



**COMMISSION**  
FOR THE PROMOTION & PROTECTION  
OF THE RIGHTS OF CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS  
& LINGUISTIC COMMUNITIES

**Report on the conference and launch  
of:**

**Cultural practice and memory:  
reclaiming living heritage through  
sacred sites**

**21 April 2010**

**Wiser seminar room, Wits University**



**SALGA**  
*South African Local Government Association*  
**GAUTENG**



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## **2. Vision and Mission**

### **Vision**

A united South African nation that protects and promotes the cultural, religious and linguistic rights of all its diverse communities.

### **Mission**

To promote and protect the rights of cultural, religious and linguistic communities.



## 1. Foreword



The conference and launch of the Commission's report (*Sacred Sites: Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Ownership, Access and Use, Vol. 1&2*) was held at a crucial moment in South Africa. The time when heritage, its conservation, realignment and safeguarding is increasingly seen as almost exclusively an important economic imperative with marginal participation of ordinary communities. The event, graced by a partnership of credible institutions, namely, Wits University, SALGA-Gauteng and CRL Rights Commission, dealt thoroughly with one of the most important components of our cultural

heritage – sacred sites. This forum, while attempted to expose some of the genuine fears of ordinary communities around treatment of sacred sites, it also provided a sterling opportunity for South Africa to engage into conversation with itself regarding management, conservation, protection and promotion of the country's cultural heritage. After all, the conservation and safeguarding of our nation's cultural heritage is not and should not be an end in itself. It must serve as a mirror that will continuously reflect the nation, its values, history and aspirations and, more importantly, its vision for the future. A (cultural) heritage that does not reflect the true identity of its people is a diminished and lost heritage.

Sacred sites that are always found upon a core set of features such as mountains, caves, rivers, spring, lakes etc. turn to create a contestation and interface between eco-tourism, economic attractions and culture, religion and spirituality because they are also transitional and transcending point between the physical world and an entry point into a spiritual world or another consciousness, thus making them a unique form of cultural heritage. In South Africa, as in many cultures around the world, sacred sites have become home to various faith and spiritual communities. These sites therefore provide a rather unique opportunity for finding common heritage, fostering peace, mutual respect, tolerance, national unity and reconciliation amongst cultural, religious and spiritual communities.

The fact that sacred sites have become an area of serious contestation in relation to, for example, their definition, scope, interpretation, rights of ownership, access and use amongst the various interest groups in South Africa, is a clear indication of an existing dissonance between the value attached to cultural heritage and the economic imperatives. It is this type of contestation that warrants further research and investigation in order to assist the nation to arrive at a common ground, as a matter of policy, in so far as the value and significance of sacred sites is concerned.



The scantiness of research on sacred sites in South Africa demonstrates that sacred sites, as a domain, have not been given priority in terms of identification, protection, safeguarding and, most importantly, ensuring access and practice by concerned communities. This outlook further points to the complex nature of challenges that are confronting sacred sites and communities. It goes without saying therefore that our society requires concerted individual and collective efforts by all stakeholders in the heritage sector to pull together resources and respond effectively and efficiently to the urgent call of restoring this fundamental cultural heritage of ordinary communities. In a nutshell, the conference on *cultural practice and memory: reclaiming living heritage through sacred sites* must not be seen as another talk-shop that merely pays a lip-service to the critical and urgent issues of sacred sites but a growth path that will lead to real changes to the cultural, religious and spiritual heritage and freedoms of South African communities.

Rev Dr Wesley Mabuza

Chairperson – CRL Rights Commission



## 2. Acknowledgements

A number of people – representing institutions -have made an outstanding contribution to what is widely considered to have been a successful event (both conference and launch).

In the first place, we would like to acknowledge both the South African Local Government Association (SALGA-Gauteng) and Wits University's Department of Anthropology for being keen to join hands with the CRL Rights Commission in this developmental initiative. We are also indebted to all the members of the conference staff from WITS - Ms Michelle Brown; representing SALGA - Ms Mhloti Masuluke and Ms Nomthandazo Raphoto; on behalf of the CRL Rights Commission - Dr Monwabisi Ralarala, Mr Matthew Gopane, Ms Natasha Whittaker, Ms Colleen Liwani and Ms Reitumetse Lemeke, for their splendid organization and support which was immeasurably helpful in undertaking a project of this magnitude.

The principals also deserve recognition for immediately seeing the need and importance of this event, and subsequently rendered all the necessary support to make it the success it was: They include Wits senior academic staff: Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Prof Derek Keats; Prof Kupe (Dean of the Faculty of Humanities); Prof Eric Worby (Head of School of Social Sciences); and Prof David Coplan (Chair: Dept of Anthropology). On behalf of the CRL Rights Commission: Rev. Dr Wesley Mabuza (Chairperson); Ms Julia Mabale (Deputy Chairperson) Commissioner M Jobson; and Commissioner G Martin. Representing the National Department of Arts and Culture: Mr Vusi Ndima (Acting Deputy Director General). On behalf of SALGA: Councillor Mokgotsi.

Further compliments are due to institutions on behalf of which warm messages of support in pledging commitment to this cause were rendered, and these were: SALGA: Ms Tomsie-Dlamini; SAHRA: Mr Dumisani Sibayi; NHC: Mr Thabo Manetsi, and Tshwane Traditional & Faith Healers Forum: Tdr Monare.

Finally, and certainly top of our list, thanks are due to all the participants, governmental, non-governmental organizations and agencies and academics especially those who agreed to bear the responsibility of chairing, facilitating and writing the authoritative papers that offered significant and concrete suggestions and viable solutions: Commissioner Gilbert Martin, Dr Monwabisi Ralarala, Mr Edward Mafadza, Mr Matthew Gopane, Mr Makhubela, Prof Cynthia Kros, Dr Peter Lekgoathi, Mr Thabo Manetsi, Mr Neo January, Prof David Coplan, Ms Cecilene Muller, Mr John Clarke, Tdr Emma Thamaga, Prof Karel Bakker, Mr Pat Dooms, Mr Kgomotso Mokgethi, Dr Amanda Esterhuysen, Prof Van Vuuren, Dr Caroline Jeannerat and Ms Tirhani Mabasa.



## 5. Report

### 5.1 What was the conference on *cultural practice and memory: reclaiming living heritage through sacred sites* about?

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2010, a conference themed, *cultural practice and memory: reclaiming the living heritage through sacred sites* was held. The conference was characterized by two main sessions, i.e., a day session in which presentations, discussions and table-talks took place, and the evening session that was then characterised by formal addresses and an official launch of the CRL Rights Commission's report on sacred sites. The hosting of this event in the month of April bore some international significance as it coincided with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) International Month on Monuments and Sites.

- i) The conference was an outcome of a partnership among the following institutions:
- ii) Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Rights Commission),
- iii) University of the Witwatersrand-Department of Anthropology
- iv) South African Local Government Association (SALGA) – Gauteng Provincial Office

The genesis of this developmental initiative was initially informed by various complaints that were tabled before the CRL Rights Commission – which contained a multiplicity of challenges that communities face pertaining to the violations of their cultural, religious and spiritual rights particularly in the domain of sacred sites. Central to the deliberations was to interrogate the role and status of the living heritage with reference to sacred sites and the approaches in which cultural practice and memory could be used in reclaiming the living heritage. The theme of the conference was purposely used not only to raise awareness of the challenges faced by sacred sites and the living heritage within them but also as a rallying point in the campaign for the recognition of the diminished and diminishing (living) heritage of communities.

Also forming part of the event was the official launch of the initial research work compiled by the Commission on sacred sites. The report titled: *Sacred Sites: Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Ownership, Access and Use*, Vol. 1&2 provides some insights and entry point (at least from the point of view of the CRL Rights Commission) into the discussions and debates on prospects and challenges of sacred sites in South Africa. This initial work points to, amongst others, the need for South Africans to reopen the discussions pertaining to the impact of the heritage



protection system on cultural, religious and spiritual heritages of local communities, and what should the role of these communities be thereof.

The different focus areas were set out as topics to assist and facilitate deliberations. The topics were set in such a way that they would achieve the objectives of the conference while attempting to address much broader outcomes. The conference focused attention on the following topics:

- i) What makes a site sacred?
- ii) Challenges in accessing sacred sites.
- iii) Best practices in sacred sites.
- iv) Weaknesses in current legislation pertaining to sacred sites.
- v) Research and future research on sacred sites.

In facilitating and prompting in-depth discussions parallel table-talks were also held. These table-talks dealt with the following topics:

- i) Location of sacred sites: which are the most important to promote and protect? Why?
- ii) Local history of sacred sites: which communities use these sites, who are their members, and what are their conceptions regarding the religious values of these sites?
- ii) Sacred sites: Local tourism and development.
- iii) What can the relevant stakeholders do to advance the recognition, promotion, protection, access and use of sacred sites?

## 5.2 Who were the participants at the conference and launch?

The conference was attended by some of the key stakeholders particularly from the heritage sector, governmental and non-governmental and academia. A detailed list of the institutions that participated is attached as appendix C of this report. Some of these institutions were, amongst others, represented by the following figures: Prof Eric Worry (Wits), Dean Tawana Kupe (Wits), Prof David Coplan (Wits), Mr John Clarke (Re-Action!), Tdr Emma Thamaga (Tshwane Traditional & Faith Healers Forum), Prof Cynthia Kros (Wits), Dr Peter Lekgoathi (Wits), Mr Thabo Manetsi (NHC), Mr Dumisani Sibayi (SAHRA), Mr Neo January (SAHRA), Ms Cecilene Muller (SAHRA), Prof. Karel Bakker (UP), Rev. Dr Wesley Mabuza (CRL Rights Commission), Ms.



Julia Mabale (CRL Rights Commission), Ms Reinette Stander (DAC), Ms Mphatheleni Makaule (Mupo Foundation), Mr Nemaniede Tshvungwe (Mupo Foundation), Mr Thwadi Komane (SAHRC), Prof. Derek Keats (Wits deputy Vice-Chancellor), Mr Vusi Ndimba (Acting DDG, DAC).

### 5.3 What was the overall purpose and activities of the conference?

The conference's overall aim was to create a platform in order to solicit and share knowledge, experiences, challenges as well as best practices amongst academics, communities, government, civil society as well as relevant stakeholders with a view to find viable solutions towards resolving the challenges that are confronted by communities in relation to access and practice in sacred sites.

The following objectives were primarily noted:

- i) To officially launch the CRL Rights Commission's report on sacred sites, Vols. 1&2.
- ii) To ensure access and practice in sacred sites.
- iii) To raise awareness on practical challenges facing sacred sites.
- iv) To create a platform for communities to engage with the challenges that confront sacred sites in order to solicit possible solutions.
- v) To generate interest and usage of sacred sites by local communities.
- vi) To encourage living heritage preservation through sacred sites.



## 6. Key Activities: Section A

### 6.1. Formal opening of the conference

The CRL Rights Commission's Commissioner, Gilbert Martin, opened the proceedings of the day. Other relevant amenities such as welcoming addresses, opening remarks, best wishes on the deliberations of the day and the event as whole were conducted by, amongst others, Prof. Coplan (Chair of the Dept of Anthropology), Prof. Worby (Head of the School of Social Sciences) and Prof. Kupe (Dean of the Faculty of Humanities) -all from Wits University.

### 6.2 Presentations

Chaired by Dr Ralarala, the session paid attention to the following topics:

#### 6.2.1 What makes a site sacred?

##### Synopsis of thoughts as addressed by speakers

Prof David Coplan

##### What makes a site sacred ?

Professor David Coplan's presentation began by dealing with the origins of words such as "sacred"; "holy", or "holiness" in the ancient Latin, Old English, Hebrew and Greek languages. He then went on to outline a sacred site in the following way: "For the sake of policy, a definition of a "sacred site" that definitively rules certain places in and others out must be found. The protection, promotion, access, and friendly use of such sites require agreements among stakeholders and the provision of resources. The simple assertion by an interested party that a place is sacred in some way cannot serve as a basis for formal or legal designation as a sacred site. Firstly, the site has to be a place of past or present activity of God, His emissaries, 'saints' whether Christian, Muslim, Hindu, or Jewish, or the ancestors of indigenous African people. Secondly, the site should be a place of present religious, spiritual pilgrimage and practice". Professor Coplan ended by saying that such sites must be prioritised for attention if public resources were to be committed. He questioned which sites were most worthy of such attention; what measures of protection and promotion were most appropriate; what kind of site and who were to be the caretakers of a designated sacred site?



**Ms Cecilene Muller**

### **Sacred sites and the National Heritage Resources Act.**

Cecilene Li-Zaan Braaf Muller's paper was concerned with the layering of the sacred places and spaces in the South African landscape, pertaining to the potential national heritage sites which have been nominated using criteria for sacredness. The paper comprised three sections: Firstly, it discussed the categories and the qualities relating to sacred sites. Secondly, three examples of sacred sites in South Africa were given. Lastly, challenges in implementing the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) No. 25 of 1999 in a developmental context, and when at least 50% of the sacred site value resides in the intangible component were all dealt with.

#### **6.2.2 Challenges in accessing sacred sites.**

**Mr John Clark**

### **Towards A "Pondo Upwising"**

John Clarke's slide presentation dealt with some of the problems of access to sacred sites drawn from his experiences as a social worker in the rural communities in the AmaDiba Tribal Area on the Pondoland Wild Coast over a three year period commencing in August 2006. He supported the communities to assert their constitutional rights, seven of which were being violated by people representing the interests of the Australian venture capital company, MRC, and their BEE partner, Xolco. The title "Towards a Pondo Up-wising" refers to the growing awareness of the communities and involvement regarding their constitutional rights and the growing awareness, concern and 'wising-up' of the people by becoming involved in environmental and heritage issues.

**Tdr Emma Thamaga**

### **Sacred sites**

Tdr. Emma Thamaga's presentation dealt with the following issues:

"What are sacred sites?" The nature of sacred sites.

"Where are sacred sites?" The areas where they are located, and how they are identified.

"Why are they sacred sites?" The significance and purpose of sacred sites.



“For whom are sacred sites?” Traditional Healers believe they belong to all those who believe in them. The paper concluded by presenting the challenges facing Traditional Healers, and recommendations on the way forward.

### 6.3 Discussion notes

- There seemed to be different interpretations and understanding of what makes a site sacred. Also central to these different perspectives on sacredness of a site was the adoption of the operational definition for the purpose of policy. As part of the discussions, the following views transpired: sacred sites can be a holy land or place of significance to certain communities. The Traditional Healers use mostly rivers, mountains, caves and grave yards that are important to the spiritual progress and process.
- Sacred sites are mostly synonymous with the presence of ancestors and the spiritual world.
- The notion of what makes a site sacred lies in the communities that relate to them, that is, sacred site is “in the eyes of the beholder”. If a community attaches meaning, symbolism and various associations that relate to the spiritual or cultural ideals of a community, then such associations make a site sacred to that community.
- Three ways of looking at sacred sites were identified: First, Legal approach –in terms of declaration and legal protection. Second, Social approach – implying that sacred sites are created as a result of usage in a certain way by communities who use them, specifically for spiritual and cultural purposes. Third and lastly, the Magical approach -which in essence could mean that sacred sites are created by certain forces.
- The National Heritage Resources Act was also referred to in terms of its definition of a sacred site. A point was made that there seems to be problems with consultations of communities regarding the process of declaration of sites as sacred, and as such contestation tends to ensue as to whose perspective should be used? Also noted was that there is a sense that the declaration criterion set by the Act does not resonate with that of many communities in terms of what makes a site sacred. In the process of research and declaration of sites it become critical therefore that the various perspectives of the communities in relation to sites be reflected when making decisions to declare or not to declare sites as sacred.



- Many sacred sites that are used by many communities are not known to authorities, and as such they are not protected. The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) noted, however, that it faces a challenge of identifying such sites because of capacity.
- It was also noted that there is a lot of sentimentality about sacred sites and people are not getting to the reality of the issues facing South Africa today. Explicitly, people are failing to mobilize communities to further deepen their understanding and their purpose (pertaining to sacred sites), particularly in the urban areas. Also highlighted was that sacred sites are not only found in the rural areas. Discussions also revealed that people designated to manage sites don't understand the purpose of the sites, and in some cases communities end up doing voluntary work to keep some of the sites alive.
- The growth and existence of the sacred sites in urban areas need to be explored. Traditionally, most of the sites that are deemed to be sacred are mostly located in rural than urban areas. The existence and emergence of sacred sites in urban areas presents a somewhat new dimension in terms of the research and protection of the sites by the authorities.
- Also noted was the fact that the research undertaken by SAHRA gives account of various (historical) narratives, various perspectives, identities, histories and voices. Nevertheless, because of the (poor) level of consultations with important communities this does not always feature in the research outcomes. The result is that there becomes a skewed view in terms of the nature and purpose of the site.
- The implication of some of these concerns, therefore, was that it is crucial that the heritage authorities should build solid and long-term interactions and partnerships regarding the ownership, use, and protection of sacred sites in the country.



## 7. Key Activities: Section B

### 7.1 Table Talks- Chaired by Mr Edward Mafadza

Conference delegates were divided into four Table Talks, and each group was given a topic for discussion. Facilitated by Prof Cynthia Kros, Dr Peter Lekgoathi, Mr Thabo Manetsi and Mr Neo January -these group discussions dealt with the following topics:

- i) Location of sacred sites: which are the most important to promote and protect? Why?
- ii) Local history of sacred sites: which communities use these sites, who are their members, and what are their conceptions regarding the religious values of these sites?
- iii) Sacred sites: Local tourism and development.
- iv) What can the relevant stakeholders have do to advance the recognition, promotion, protection, access and use of these sites?

Presented in this part are **recommendations** drawn from the Table Talks:

#### 7.1.1.Table Talk 1

**Topic: Location of sacred sites: which are the most important to promote and protect and why?**

- The processes of the location, promotion and protection of sacred sites must be done within the context of the legislative provisions.
- The various provisions, including the provisions on the grading of sites must be looked at to assist on the determination of the importance of the sites in terms of their protection.
- The analysis of the legislative provisions of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) must put emphasis on the spiritual values (the spiritual past and present) of the site.
- Sites carry different degrees of significance, .i.e. national, provincial and local heritage significance.
- It is critical that after a site being declared as sacred, communities must become important stakeholders. Therefore, communities must be capacitated in the management, preservation and participation in the site in terms of promoting their own spiritual, cultural and religious heritage.



- In the declaration of a site, the changing environment must be taken into account.
- Grading based on intensive research should be prioritised and in the research community stories and experiences must dominate the narrative of such research.

### 7.1.2. Table Talk 2

**Topic: Local history of sacred sites? Which communities use these sites, who are their members and what their perceptions are of the sacred sites?**

- This group contended that the notion of sacred sites and their location is romanticised. There is a growing sense that sacred sites exist only in rural areas. In fact there are many sacred sites that exist in urban areas. Therefore, there is a need for a wider view of sacred sites and their location.
- For the purpose of protection and reflection of the true history of the sites and of the community using it- appropriateness and accuracy must be observed. The same tool in analysing rural sites must be applied to the urban sites as well.
- The contemporary practice in researching sites for the purpose of protection is a knee-jack approach. It is mainly done to attract the economic spin-offs of sites rather than seeing sites as a reflection, reinforcement and recovering of the history and identities of affected communities.
- There is a need for a national audit of local sacred sites. This must be done to determine the perspectives and interpretations of the sites. This is to ensure that such sites are a representation of the history and heritage of the local communities.
- In urban areas the sites take somewhat different dynamics: during the apartheid struggle many people used sacred sites as places of hiding, bonding and connecting and in other instances the religious faith communities such as Rastafarians would use the site to bond and connect with each other and their spiritual energies. In other words, given the diversity of the urban setting, sacred sites have assumed a role of unifying the diverse beliefs and heritage identities.
- When spiritual and religious values are associated with a site and when there is some form of relationship and association with the spiritual world it assumes a degree of sacredness (significance of local histories and narratives).
- It is important to clarify which histories and interpretations are included and



excluded in terms of the declaration of sites as sacred – i.e., how far back do we go in determining the sacredness of a site.

- The communities who have a level of association of one form or another to a site have a right of access and claim over a site even if they might not be located within the vicinity of a site.
- There is a need for awareness and education on what sacred sites are and how they differ from other heritage sites is crucial.
- As the oral tradition relating to sites fade with time it becomes difficult to determine the voice of authority relating to sacredness of sites. There is a need for communities to verify and validate the written histories relating to their sites – SAHRA needs to make such information available to affected communities.
- There is a need to use the sacred sites for social cohesion. It is also necessary to create new platform to build a movement looking comprehensively into the challenges and opportunities presented by sacred sites.
- Efforts to deal with challenges of sacred sites must be approached with caution because of the sensitivity involved as this could lead to conflict.

### 7.1.3. Table Talk 3

#### Topic: Local tourism and development

- 2010 Fifa World Cup is an important marketing concept for South Africa. The concept of sacredness can be used to market South Africa to foreign and local tourists.

#### Ethical issues on sacred matters

- Community engagement and participation is important in sacred sites as it contributes to promoting respect and responsible tourism.
- Control of sacred sites – consideration on the rules and regulations pertaining to sacred sites must be developed and enforced within the tourism sector.
- The tangible and intangible heritage must not be distorted by the tour guides – there must be accurate reflection of the local histories, stories and heritage. There must be training of local tourism personnel on the issues of sacred sites.
- Because of the global media, Western notions turn to influence the youths' perspectives in terms of interpretations of the local heritage. There must be a



level of incorporation of the local indigenous knowledge into the interpretations and narratives in understanding sacred sites.

- The traditional leaders have an important role to play in the interpretations of sacredness and sacred sites.
- The communities must be the central stakeholders pertaining to the research, interpretations and presentation of sacred sites in their localities.
- There must be management plans and practical solutions to managing sacred sites. There is a need for partnership with municipalities when addressing issues affecting sacred sites. The Act is silent about the various practices affecting sacred sites.
- The government must encourage and pursue the development perspectives that will assist in the promotion and protection of sacred sites. Put it differently, the government must use the notion of sacredness in its developmental agenda.

#### 7.1.4. Table Talk 4

**Topic: What can the stakeholders do to advance the recognition, promotion and protection and access and use of sacred sites?**

- There is no strategy for the protection of sacred sites. There is a need to have such a strategy developed.
- There are problems of access to sacred sites by communities especially those that are located in private lands.
- There is a need to develop a programme in order to identify these sites. The need for research that must involve communities is crucial, and such an initiative must be properly resourced.
- The custodians of the sites such as communities must play a central role in managing them.
- In practice, there is a need to enforce protocol or enforce rules relating to the sites to guard against the violation of sacredness of the sites. Tourism activities are known to be a threat to the sacredness of many sites.
- There is also a need to develop awareness programmes on sacred sites.



## **8. Key activities: Section C**

### **8.1 Presentations**

#### **8.1.1 Best practices in sacred sites.**

##### **Synopsis of thoughts as addressed by speakers**

###### **Prof Bakker**

Professor Bakker's slide presentation was on the use and management of sacred sites in a heterogeneous society in a rights based democracy. His presentation provided a few milestones in acknowledging the existence of guidelines and management documents providing for proper interpretation, conservation, management of, as well as ensuring unrestricted access to, and use of sacred sites that had a specific relevance in the African cultural and physical environment, and in which best practice principles are embedded. In his closing remarks, he mentioned that South Africa is lagging behind in terms of enacting the internationally accepted and ratified concepts of cultural landscapes, intangible heritage, sacred sites and rights of indigenous communities. Recommendations to address the situation were also tabled.

###### **Mr Pat Dooms**

Mr Pat Dooms gave a slide presentation on his philosophy pertaining to the concept of sacredness. His thesis was that sacredness is in the eyes of the beholder, and that the entire earth was a sacred and beautiful place, with human beings at the centre of this configuration. He further noted his observation in relation to the positive aspect of the mining of platinum, and related how he had witnessed the lives of the people in Rustenberg being changed and living conditions greatly improved when Anglo Platinum gave R20m to the local community to improve their lives.

#### **8.1.2 Weaknesses in current legislation pertaining to sacred sites.**

###### **Mr Kgomotso Mokgethi**

Mr Mokgethi's presentation focussed on the weaknesses in current heritage legislation as encountered by heritage practitioners, especially in dealing with preservation and management of sacred sites in South Africa. In his paper, he emphasised that Africans should cease to become uncritical consumers of western ideologies and begin to become producers of knowledge strongly inspired by an African world view and perspective. Mr Mokgethi went on to point out that one of the fundamental flaws in our heritage legislation was the lack of recognition of sacred sites with unintended consequences for their survival and protection. Many of South Africa's sacred sites,



he maintained, were being destroyed by unscrupulous developers, especially graves, most of which lay unidentified on various pieces of land and farms. The progressive loss of access to the Ramunyangi, the traditional custodians of the sacred sites of LanwaDzongolo and Guvhukuvhu at Phiphidi Waterfall, were cited as a sad example of the failure of the legal framework to safeguard the community's right of access, use and legal claim for the restoration of the sanctity and integrity of their sacred sites. According to Mr Mokgethi, the voices of smaller clans like the Ramunyangi were effectively silenced, and they have been powerless in the face of tourism development and road construction. He emphasized that the lack of institutional capacity to regulate and implement the existing laws is another area of grave concern. In addition, he pointed out, SAHRA was unable to effectively administer the Heritage Act due to scant financial resources, and without the necessary assistance of largely dysfunctional Provincial Heritage Resources Authorities (PHRAs) in the provinces such activities were rather impossible.

Finally, the paper noted that government had developed progressive legislation that compelled various state organs, government departments and the private sector to give effect to Chapter 3 of the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) and the Inter-governmental Relations Framework Act (Act 13 of 2005). More importantly, he suggested, government needs to strengthen heritage institutions and provide adequate funding, so that they can be able to effectively play a regulatory and oversight role, thereby ensuring the promotion and protection of the rights of access and use by communities.

### **Dr Amanda Esterhuysen**

Dr Esterhuysen gave a slide presentation on the case of the Sekuruwe community in Limpopo Province, illustrating how their graves were violated during a relocation to make way for the expansion of the local platinum mine, owned by Anglo Platinum Limited. She outlined the shortcomings in the legislation protecting graves and in the implementing agencies that tend to be undeveloped, under-resourced, and uncoordinated. Dr Esterhuysen highlighted that a further weakness in the system was the lack of capacity in the various departments to monitor the required processes. Sekuruwe was only one example, she noted, amongst many, and the number of incidences of illegal relocation or destruction of graves was on the increase. Dr Esterhuysen concluded her presentation with recommendations to improve the situation.



### 8.1.3 Research and future research on sacred sites.

#### Prof Van Vuuren

Professor van Vuuren identified and acknowledged the official initiatives of organisations involved in the promotion and protection of heritage and sacred sites. His presentation specifically identified the disciplines typically involved in research on living heritage and sacred sites; e.g. Anthropology, Archaeology, History, Architecture and Urban Planning, Ethno-musicology, Drama and Performance, etc. and elaborated on the definitions and scope of the following focus fields which would provide a knowledge base to inform the research on sacred sites and living heritage:

- Space, place and landscape
- Performance, ritual and ceremony
- Oral tradition and oral history
- Memory and its manifestations
- Symbolism
- Pilgrimage and journeys to sacred sites

Professor van Vuuren concluded his presentation by offering a few suggestions on fieldwork.

#### Dr Caroline Jeannerat

Dr Jeannerat's presentation was based on an investigation she had conducted on sacred sites. Her work identified, and elaborated on the following nine different debates or concerns:

- Concerns of archaeologists, who need sacred sites to be preserved in as original format as possible to enable research into the past.
- Concerns of heritage practitioners who had the task of preserving heritage sites that are affected by present-day usage.
- The active community of practice that uses a sacred site for present-day rituals.
- The economic concern that sees historical sites or the sacred heritage as possible sources of income; giving local communities access to income; allowing them an inroad into the globalised economy.



- The political concern, that is, the search for national unity and common values shared by all.
- Cultural Geography that thinks about sacred sites in comparison to secular sites and about how space is used by human communities.
- Legal concerns and discussions in legal journals about access to graves, ownership over graves, permissibility of burying someone on land that is not owned and is outside a legally demarcated area of burial.
- Concerns over human rights and the rights of indigenous communities, mainly expressed through UNESCO.
- Concerns associated with ecological conservation, where local communities are called to support ecological conservation.
- Dr Jeannerat's investigation supported the Commission's report, stating that little research had been conducted on sacred space in South Africa. She went on to identify some of the problems encountered when conducting research on sacred sites.



## 9. Overview of proceedings: Ms Tirhani Mabasa

Ms Mabasa of the CRL Rights Commission gave a synopsis of the conference proceedings with specific reference to key recommendations:

- A need to create a balance between sacred sites and community development, bearing in mind economic spin-offs through tourist visits/ use for recreational purposes.
- A need for an integrated approach, that is, - involvement of communities as custodians of sacred sites.
- A need for a multiplicity of stakeholders' involvement in this developmental initiative.
- A need for the development of guidelines/policy that should speak on spiritual benefits as opposed to economic benefits.
- A need for national audit of sites-for purposes of proper identification.
- A consideration of new approaches that are aimed at imparting knowledge to young people with reference to sacred sites.
- A need for protocol meant to control access to sacred sites.
- A need for cultural landscape mapping, thus enabling awareness of that development in order to increase the value of such developments in designated areas.
- A need for awareness, international benchmarking and international capacity building in relation to sacred sites.



## 10. Key Activities: Section D

### 10.1 Official launch of the CRL Rights Commission's report

In the evening, the conference concluded with the official launch of the Commission's report, titled: *Sacred Sites: Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Ownership, Access and Practice Vol. 1&2*. The evening session, facilitated by Dr Monwabisi Ralarala, was embraced by presentations from various speakers, namely: Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Wits University, Prof Derek Keys, the Chairperson of the CRL Rights Commission, Rev. Dr Wesley Mabuza, Mr Vusi Ndima, Acting DDG of the National Department of Arts and Culture, Councillor Mokgotsi from SALGA and Prof David Coplan from Wits University.

### 10.2 Keynote Speakers

#### 10.2.1 Introductory remarks

##### Rev. Dr Wesley Mabuza

In setting the tone of the evening, Rev. Dr Mabuza cautioned the delegates about the critical period of our times, and reminded them about the importance of being present. He mentioned that in the apartheid past there were many barriers that made it difficult to crafting one's own life and destiny. Today, however, people are forced to look themselves in the mirror and it is easy because there are reasons to explain the lack of achievements. Therefore, he suggested, being present means that there is a huge responsibility that lies on the shoulders of those who had a privilege to have achieved something in life to make a significant contribution as part of living heritage. He emphasised that Africa must tread with a consciousness of the reality of being part of the global village. Rev. Dr Mabuza further noted that as the nation recognises sacred sites, it is important to appreciate that these sites cannot be sacred if we do not acknowledge the sacredness in ourselves and within us. In his final remark, he pointed out that pursuing the protection of sacred sites without recognising the value existing in those who actually use these sites would be a fruitless exercise.

#### 10.2.2 Welcome address

##### Prof Derek Keats

In his presentation, Prof. Keats took the opportunity to note the significance of the conference and launch as this coincided with the International Month of Monuments and Sites. He further noted that it augured well with the aims of this month as it was envisioned by the United Nations.



Prof Keats praised and cemented the partnership amongst the three institutions: CRL Rights Commission, WITS University and SALGA-Gauteng as a step in the right direction in dealing with important issues of sacred sites, especially in the face of the lack of national support and interest, and as such, he noted, partnerships are the best ways of creating viable and functioning collaborations. In his talk, he also wished all the success to the conference staff and leaders of the project in terms of mobilising the current research work and opening up avenues for future research on sacred sites. He concluded that sustainable livelihoods are very important in rural areas, of which sacred sites are one of the significant sources of these livelihoods. For this reason, he noted, this partnership should serve to broaden and strengthen communication between Wits, SALGA, government and the private sector in crafting of the vision for future research. **(Refer to the Appendices for a full presentation by Prof Keats)**

### 10.2.3 Snapshot on the report: *Sacred Sites: Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Ownership, Access and Use, Vol 1 & 2:*

#### Mr. Mathew Gopane

In his presentation, Mr. Gopane acknowledged the complexity of the subject of sacred sites and its importance especially in the post-democratic dispensation. While dealing with this work, he noted that he explored the depth of the conceptions and the apparent deep consciousness that communities carry in relation to the sacred places. He further noted the challenge of attaining the same understanding and conception as these communities in relation to sacredness of their sites. More importantly, he cited the nature of the challenge that the South African heritage legislative framework must be facing in documenting, presenting and representing the deep spiritual and cultural consciousness of communities. Mr Gopane also pointed out that the laws protecting heritage in this country cannot be seen as an end in itself but must be embedded within the continuous national conversation on heritage protection.

He highlighted that part of the motivation for his exploratory work came as a result of the various complaints that had been lodged with the CRL Rights Commission. He also mentioned that the deliberations and entry point in the discussions on sacred sites is characterised by contestations in terms of who has the right of ownership, access and practice in them, and in South Africa these debates are not entrenched as part of the national discourse on heritage.

This is evident on the treatment of sacred sites that are still threatened. Cases of note are at Paulpietersburg in Kwazulu-Natal and Southall in the E. Cape where farmers



are accused of refusing communities access to their sacred spaces, and demolition of graves respectively. The case of threatening sacred sites at Phiphidi waterfall in Venda and Naledi in Soweto where development of tourism and low-cost housing respectively is set to take place is another classic example.

Mr Gopane made a point that sacred sites must be seen as part of a national agenda on reconciliation and nation-building and restoration of spiritual dignity of many communities. He concluded by suggesting that it is critical to review the developmental paradigm that South Africa is following in relation to sacred sites, and as such the developmental initiatives must promote social cohesion and reconciliation.

#### 10.2.4 Keynote address

**Department of Arts and Culture: Mr. Vusi Themba Ndima**

**(Acting Deputy Director General)**

In his speech, Mr Vusi Themba Ndima, - Acting DDG - who was representing the Deputy Minister of the Department of Arts and Culture - expressed the Department's gratitude for the invitation to the launch. He noted that the Department is aware, and thus acknowledges the richness of the indigenous knowledge and skills within communities that remain largely untapped. While this knowledge was neglected by the previous government, the democratic government has led developmental initiatives to support, resuscitate, harness and protect indigenous knowledge, intangible heritage including heritage that deals directly with heritage sites. Mr Ndima further noted that such initiatives raised important questions particularly in relation to the treatment of sacred sites in our communities. Some of these questions relate to the challenges posed by legislative protection of sacred sites especially where communities are treated as secondary citizens, with preference attached to developers and other lucrative and commercially yielding projects such as mining at the expense of the communities' heritage. Mr Ndima used the example of Lake Fundudzi and its success and prospects as providing some lessons towards the treatment of sacred sites. He noted that protection of sacred sites must be an inclusive endeavour which, amongst others, must take cognisance not only of the living heritage within the sites but also those communities who sustain the sacredness of the sites. In closing, Mr Ndima impressed on the various activities (including the development of inventories of sacred sites in South Africa) that they (as the Department) have taken on with reference to the concept of sacred sites, and subsequently called on all stakeholders to coordinate their activities and work with the Department.



It was in the midst of Mr. Ndima's talk that the CRL Rights Commission presented its completed reports on sacred sites. These reports were viewed as a stepping stone towards the creation of a partnership with the Department, amongst other things. In accepting these reports, Mr Ndima once again congratulated the Commission for its commitment to addressing the challenges facing communities in this area. He further assured the Commission and its partners that they should consider the Department as one of its important partners going forward. **(Refer to the Appendices for a full presentation by Mr Vusi Ndima)**

The session was also graced by poignant messages of support that were delivered by representatives from the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) – Ms Tomsie Dlamini , South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA)- Mr Dumisani Sibayi, National Heritage Council (NHC)- Mr Thabo Manetsi, and Tshwane Traditional & Faith Healers Forum –Tdr Monare- all in support of this constitutional project.

All guests, participants and conference staff were respectfully acknowledged, in recognition of their concerted efforts towards the success of the event, by Ms Thoko Mkhwanazi-Xaluva of the CRL Rights Commission.

#### **10.2.5 Closing Address and vote of thanks**

##### **Councillor Mokgotsi (SALGA)**

Councillor Mokgotsi reminded the gathering that occasions like this are always moments for giving thanks, and she presented an exhaustive vote of thanks which was well received by the delegation. **(Refer to the Appendices for a full presentation by Councillor Mokgotsi)**



## **11. Marketing material**

The CRL Rights Commission, SALGA and Wits University were given equal opportunity to display their marketing material, i.e. brochures, reports, calendars, banners etc. during conference proceedings. Some of these materials were distributed among the delegates.



## 12. Media and publicity

Conference proceedings received some media coverage. The conference received coverage primarily from the radio and print media. In the post-conference coverage of several interviews was conducted by some of the key programmes of several radio stations. The representatives of the partners participated equally during these interviews. Dr Ralarala was interviewed on Tru FM, Umhlobo wenene FM and Bush Radio. Prof Coplan was interviewed on SA FM and Radio 702. Rev. Dr Wesley Mabuza was interviewed on SABC 2, Weekend Live. Media coverage was also in the form of internet coverage on the WITS "Wale" website.



### 13. Partnership

This conference/launch on sacred sites was an outcome of a long-standing work of partnership among the three institutions: CRL Rights Commission, SALGA-Gauteng and Wits University. This partnership was not only meant to focus on the hosting of this conference but also to galvanize and collectively plan to deal with the subject of sacred sites in South Africa on a well-conceived and sustained basis. It also warrants mention that this conference was the beginning of an insurmountable work that needs to be done through this partnership both in their collective and individual responsibilities.



## 14. Vision for the future: Prof David Coplan

Professor Coplan briefly noted the following points in relation to the partnership's vision for the future: "So, as we speak of the future, research must restore the beauty of South Africa some of which has been lost in that more intangible sense. What apartheid regime did was to cut the roots of communities and whenever the people put down the roots they would be cut again so that African people became a vast army for labour without roots. What needs to be done is that people need to re-cultivate themselves and reclaim their roots in a more fertile cultural soil. So sacred sites must not be viewed outside the context of re-cultivation and reclaiming their roots. This research is in partnership between Wits University, SALGA and CRL Rights Commission. There is some work that has already been done by SAHRA and others about where are the sites and so on. We need to establish some form of synergy and avoid re-inventing the wheel. We need to relate all the disciplines including the possibilities of documentaries and other sources. Some of the initial work will have to sample them and conduct a pilot. This work will seek to involve all the stakeholders".

## **15. Appendices**

### **15. Appendices**

#### **15.1 Appendix A: Brief biography of speakers**

#### **15.2 Appendix B: Programme**

##### **15.2.1 Day Programme**

##### **15.2.2 Evening Programme**

#### **15.3 Appendix C: List of participants**

#### **15.4 Appendix D: Letter to Handover - Minister**

#### **15.5 Appendix E: Concept Document**

#### **15.6 Appendix F: Full presentations of keynoters:**

##### **15.6.1 Acting Deputy Director General-representing the Ministry of Arts and Culture, Mr Vusi Ndima**

##### **15.6.2 Deputy Vice Chancellor, Wits, Professor Derek Keats**

##### **15.6.3 Councillor Mokgotsi, South African Local Government Association (SALGA)**

## 15.1 Appendix A: Brief biography of speakers

### 1. Professor Karel Bakker

Karel Bakker is attached to the University of Pretoria, and he is the current Head of Dept of Architecture. He is also a practicing professional architect as well as a member of Cultmatrix cc Heritage management. His academic work focuses on Cultural Landscapes, Interpretation and Presentation of sites, Conflict sites as well as urban regeneration through heritage development. He is an acknowledged expert and has published and presented papers globally on the above cited topics.

### 2. Mr John Clarke

John Clarke is a professional social worker, lay theologian and writer working to promote resilience with and within vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and communities, by promoting and protecting their fundamental rights. He is a founder member of Sustaining the Wild Coast Association which works to promote community-based eco-tourism enterprises that local residents on the Wild Coast have initiated, and the Southern African Faith Communities Environmental Institute (SAFCEI). For the last three years he has been working with the Amadiba Community on the Wild Coast to bring attention to human rights violations on the Pondoland Wild Coast, perpetrated by pro-mining interests. He is currently employed by Reaction! Consulting as a development consultant within a trans-disciplinary team to promote "responsible action for health and sustainability"

### 3. Mr Kgomoitso Mokgethi

Kgomotso Mokgethi works for the Mpumalanga Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation as the Head of Museums and Heritage Resource Services. He worked for the South African Heritage Agency (SAHRA) as a Cultural Heritage Officer - Mpumalanga Regional Office before he joined the Department in 2004. Kgomoitso holds a degree in Dramatic Art (with Honors), majoring in Art History (Wits University), and a Master of Arts degree in Cultural Heritage Management and Tourism Development (Wits University). He is currently enrolled for a PhD in Heritage Studies with Wits - investigating the Meaning and Significance of Erholweni/Legolong/Mapochsgronde Heritage Site in the post-apartheid South Africa.

### 4. Tdr Emma Thamaga

Emma Mante "Magolobelo" Thamaga joined the Traditional Healers Organization as a Field worker in 1994, assisting the organization with registration of new members. In 1998, she left for the National Traditional Healers Union as the General Secretary. In 2004, she then co-founded the Tshwane Traditional and Faith Healers Forum, where she is currently working as a Chief Director for Planning and Development. Emma Thamaga holds an International Diploma in Herbology and Certificate in HIV/AIDS Counselling from the International Meyer Institute.

In 2008 she started teaching Herbiology classes to the Traditional and Faith healers in the Tshwane and Vaal areas. She is a Traditional healer, specializing in women fertility diseases.

#### **5. Dr Caroline Jeannerat**

Caroline Jeannerat is a postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for Culture and Languages in Africa at the University of Johannesburg. She is an alumni of Wits University, where she completed her MA in Social Anthropology on intergenerational conflict. She completed her PhD at the University of Michigan in History and Anthropology. She has a general interest in history and anthropology (historical anthropology) and a particular research focus on religion, Christianity and mission Christianity. She is working on a research project on "Mission Christians and faith" that analyses how mission Christians – the Africans who were converted by European missionaries and joined the mission churches – engaged with their personal faith: what it meant to them, how they defined it, how they lived it, how it differed or paralleled that of the missionaries and what the missionaries expected. She is currently also involved in a project on international migrants in South Africa and their religious lives.

#### **6. Dr Amanda Esterhuysen**

Amanda Esterhuysen is a Senior Lecturer and the executive head of Archaeology in the School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies. Her main research interests are informed by contemporary issues in archaeology. She is a founding member of the 500 Year Initiative; a multi-disciplinary project which seeks to understand the origins of modern South African identities. She is the past chair of the Association of the Southern African Professional Archaeologists and has served for a number of years on the South African Heritage Agency (SAHRA) Council.

#### **7 Ms Cecilene Li-Zaan Braaf Muller**

Cecilene Li-Zaan Braaf Muller holds undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from the University of Cape Town: BA (Hons) and a Master of Arts (Archaeology) She joined the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) as Assistant Heritage Objects Officer and Acting Manager in July 2005. She is currently occupying a position of Manager: Grading and Declaration of National Heritage Sources at the South African Heritage Resources Agency. Her responsibilities, among others, involve coordination, policy formulation, management and networking with the various South African stakeholders regarding National Heritage Resources. Cecilene has also participated in national conferences such as the South African Museums Association (SAMA) National Conference -2008- in her capacity as a presenter and chair.

## 8 Mr Pat Dooms

Pat Dooms is an Assistant Media Relations Director in the Office of the Premier in the North West Province, in Mafikeng. His responsibilities include, amongst others, dealing with the media through writing articles in the print media and making public contributions through the broadcast media. He is a trained teacher, with a Social Science background. Pat is very passionate about Socio-Cultural research, and his specific interest is in the domain of beliefs and practices of ordinary people. He is also a spokesperson for Inkosi ya maNazaretha uku Phakama Shembe, the leader of the Nazareth Baptist Church in the Gauteng province.

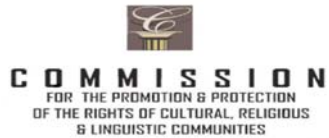
## 9 Professor David Coplan

David B. Coplan, Ph.D. is the Professor and Chair in Social Anthropology at the University of The Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, and has lectured at numerous universities in North America, Europe, and Africa. He has been researching and writing about the heritage and performance culture of the Basotho of southern Africa for more than a quarter of a century. His contributions include 2009 Erasing History: The Destruction of the Beersheba and Platberg African Christian Communities in the Eastern Orange Free State, 1858-1983. *South African Historical Journal*, 61, 3; 2003. Land from the Ancestors: Popular Religious Re-Appropriations Along the Lesotho-South African Border, *Journal of Southern African Studies* Vol. 29, No 4, Dec., pp. 977-993; and In the Time of Cannibals: the Word Music of South Africa's Basotho Migrants (Chicago 1994), the film *Songs of the Adventurers* (Constant Spring Productions 1986). His forthcoming social history of the Lesotho – South African border is entitled *Major Warden's Knife: Narrating Race and Place in a South African Borderland*.

## 10 Professor Chris J van Vuuren

Chris J van Vuuren holds a D Phil in Anthropology and a Diploma in Museum Studies (University of Pretoria) He was curator of the Middelburg Museum from 1978 to 1980 and then lectured in the Departments of Anthropology and Archaeology first at UP and then at Unisa, where he is currently Professor and Director of the African Centre for Arts, Culture and Heritage Studies (ACACHS). He has published 46 articles and has 8 contributions as books chapters. His fields of specialization are oral tradition and intangible heritage, cultural heritage, HIA (Heritage Impact Assessment), ritual and initiation and land restitution.

## 15.2 Appendix B: Programme



Presents a Conference and Launch:

Cultural practice and memory: reclaiming living heritage through sacred sites

In partnership with



## 15.2.1 Day Programme

TIME : 09H00  
 DATE : 21 APRIL 2010  
 VENUE : WITS WISER SEMINAR ROOM

6<sup>TH</sup> Floor

Richard Ward Building, East Campus

WITS – FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, School of Social Sciences, Department of Anthropology

Wednesday, 21 April 2010		
Programme Director: Commissioner Gilbert Martin, CRL Rights Commission		
SECTION A		
Time	Activity	
08:00-09:00	Arrival and Registration	
09:00-09:05	Opening Remarks	Prof Eric Worby (Head of School of Social Sciences, WITS)
09:05-09:15	Welcome & Address	Prof T Kupe (Dean: Faculty of Humanities, WITS)
	Chair: Dr Monwabisi Ralarala (CRL Rights Commission)	
09:15-09:50	What makes a site Sacred?	Prof David Coplan  (Chair: Dept of Anthropology, WITS)  Ms Cecilene Muller (SAHRA)

09:50-10:40	Challenges in accessing Sacred sites?	Mr John Clarke Re-Action Consulting Tdr Emma Thamaga (Tshwane Traditional and Faith Healers Forum)
10:40-11:00	<b>Discussion</b>	
11:00-11h20	<b>TEA BREAK</b>	
	Chair: Mr Brian Makeketa CRL Rights Commission	
11: 20- 12:05	Parallel table-talk sessions- led by facilitators:	
	1. Location of sacred sites? Which are the most important to promote and protect, Why?	Prof Cynthia Kros (WITS)
	2. Local history of these sites? Which communities use these sites, who are their members, and what are their conceptions regarding the religious value of these sites?	Dr Peter Lekgoathi (WITS)
	3.Sacred sites: Local tourism and development	Adv. Mancotywa (NHC)
	4. What can the relevant stakeholders do to advance the recognition, promotion and protection, and proper access and use of these sites?	Mr Neo January (SAHRA)
12:05- 12:45	Report back sessions	
12:45-13:45	<b>Lunch</b> <b>Lunch</b> <b>Lunch</b>	
	Chair: Mr Makhubela, Department of Arts and Culture	

14:00-14:35	Best practises in Sacred sites	Prof Karel Bakker (UP)
		Mr Pat Doms (NW Premier's office)
14:35-15:10	Weaknesses in current legislation pertaining to Sacred sites	Mr Kgomotso Mokgethi (Dept of CSR)
		Dr Amanda Esterhuysen (WITS)
15:10-15:45	Research and future research on Sacred sites	Prof Van Vuuren (UNISA)
		Dr Caroline Jeannerat (UJ)
15:45-16:00	<b>Discussion</b>	
16:00-16:20	Overview of the proceedings	Ms T Mabasa (CRL Rights Commission)

## 15.2.2 Evening Programme

TIME : 17H30 FOR 18H00

DATE : 21 APRIL 2010

VENUE : Hofmeyr House, Wits University

DINNER		
<i>Evening Session :Official launch of Sacred Sites Research Reports, Sacred Sites: Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Ownership, Access and Use, Vol. 1&amp;2</i>		
<i>SESSION FACILITATOR: Dr Monwabisi Ralarala, CRL Rights Commission</i>		
<b>SECTION B</b>		
17:30	ARRIVAL AND SEATING OF GUESTS	
18:00-18:10	Welcome Address	Prof Derek Keats(Deputy Vice Chancellor,WITS)
18:10-18:20	Acknowledgement of Guests	Ms Thoko Mkhwanazi-Xaluva (CRL Rights Commission)
18:20-18:30	Introductory Remarks	Rev Dr Wesley Mabuza (Chairperson: CRL Rights Commission)
18:30-19:00	Snapshot on the documents	Mr Mathew Gopane (CRL Rights Commission)
19:00-19:30	Address by the Honourable Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture.	Mr Paul Mashatile
Launch of the Report		
Mrs Julia Mabale, Deputy Chairperson of the CRL Rights Commission		

19:45-20:00	Message of Support	Mr George
	Mr Sibayi	SALGA
	SAHRA	
	Adv Mancotywa	
	NHC	
	Dr Sibanda	
	Dept of Traditional Affairs	
	Tdr Monare	
	Tshwane Traditional & Faith Healers Forum	
20:00-20:20	Our vision for the future	Prof Coplan (WITS)
20:20-20:30	Closing Address and vote of thanks	Councillor K Dau
		Chairperson (SALGA)

## 15.3 Appendix C: List of participants



**COMMISSION**  
FOR THE PROMOTION & PROTECTION  
OF THE RIGHTS OF CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS  
& LINGUISTIC COMMUNITIES

### SACRED SITES CONFERENCE: CULTURAL PRACTICE AND MEMORY: RECLAIMING LIVING HERITAGE THROUGH SACRED SITES

21 APRIL 2010

WISER SEMINAR ROOM, WITS UNIVERSITY

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12	Sven Ouzman	Up Anthropology & Architecture	(012) 420-2497	<i>Sven.ouzman@up.ac.za</i>
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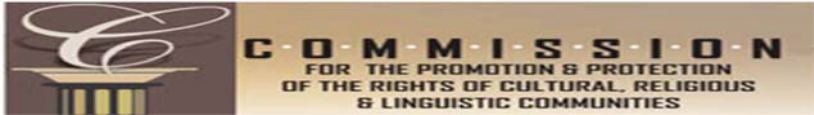
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30	Mudau Phanuel	Mupo Foundation	073 515 1583	<i>Box 1744 Thoyandou 0950</i>
31	James Mulovhedzi	Mupo Foundation	073 210 0526	<i>Box 203, Sibasa 0970</i>
32	Tirhani Mabasa	CRL Rights Commission	(011) 537-7600	<i>Rosebank</i>
33	Troy Phili	SAHRA	073 618 6397	
34	Neo January			

	NAMES	ORGANISATION	TEL	FAX / EMAIL
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## 15.4 Appendix D: Letter to Handover - Minister



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**Enquiries: Dr Ralarala**

21 April 2010

The Honourable Minister, MP, Mr Paul Mashatile  
The Minister: Department of Arts and Culture  
Private Bag 897  
Pretoria  
0001

Re: Hand over of the Report: Sacred Sites: Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Ownership, Access and Use, Vol. 1&2.

Dear Minister Mashatile

In 2008, the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and linguistic Communities (henceforth CRL Rights Commission) completed a report on Sacred sites. Apart from providing a detailed account in relation to the background on Sacred sites, this report also raises the need for South Africa to promote and protect constitutionally embedded rights of ownership, access and use of Sacred sites for cultural, religious and spiritual purposes. The CRL Rights Commission wishes to share and update the Ministers concern about this developmental initiative: Sacred Sites: Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Ownership, Access and Use, Vol. 1&2.



To mark the publication of the Sacred site report, the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Cultural Communities (henceforth CRL Rights Commission) in partnership with the Department of Anthropology at Wits University and the South African Local Government Association's (SALGA) Gauteng Department of Community are hosting a conference - and - launch reception – themed: *Cultural practice and memory: reclaiming living heritage through sacred sites*

Aside from giving voice to communities through this initiative, this correspondence is also an attempt to mobilize a Sacred sites rights movement through which the traditional ways, cultural and religious practices of communities will be promoted and protected. This arises in the wake of the multiplicity of complaints received by the Commission on violation of rights with specific reference to Sacred sites in the past few years. This recurring configuration carries with it legislative overtones in relation to Sacred sites, and as such the legislation governing the management, access and use of Sacred sites may warrant urgent review. To this end, the Commission further notes that it is only through a joint efforts and interventions of this nature, on the part of the partners and other relevant structures that the cause of the South African communities will be advanced.

Over and above, it is hoped that the Ministry will, in the fullness of time, reinforce all the necessary support that will pave way towards achieving and executing any legislative project in this regard.

Kindest Regards

Rev Dr Wesley Mabuza

Chairperson: CRL Rights Commission

21/April/2010

## 15.5 Appendix E: Concept Document



**COMMISSION**  
FOR THE PROMOTION & PROTECTION  
OF THE RIGHTS OF CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS  
& LINGUISTIC COMMUNITIES

Presents a Conference and Launch:

Cultural practice and memory: reclaiming living heritage through sacred sites

21<sup>st</sup> of April, 2010

University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

In partnership with



## 1. Introduction

The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (henceforth CRL Rights Commission) in partnership with the Department of Anthropology at Wits University and the South African Local Government Association's (SALGA) Gauteng Department of Social Development will be hosting a conference and launch. The event is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 21 April 2010 at Wits University, and is due to coincide with the International Month (in April) for Monuments and Sites. Apart from the launching of CRL Rights Commission's report: *Sacred Sites: Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Ownership, Access and Use*, Vol. 1&2, the aim of the conference is to provide an opportunity for delegates to deliberate on key issues pertaining to sacred sites in the country. It is also envisaged that the conference will be a suitable springboard that will pave way for future research in relation to the development of a framework on management, ownership, access and use of sacred sites in South Africa.

Accordingly, the conference will create a platform in order to share knowledge and experiences as well as best practices amongst academics, communities, government, civil society as well as relevant stake-holders. The conference forms part of the ongoing discussions and debates that aim, inter alia, to raise awareness on issues relating to sacred sites.

Thematic areas have been identified to assist in stimulating deliberations at the conference. The resolutions of the conference will be taken forward for implementation by the relevant institutions, and progress will be monitored by coordinating structures with the CRL Rights Commission being the convener of this assignment.

The Minister of Arts and Culture along with other relevant institutions will be approached to be the recipients of the documents that will be launched. It is our hope (the partners) that concerned government departments, government agencies and the private sector will pledge support to the project and ultimately take this notion to the level of policy review or formulation for purposes of implementation.

## 2. Background to the domain of sacred sites

The period of racial, cultural and heritage subjugation of the majority of black communities in South Africa necessitates a more aggressive revisit and refocus of issues of culture, identity and heritage in the post-apartheid and Constitutional democracy in South Africa. While many studies show that sacred sites around the world are in danger of being eroded, the impact of forced removals under apartheid carried a unique feature. The systematic destruction of sacred sites coupled with the almost total erosion of the cultural and spiritual identities and heritage of many communities cannot be overemphasized.

It will therefore not be over-exaggeration to suggest that destruction of sacred heritage sites was the cornerstone of the apartheid project of acculturation of black communities. This was

particularly the case because of what sacred heritage sites represent. It is contended that in post-apartheid, sacred sites represent the life of a community – the prospects and opportunities – the sacred sites are/can be a powerful force to building and rebuilding culture, heritage and identities of communities. They represent the past, present and the future of many cultural and spiritual communities in South Africa and elsewhere.

Since 1994 major strides have been made in the recovery and protection of the diminishing heritage of communities. The new heritage laws and management have been aggressive in overturning the previous racial laws for more inclusive legal environment in heritage protection and management. This is pursued as part of the national agenda on nation building, national identity, peace and reconciliation. It is proposed that the questions surrounding sacred sites must be placed at a centre stage of heritage protection and management and this must be done in a manner that reaffirms the cultural and spiritual identities of communities as a primary objective of heritage management.

In the entire debates and discussions regarding the achievements and challenges in heritage protection management in South Africa, the issue of sacred sites has not received particular attention. The observation on the widespread use of various spaces that ordinary communities regard as sacred should ignite debates and discussions regarding their prospects and challenges. These sacred sites are the spaces that communities use for spiritual, religious purposes.

A notable observation, however, is that, at the protection of heritage sites in the country, there is an almost dominant pattern emerging since 1996. The recognition and declaration of sacred heritage sites is predominantly geared towards their potential to attract investments, positive economic spin-offs and selling a country internationally as imbued with rich natural and other forms of heritage. This is premised on the presupposed recognition and appreciation of the country's ability to protect heritage by the international community. Further, the recognition and protection of few selected sacred sites takes place within the context of a huge pool of sacred sites in the country that are not only important to communities but are also under threat of diminishing.

It remains a matter of grave concern that the level at which, after 15 years of democracy, many sacred sites are not known to relevant authorities and are not protected from being eroded by various human activities, especially infrastructural and mining development initiatives. This is indicative of some of the many problems that still need to be addressed if the cultural, religious and spiritual rights and practices are to be protected and promoted in South Africa.

Equally disturbing is that compared to many parts of the world where communities have mobilised to make claims regarding their rights of ownership, access and use of sacred sites, South Africa is still lacking behind. This happens despite the remarkably high numbers of communities still using various sacred sites in the country which some, if not most of them, are not protected under the law, not owned by the communities and worst, not accessible for

cultural and spiritual usage. Further, the most alarming and staggering aspect of the issue of sacred sites in South Africa which could be regarded as contributing to the sluggish manner in which they are treated by authorities and communities alike, is the level of research and scholarship regarding sacred sites, their prospects and challenges in the country.

It is at this latter point that this proposal addresses itself – i.e. the extensive national policy and legislative debate, discussions and recommendations that will not only assist in identifying sacred sites in South Africa but also explicate the challenges they face and those faced by various cultural and spiritual communities in these sites.

### 3. Conference concept

In 2008, the CRL Rights Commission concluded a preliminary work on the need for South Africa to promote and protect constitutionally embedded rights with regard to access and use of sacred sites.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, the CRL Rights Commission envisioned the initiation of a major research project for the advancement of its objectives particularly in this domain. The questions to be addressed include, among others: What is the meaning of the designation 'sacred site', and how does it acquire the label, 'sacred.' Where are these sacred sites located? Which are the most important to promote and protect? What is the local history of these sites? Which communities use these sites and what are their conceptions regarding the cultural and religious value of these sites? Within the bounds of respect and preservation, what role might these sites play in local tourism development? What can the relevant stake holders do to advance the recognition, protection, and proper access and use of these sites?

This project will attempt to address these questions and concerns in respect of sacred sites. Consequently, the envisaged research effort will involve representatives from both governmental and non-governmental agencies who are concerned with heritage management and development. This (participatory) research would have an empowering and capacitating component as it will draw on, where necessary, researchers in training to participate in this developmental initiative.

This signal event will bring together representatives of each of the stakeholder groups in order to debate new trends and perspectives on sacred sites, and further outline a framework for future research that will certainly contribute immensely to the development of a *Framework/Model for Access and Practice in Sacred sites*. In order to present the printed the 2008 Report, and to introduce the research project, the CRL Rights Commission will also hold a formal launch in the evening, following the day's conference proceedings. Representatives from higher levels of government, heritage management institutions, civil society and academics are expected to grace the evening session through their presence.

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1 'Sacred Sites: Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Ownership, Access and Use', Vols. 1 & 2, CRL Rights Commission, 2008.

#### 4. Objectives of the conference

- To officially launch the report on Sacred Sites: Vols. 1&2.
- To ensure access and practice in sacred sites.
- To raise awareness on practical challenges facing sacred sites.
- To create a platform for communities to engage with the challenges that confront sacred sites in order to solicit possible solutions.
- To generate interest and usage of sacred sites by local communities.
- To encourage living heritage preservation through sacred sites.

#### 5. Conference logistics and structure

The conference/launch is being organised and administered jointly by a conference working committee which comprises the CRL Rights Commission, Wits University and SALGA which will include, among others, drafting of concept document, sending out of invitations to speakers, facilitators and other designated participants, confirmation of venues, writing the final report of the conference etc.

The event will be divided into two major sessions, that is, full day session and an evening session. The former will be divided into four sub-sessions: Panel presentations and plenary discussions, Parallel table talks and report backs, Panel presentations and respondents. The latter will be characterised by the following primary activities: Synoptic presentation of the CRL Report on Sacred sites (Vol. 1&2), Ministerial Speech, Launch of the Reports and the Outline of the second phase of the project, that is, our vision for the future.

#### 6. Marketing and publicity

The event will coincide with the International Month (in April) for Monuments and Site along with the 2010 Wits Arts and Literature Experience (WALE)(21 – 24 April). This will certainly guarantee the presence of both national and international media (print, television and radio) for the duration of the conference/launch.

Potential gains and spin-offs include live broadcast and coverage by SABC's Morning Live, Spirit Sunday, Bush Radio, Umhlobo Wenene, SAfm – to mention but a few. Media interviews with relevant high profile delegates representing the partnership will certainly maximize exposure of the activities of the day and their impact thereof in relation to the objectives of the conference. The nature of the partnership, i.e. eminency and high profile institutions, will by itself inevitably market the event extensively – possibly through press releases, feature stories etc.

## **7. Deliverables/Outputs**

- Development of a working definition on sacred sites.
- Constructing knowledge and understanding of sacred sites and other related structures.
- Popularising and enhancing the concept of preserving and managing sacred sites
- Strategic Plan to advice government and other related agencies on possible policy review and guidelines on sacred sites.
- Conceptualising research topics on sacred sites.

## **8. Date and duration of the conference**

The conference is planned to take place over a full day and evening .The month of April, that is, 21<sup>st</sup> of April, 2010, being the International Day of Monuments and Sites was one of the deciding factors.

## **9. Conference venue**

The conference will be hosted by Wits University's Dept of Anthropology in Braamfontein.

## **10. Monitoring and evaluation**

A post conference questionnaire will be disseminated to the delegates with a view to measure the outcomes of the conference.

## **11. Reporting**

Proceedings will be recorded and a detailed report will be produced and printed subsequent to the event. Delegates and participating structures will be presented with either hard or soft copies the report.

## **12. Funding of the conference/launch**

The event will be jointly funded by the partners from their respective budgets. Over and above that, possible sponsorships will be approached to assist and cover additional overheads

## **15.6 Appendix F: Full presentations of keynotes:**

### **15.6.1 Acting Director General-representing the Ministry of Arts and Culture, Mr Vusi Ndima**

**ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF ARTS AND CULTURE, PAUL MASHATILE,  
AT THE COMMISSION FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF  
CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE.**

21 APRIL 2010

Programme Director

The Vice Chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand, Professor Nongxa

The Chairperson of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, Reverend Mabuza

The Chairperson of SALGA in Gauteng, Councillor Dau,

Councilors here present

Members of the academia

Ladies and gentlemen

On behalf of the Department of Arts and Culture, I would like to express our sincere gratitude for the invitation to participate in this important Conference.

As a Department, we acknowledge that there exist in our country a richness of knowledge and skills within our people that remains largely untapped.

This knowledge, found mainly in rural communities, relates to indigenous food technology, indigenous music and craft, indigenous herbs and medicine as well as traditional practices and belief systems.

Sadly, this knowledge has been neglected and has not been harnessed by previous governments.

As the ANC-led government we have initiated processes and projects that are aimed at harnessing this knowledge, for the benefit of all South Africans.

In this regard, we have made funding available to the Universities of Fort Hare, Venda and Zululand to do research and produce books and publications, with an intention of ensuring that; all South Africans can benefit from this vast knowledge, which in the past was regarded as backward.

This we are doing as part of our overall commitment to ensuring that the perspectives and

experiences of all South Africans, regardless of their race, class, gender and social background are fully reflected.

We are doing this also because we are conscious of the reality that; ours is a society founded on the noble values of inclusiveness, equality and dignity for all.

In the concept document prepared for this Conference, you talk about sacred natural sites, sacred historical sites, sacred man-made sites and graves as examples of sacred sites.

Apart from churches, temples and mosques; indigenous communities in South Africa have for generations preserved a number of spaces as sacred.

There is an enchanted body of water known as Lake Fundudzi on R523 between Thohoyandou and Louis Trichard-Makhado.

This lake is surrounded by the equally revered Thathe Vondo forest.

It is thought that the area is so full of spirits that few vhaVenda people venture into it for fear of being haunted.

Trips to the lake shore are traditionally rarely granted to visitors.

The lake has no obvious outlet and is formed from the water of the Mutale River, where a giant python god of fertility is said to reside.

Legend has it that the python god demands a sacrifice of a maiden every year, and the ritual domba dance, which is part of the initiation rites of young women, can be viewed by getting permission from the local custodians of the lake known as the "people of the pool".

The respect for the lake and the taboos that disallowed visits has led to the survival of the lake, and to this day the lake remains in good condition.

I am making this example about Lake Fundudzi because there is a big debate amongst heritage experts on the issue of the safeguarding of our intangible heritage.

Lake Fundudzi has survived largely because local communities regard it as taboo to visit the lake. Its protection therefore lies in the sacredness of the site.

If government agencies take over the custodianship of sacred sites in terms of our legislation, will this not destroy the sacredness of these sites?

Once these sites are taken over by government, will they not become tourist sites that are visited daily by scores of local and international tourists?

Is there a need for government to protect a heritage that is presently protected by communities themselves?

Can you protect a heritage element that you might actually not even understand?

Programme Director: these are some of the questions that we need to ask ourselves as academics, professionals and officials as we grapple with the subject of protecting sacred sites.

To this end the Department of Arts and Culture has started a project through which all elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage will be recorded and put into two separate inventories.

The first one will be a national inventory of all intangible heritage and the second one will be an inventory of all the intangible heritage in danger of disappearing.

The inventory of sacred sites that the Commission is undertaking can also be fed into a national inventory that the Department of Arts and Culture is currently working on.

I am aware that the South African Heritage Resource Agency also started a similar project in heritage objects.

I wish to encourage all the institutions working on these initiatives to coordinate their activities.

I would further urge that you also categorise those sacred sites that are in danger of disappearing so that we can have both a general list and a list of those in danger.

Also of significance is that we must not forget to document the people who keep the sacredness of those sites.

Remember that without those people, those Living Human Treasures, the sacredness and the significance of those sites disappear.

The Department of Arts and Culture has asked cabinet to approve that South Africa ratifies the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Once Cabinet approval has been received, we will be in a better position to come up with the institutional means of recognising people who possess special and rare indigenous knowledge associated with sacred sites in our country.

I wish the Commission well in its endeavors.

I would also like to encourage you to work closely with the Department of Arts and Culture, especially the Directorate: Living Heritage.

Working Together, We Can Do More.

Ndo livhuwa, Ndiyabulela, Baie Dankie.

Thank You.

## 15.6.2 Deputy Vice Chancellor, Wits, Professor Derek Keats

Minister for Arts and Culture, Honourable Lulu Xingwana; Deputy Minister, Paul Mashatile; colleagues; ladies and gentlemen.

I am happy to be able to say a few words at this conference entitled Cultural practice and memory: reclaiming living heritage through sacred sites.

This conference is taking place during the International Month for Monuments and Sites. Now I am a biologist turned technogeek strategist, and I have no claim on any expertise in this area. However, way back when I was a high school student living in a rural part of Newfoundland, in Canada, I started exploring the sites that our ancestors had occupied before settling finally in the tiny town of Gambo, at the head of a bay. I wrote an assignment on this for my history class, and I am pretty sure that by now those unprotected sites have deteriorated and all but vanished.

During my university days, I did some anthropology courses, and got involved in underwater archaeology, in which I still have my certificate. I was involved in a couple of underwater digs, and learned how important it is to protect all aspects of our heritage.

I travel quite a bit and often visit historical sites, and I know just how important sacred sites are in preserving aspects of our history; history that is often otherwise unwritten.

The first thing that I noticed about this conference is that it is a partnership among three entities:

the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities  
the Department of Anthropology at Wits University, and  
the South African Local Government Association's (SALGA) Gauteng Department of Community Development.

I often say that if I could choose my middle name, it would be synergy. And partnerships of this nature are a way to create synergy and do more than either of us could do alone working with the same level of resourcing. We have too few of everything in South Africa for us to try to succeed without creating synergy. For sure, we will not be innovative without these kinds of partnerships.

While Wits has expertise and research capacity in a number of areas, I would want us to view collaboration and partnerships as much more than us just lending our expertise and capacity to the initiatives of the Department of Arts and Culture and other departments of government. It is in our mutual interest and the interest of our nation that we use these partnerships to strengthen all of us. Indeed, as I have said, without critical mass, there is really no other way forward for us.

Delegates at the conference have deliberated on key issues pertaining to sacred sites in the South Africa. I hope, as do the organisers, that this conference will open up avenues for future research in relation to the development of a framework on management, ownership, access and use of sacred sites in South Africa. A lot of these sites are in rural areas, where sustainable livelihoods are complicated and threatened.

I have confidence that the collaboration of Prof David Copland and his students with the CRL Commission on a very major research project that they have envisioned will produce the kind of synergy to which I am referring. Such an initiative should lead to broadened communication between Wits, the CRL, local government, community stakeholders and the tourism sector. A modest economic development should also result, and none of this would happen without the kinds of collaboration we see here today.

I have a dream for Wits and for our country. At Wits, we hold a lot of materials of historical significance, and we have the potential of hosting a lot more. But we need to hold them in a state-of-the art, world-class facility, and ensure that they are converted into digital representations and that those representations are preserved for the enjoyment and research activities of future generations.

Madam Minister, I have engaged with your National Archivist and the CIO of your department, and I believe that we have much to learn from one another, and much that we can do together in this area as well. All for our mutual benefit of course.

But let me not take away from this gathering with my own dreams, let me welcome you to Wits on behalf of the Vice Chancellor, thank you for this engagement. Let me also express my hope that this is the beginning of something truly special, something that will build synergy and become a win-win-win scenario for all of us, and for the people of our country.

In closing, let me mention that we have our own arts and cultural experience happening this week at Wits, for it is the week of WALE, the Wits Arts and Literature experience. A rich programme activities are enriching our campus, and the cultural life of our community.

Thank you.

Prof Derek Keats (Deputy Vice Chancellor, WITS)

### **15.6.3 Councillor Mokgotsi, South African Local Government Association (SALGA)**



**VOTE OF THANKS BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF SALGA-GAUTENG AT THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF SACRED SITES REPORT: PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE RIGHTS OF OWNERSHIP, ACCESS AND USE VOL. 1 AND 2, HOSTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WITS AND CLR RIGHTS COMMISSION ON THE 21<sup>ST</sup> OF APRIL 2010.**

Honourable Deputy Minister, Comrade Paul Mashatile, the chairperson of the CRL Rights Commission, Rev. Dr Wesley Mabuza, Programme director, WITS management, SALGA senior management, our most valued invited guests, ladies and gentlemen. It is indeed an honour and a privilege to be granted this opportunity to propose a vote of thanks for such a prestigious event. I, on behalf of SALGA, WITS and CRL Right Commission wish to direct our gratitude to everyone for gracing this occasion and mainly to the delegates who have shared their opinions, knowledge and experience with us even during the morning session.

Our heartfelt thanks go to all speakers who set aside their time to make inputs today. Today as we gathered here to witness the launch of the research report, we will be doing ourselves injustice if we do not thank the CRL rights Commission for the magnificent work done in researching sacred sites and the development of the framework on the access and use, protection and promotion on the rights of ownerships. We further would like to indicate our gratitude and acknowledgement to all who contributed in the study. It is our hope that the report will not gather dust in our cabinets, but we shall all brighten our corners where we are by crafting strategies to support the implementation of programmes and initiatives aimed at addressing recommendations within the report.

I must mention our deep sense of appreciation to the Honourable Deputy Minister for gracing this occasion. Your presence indicates support and shows that the insurmountable challenges that we face as local government with regard to Sacred Sites can be addressed through your Ministry. We say thank you for such support.

I also extend our thanks to all institutions who delivered the messages of support. We hope the support will continue beyond today.

Programme Director, ladies and gentlemen, I cannot thank everyone enough for their involvement and their willingness on the completion of tasks beyond their comfort zones. On behalf of all, SALGA expresses its heartfelt thanks to all for making this occasion a success.

Comrades, lastly but not least, I would like to direct my deepest thanks and appreciation to the three institutions for the technical and financial support received to make this a success. To the task team for your commitment and guidance offered during the preparation for this event, without mentioning each individual I would however like to thank the WITS support under the leadership of Prof Coplan, CRL Rights Commission under Dr Ralarala and our own SALGA staff members within Community Development, we say thank you. "Le ka moso"

THANK YOU!!!!

