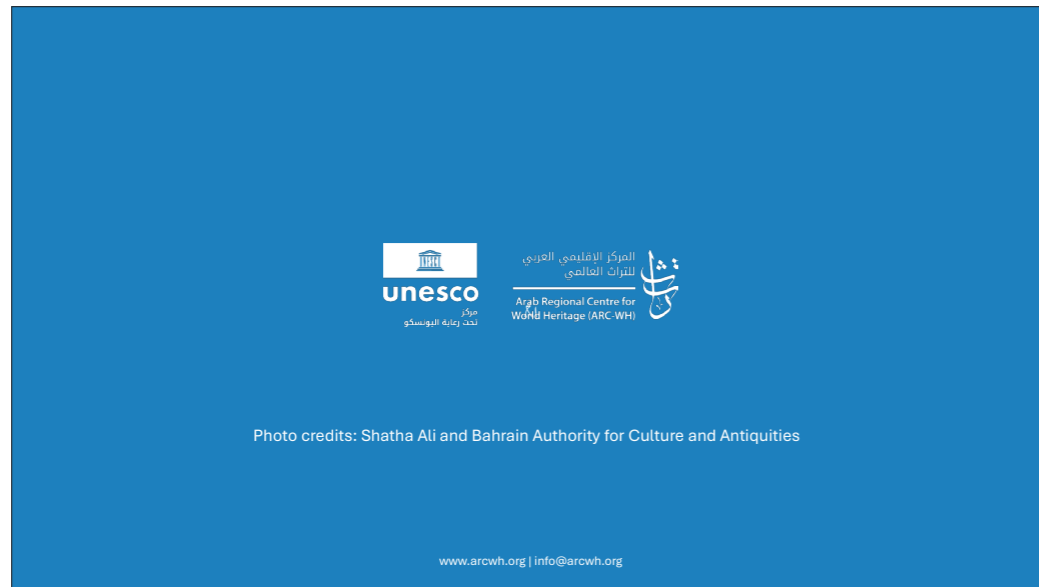
### Heritage Interpretation Challenges in the Arab Region



### Themes covered in the Draft Action Plan

-  Theme 1: Layered & Wholistic Interpretative Planning
-  Theme 2: Data Collection & Access
-  Theme 3: Stakeholder / Community Engagement
-  Theme 4: Interpretation & Integration into Management Plan
-  Theme 5: Policy & Regulatory Framework
-  Theme 6: Interpretation through Creative Economy





## Presentation 4

# Key Considerations for the Heritage Interpretation for the Africa Region and the Case of Twyfelfontein

| **Mr. Alpheus Bam** National Heritage Council of Namibia

Good Afternoon, Your Excellencies. Afternoon, distinguished guests, friends and partners. My name is Alpheus Bam and my presentation will be on Twyfelfontein, or known as !Ui-!Ais, as a World Heritage Site. The presentation will consist of a description of this site, an overview of interpretation methods, and reflections on the workshop that was held last year in Windhoek, organised by WHIPIC and the African World Heritage Fund.

So, first of all, a brief description of this site: Twyfelfontein, known as !Ui-!Ais, is a prehistoric site located approximately 90 km west of Khorixas. The town is situated in the western side of Namibia, in the Kunene region. The inscription of this site is based on criterion iii and criterion v.

Why do we focus on heritage interpretation?

It is to enhance understanding of the site, ensure inclusivity, educate and inform, and engage visitors through interactive and immersive experience.

Regarding interpretation methods at the site, David Levin, a farmer, settled in Twyfelfontein in 1946 with the intention of farming. But the area is known for very little rainfall, so he called it 'Twyfelfontein', meaning "the doubtful fountain" in English. Twyfelfontein was registered in 1951, in the National Archives.







The visitor centre of Twyfelfontein is a clear example of a green architecture. The walls at Twyfelfontein are constructed from hand-packed wire gabion baskets filled with local sandstone and recycled rubble. The roof features a steel structure covered with tiles made from recycled oil bins, while the floor is made from Namibian clay bricks on compacted sand. Minimal cement was used in the construction to reduce embodied energy. The benefits of green architecture include lower embodied energy and a reduced contribution to global warming. The rusted steel plants blend harmoniously with the surrounding red and brown rocks of Twyfelfontein. The use of oil drums in the roof design allows for directional curves, and the structure can be easily dismantled and relocated if necessary. This demonstrates effective use of locally available materials, as all materials were sourced locally from the surrounding area.

Twyfelfontein offers guided tours for two reasons. First, to enhance visitor experience by providing comprehensive information about the site. Secondly, to preserve against vandalism and damage. Additionally, Twyfelfontein offers virtual reality experiences, which was made possible with funding from the African World Heritage Fund, which helps reduce the pressure on the physical paths and surrounding area.



The information centre is well-equipped with comprehensive details about the site, ensuring that visitors, whether or not they participate in guided tours, remain well informed. Namibia celebrates Heritage Week each year in September, during which Twyfelfontein provides access to locals. In September 2021, the National Heritage Council with the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, launched two documentaries on two World Heritage Sites, which are the Namib Sand Sea and the Twyfelfontein, to enhance digital engagement.

Heritage education in Namibia is currently governed by a policy on arts and culture, which includes the inclusion of heritage-related topics into the school curriculum, specifically the junior secondary school curriculum. The launch of school culture and arts clubs also promotes heritage awareness among students.

And lastly, I would like to reflect on the workshop that was held last year in October through WHIPIC. The workshop focused on World Heritage interpretation and presentation, hosted in Windhoek. One of the key issues discussed was enhancing site visibility, particularly regarding the parking redesign. Currently, the first thing visitors encounter upon arriving at Twyfelfontein is the parking area, which obstructs the view of the site and interferes with the dramatic mountain scenery. Potential updates include relocating the parking to a less prominent area. Then, implement landscape screening techniques, designing sunken or partially underground parking, and creating a scenic approach path from the parking to the site.

Another observation was regarding the reception area. The first thing visitors encounter is the craft shop, which is not the primary reason they visit the site. To address this, we proposed relocating the whole craft area, allowing the reception area to serve as a focal point, enhancing the overall visitor experience.

In terms of Heritage interpretation, we identified both opportunities and challenges. The opportunities include enhanced learning and understanding of the sites OUV while reducing pressure on the site, especially during peak seasons and improving accessibility. However, challenges include the need for ongoing training and feedback, as well as the regular maintenance of digital tools. Thank you.



## | Presentation Slides |

# HERITAGE INTERPRETATION: A CASE OF TWYFELFONTEIN OR /UI //AES

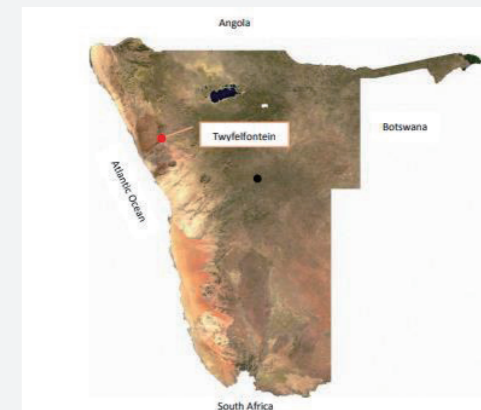
## Table of Content

- 01** Brief Description About the Site
- 02** Interpretation Methods
- 03** Lesson Learnt

## 01 Brief Description About the Site

### Brief Site Description

Twyfelfontein, also known as !Ui-!Ais, is a prehistoric site of great significance, located approximately 90 kilometres west of Khorixas in the Kunene region of northwestern Namibia. Twyfelfontein or /Ui //aes was declared a national heritage site in 1952 and became Namibia's first World Heritage Site in 2007. Twyfelfontein boasts the largest concentration of rock engravings in southern Africa.



## Why Focus on Heritage Interpretation?

- ✓ enhance understanding of the site
- ✓ ensure inclusivity
- ✓ educate and inform
- ✓ Engage in activities through interactive and immersive experience



## 02 Interpretation Methods

## Twyfelfontein or /Ui //aes : The Meaning



The name Twyfelfontein was registered in 1951 (National Archives LAN 1588), the site having been known previously as /Ui-//aes in Khoekhoegowab (a local language) which refers to a place “among packed stones.

Mr. Levin David, a topographer and farmer settled in Twyfelfontein 1946. With the presence of the natural spring, Levin’s hoped he could sustainably farm and rear his livestock to support his family. He however gravely became concerned about farming in this unpredictable environment and began to have doubts about the reliability of the spring. As a result, he coined the name Twyfelfontein (doubtful spring) that firmly became an alternative to the Khoekhoegowab name !Ui- ll aes. To date both names are used on all official records.

## Twyfelfontein Visitor Centre: An Example of Green Architecture








## Benefits of green architecture?


- ✓ Lower embodied energy, reducing contribution to global warming
- ✓ Rusted steel blends with surrounding red and brown rock
- ✓ Oil drum 'tiles' allow for bi-directional curves in roof design
- ✓ Easy to dismantle and relocate if necessary
- ✓ Demonstrates effective use of locally available materials



## Guided Tours


The site exclusively offers guided tours for two key reasons:

1. Firstly, to enhance the visitor experience by providing comprehensive information about the site's archaeology, geology, and history.
2. Secondly, to address preservation concerns by ensuring that visitors follow site regulations and prevent any potential vandalism.



## Virtual Reality Tours

The integration of advanced technology such as virtual reality enhances the visitor experience by providing detailed, interactive, and informative tours that. This approach ensures that Twyfelfontein remains a vibrant heritage site for future generations while maintaining the integrity of its precious rock art.



## Information Centre

The site features an information centre that offers comprehensive details about the site, ensuring that visitors, whether or not they participate in guided tours, remain well-informed. Additionally, this centre functions as a classroom for learners, students, and researchers visiting the site.



## Celebration of Heritage Week



Namibia celebrates National Heritage Week annually in September. It has become a tradition to invite various schools and youth from neighbouring communities to the site each year to participate in the celebrations.

## Digital Engagement

A digital engagement graphic for Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site. It features the National Heritage Council of Namibia logo, the text "Celebrating Our Rich Cultural Heritage!", and information about a live event on Thursday, 09 September 2021 at 11H00. The graphic also includes images of the site and social media statistics: "2.2K likes • 2.3K followers".

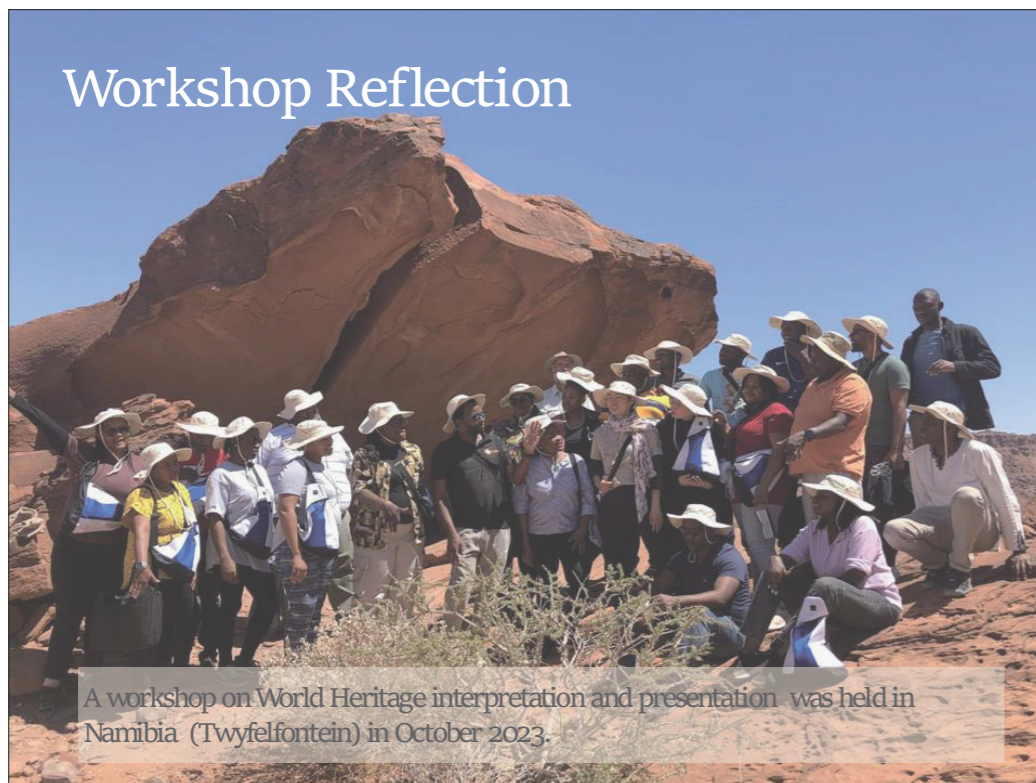
## Heritage Education in Namibia: Some Experience to Date

Policy of Art and Culture

Launch of the School Culture and Clubs

Inclusion of Heritage-Related Topics in the 2014 JSS Curriculum





## Enhancing Site Visibility: Parking Redesign

- ✓ Current issue: Parking obstructs initial view of heritage site
  - ✓ Blocks visitor's first impression of recycled material structure
  - ✓ Interferes with dramatic mountain edge scenery
- Potential updates:
- Relocate parking to less prominent area
  - Implement landscape screening techniques
  - Design sunken or partially underground parking
  - Create a scenic approach path from parking to site
- ✓ Would you like me to expand on any of these points or suggest additional ideas for addressing the parking situation?

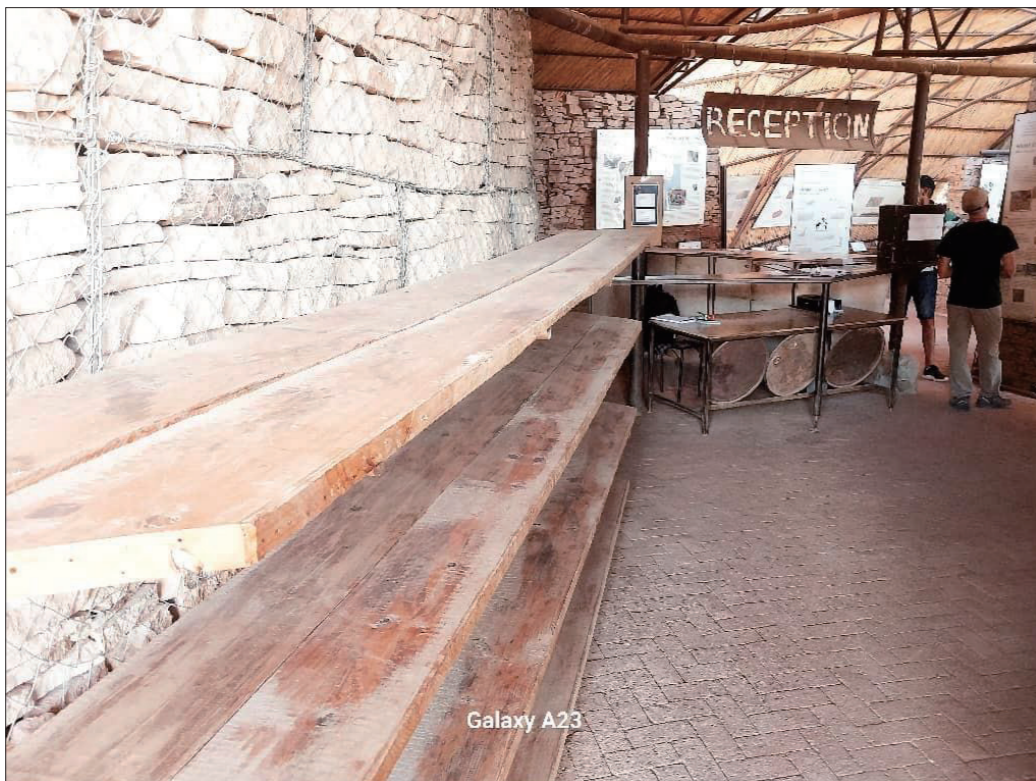


## Repurposing the Reception Area





After...



## Q&A session

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## HERITAGE INTERPRETATION: Opportunities and Challenges

- Enhance learning and understanding of the site's OVU
- Requires training / framework
- VR reduce pressure on the site especially during peak season
- Digital tools requires regular maintenance
- Enhance access





## Q&A



**Dr. Albino Jopela** Executive Director of the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF)

I would like to give the opportunity to everyone in attendance, in case you would want to raise any specific questions or seek further clarification on any points, as well as contribute any insights you may have.



**Question 1**

Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Anuranjan from the Natural Heritage Category 2 Centre (WII), and I have a question for Mr. Rashad Faraj. Thank you for the wonderful presentation, there was a lot of information. Since the ocean is a critical component of the pearling history, I just wanted to find out if anything in particular was done to protect those areas where the oyster beds are located. Are there any national parks established in those areas, or have any protective actions been implemented? As we all know, the ocean is among the first to be affected these days by climate change and pollution.



**Mr. Rashad Faraj** Director of the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage

Certainly. Thank you for the question. Yes, the surveys that were conducted initially in 2009, when we began the nomination process, have been followed up on an annual basis. We have established protections for the three different pearling beds. Currently, we are in the process of reviewing these protections, as there are potential plans for development; as you can imagine, there is a lot of terraforming that happens in the Gulf. Our territorial waters are quite extensive, and we have regular monitoring by environmental agencies.

We hire our own divers, and the process of pearl diving is still a living tradition. The Ministry of Industry regulates this alongside the environmental agency, and we issue licenses for pearl divers. Regular monitoring is conducted, and buffer zones are regularly patrolled.



**Mr. Rashad Faraj**

While we do not have a very extensive 24/7 monitoring system, like the honourable delegate from Palau who mentioned having around 100 marine rangers on eight-hour shifts, so 24-hour monitoring of the sites. We do not have that level, but we do take it very seriously and are very keen on preventing any encroachment. This also works in line with a number of other marine policies, such as regulations on overfishing. We have certain seasons for prawn fishing and various types of fish. We do take our marine, conservation very seriously.



**Question 2**

Congratulations, and thank you, colleagues, for a wonderful presentation. My name is Khwezi, and I am working on the Nelson Mandela nomination. I'm very interested in knowing how, in the view of my colleagues, controversial topics and themes should be dealt with in the interpretation work. And one of the issues that attracted my attention was the multivocality that you raised prof. Manyanga. I know you are familiar with our country and have used multivocality in very interesting ways. I would like to hear some suggestions on how to approach this, regardless of differing views



**Prof. Munyaradzi Manyanga** GZU(Great Zimbabwe University)

Thank you so much for that particular question. In fact, that is the purpose of a framework. Once you have a framework, you set the limits. You set the context within which different interpretations can occur. So that is the reason why a framework and the interpretation concept itself are very important, as they allow for multivocality.

And the ways in which you articulate these elements in your presentation plan will be defined by that framework. So, this is why we are emphasising that we need this plan for Great Zimbabwe where you have seen the extremes- at times focusing on one particular idea for different reasons, and at other times reflecting a more hegemonic view of things.

Having a framework enables you to determine the comprehensiveness of the interpretation, allowing for multiple voices to be included within the interpretation.



**Ms. Haeree Shim** | Head of the Education and Networking office at WHIPIC



That is one of the very important issues for WHIPIC as well. We also conduct research on dissonant heritage and how to interpret the dissonant heritages and sites of memories. To quote Laura Jane Smith, there was an 'Authorized Heritage Discourse' in the past, which represented a dominant narrative of heritage. But now, we try to discover many other voices and thoughts around heritage.

In our research, we do encourage you to try to listen to these diverse perspectives and reflect them in heritage interpretation. Thank you.

**Mr. Rashad Faraj** |



I was just going to add to my esteemed colleagues' points. Even in our consultative process, which may seem very general, we observed a very hierarchical structure within the pearling economy. And there were undoubtedly, the humble pearl divers at the bottom of that pyramid, as opposed to the merchants who occupied the top. The disadvantageous economic structures were put into place.

It was through our interpretation and consultative process, we were able to bring a lot of these to the forefront. Within this discourse and dialogue, we aimed to diffuse some of the tensions that came out of it.



Perhaps on this point I could play devil's advocate. One of the contentious issues in the debate on the so-called sites associated with memories of recent conflict is how to regulate these sites. This is particularly interesting for our region, as one of the reasons we collaborate is that it addresses the dichotomy between the nervousness around the different versions and interpretations on one side, and the sense of the value of these sites for society on the other, despite what different people might agree.

But it is one of the very complex areas, and we hope that through our collaboration, we can pave the way to for a better understanding and more constrictive positions.

**Question 3**



Thank you, Chair. My name is Hosea Wanderi, and I'm from Kenya. I would like to commend the three presenters on their very interesting case studies. My question is about the community's involvement in interpretation. I realise that there are often people who were the original occupants of these heritage places. So, my issue is: which story do we listen to?

For example, in the case of Great Zimbabwe, much of what we have is published literature, but it seems that the myths and legends of those people who lived there before the archaeological works may be suppressed. This point is highlighted in the presentation from Mr. Alpheus, who noted that the original name of Twyfelfontein was something before 1951, but now it has been adopted, replacing the original name.

So that's my challenge. When do we listen to these local communities? How do we respect their views, interpretation, ownership, and identity of some of these heritage places?

Additionally, to Mr. Rashad from the Arab Regional Centre, my concern is how far do we go in interpreting? In your presentation about the Pearling in Bahrain, I noticed a slide with images of medicinal plants used to treat pearl divers. So how far do we go in our interpretations, and what are the limits of this interpretation?

**Prof. Munyaradzi Manyanga** |



When do we listen to the narratives of the community? Always. In fact, this is what we are trying to correct, because they have been marginalised and their stories have not been heard. And remember, we are interpreting these stories on their behalf, so those stories must be captured.

Now, if we continue to rely solely on official or unidirectional narratives, it means that we are not giving the broad spectrum of our audiences the opportunity to experience different sites. Remember, interpretation varies from one individual to the other, and we must allow for that diversity so that our communication of the Outstanding Universal Values of our World Heritage Sites can be better understood.

So, my straightforward answer is that we always have to give the space for our communities to express themselves, to be part of the interpretation process, and to communicate as well about the sites. Thank you.

**Ms. Agnes Shiningayamwe** National Heritage Council of Namibia |

Thank you very much. The local name was not suppressed; rather, the one that replaced it became more prominent. As you may know, Namibia was colonised by South Africa, and the same legislation used in South Africa was then used in Namibia. So, when they declared the site as a heritage site and gazetted the site, they took advantage of the Twyfelfontein name instead of the local name.

However, to date, both names are used in all official documents, including the nomination dossier. So, we are using both names. Thank you.



**Mr. Rashad Faraj** |

I think it's clear to say that from all of our experiences here, interpretation is an ongoing, living process. It is how communities interact and relate to the sites. So, the example that I had given with regards to the plants that are being used, as long as there is an interest, as long as people are engaging, as long as they want to explore that history and that heritage, then we want to encourage that. We want to develop that further.

And in reality, all we're doing is facilitating people's own research and development and interest by providing them with an avenue or an outlet for it. At the end of the day, we're preserving this culture, this heritage, this sense of identity for future generations. And it's for those people who are interacting with these sites to identify themselves and to interact through this process of interpretation to identify how the site will continue to be seen and perceived in the future.



**Question 4**

Thank you very much. I'm delighted and very happy. Let me start with a proverb: We say, 'A dog that belongs to everyone will die of hunger.' This simply means that as long as there is a world body known as UNESCO, and the 1972 convention, then the World Heritage is safe.

I don't have any questions, but I began to think of heritage interpretation, the concept of having the site, and the challenges. With the three presentations, I'm delighted.

I also want to mention South Sudan, which recently ratified the three conventions- the 1972, 2005, 2003 conventions- in 2016. But we are still learning, and our case study will focus on something like the Kasubi Tombs. Most African heritage technologies are simple technologies, where you begin to compare the building, the structure of the building, where you involve the touch in a simple manner, and also the building heritage.

So, these are the kind of the experience we want to share. And I was delighted to see that adaptable three samples from the Arab world, Africa, and beyond. Thank you very much.



**Dr. Albino Jopela**

Thank you so much. I'm afraid we will have to close, but the good news is that you're welcome to join us in the 47th session, where we will have another side event to continue the conversation.

I would like to sincerely thank you all for honouring us with your presence and for stimulating this debate. We are sincerely grateful to our partners and the support that we have received. And, we look forward to continuing the discussions as we move forward with our collaborative project.



**Ms. Haeree Shim** |

Thank you, everyone. I think this concludes the side event seminar today on 'The Understanding of Heritage Interpretation Strategy and Its Case-Studies.' We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated, and we hope to see you again next year. Thank you very much!



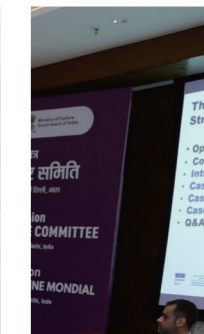
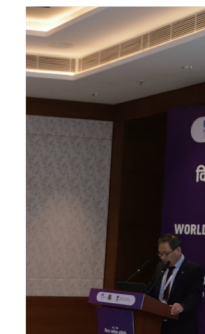
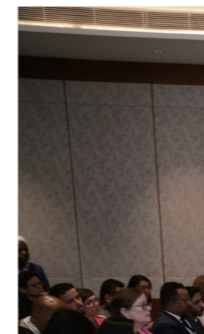
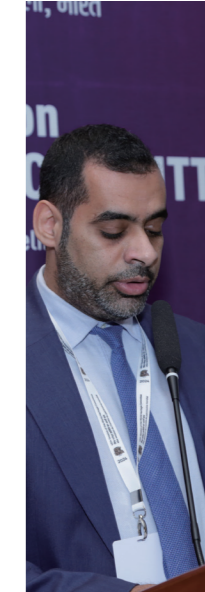


# The Side Event for the 46th Session of the World Heritage Committee

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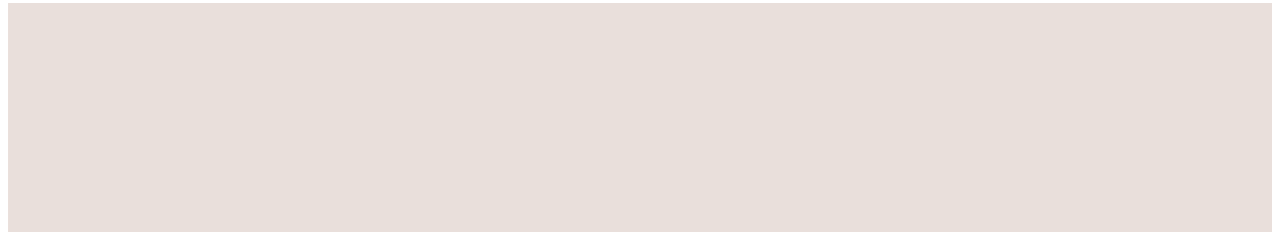








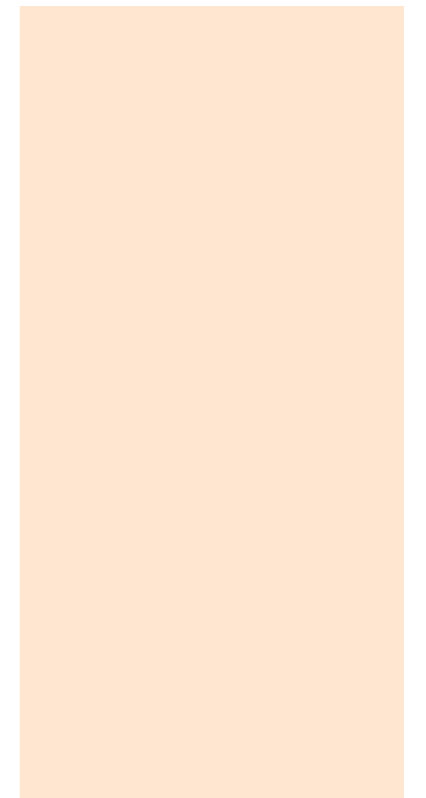
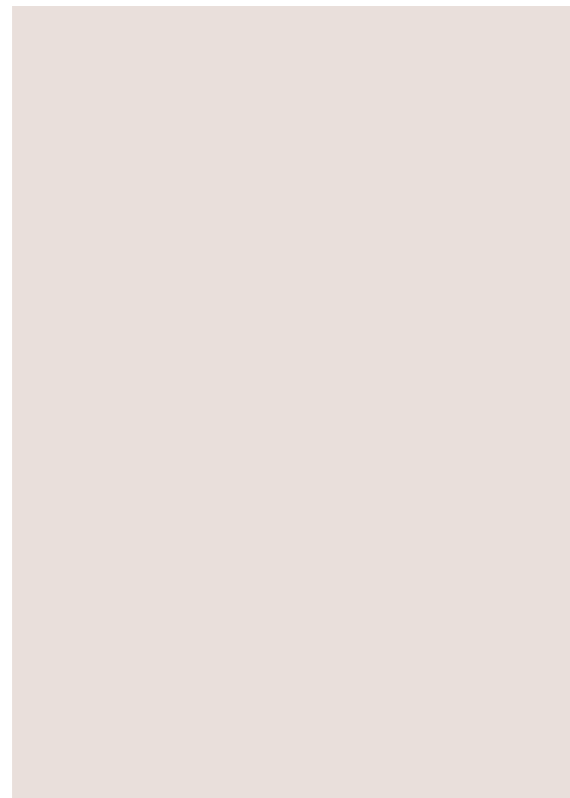
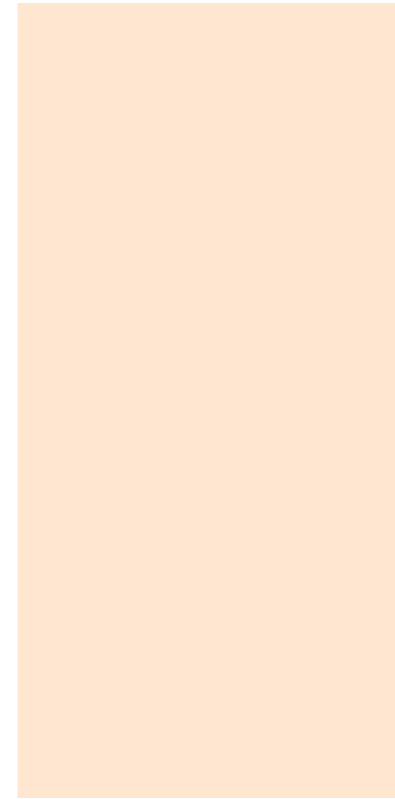
















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COMMITTEE

Q&A  
Discussion

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46<sup>वाँ</sup> सत्र  
विश्व धरोहर समिति  
21-31 जुलाई, 2024, नई दिल्ली, भारत

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WORLD HERITAGE COMMISSION  
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