



Africa Thematic Workshop 3

Restitution of Cultural and Artistic Heritage: A Regional Approach

AGENDA

Date: November 11, 2020

Time: 12-2:40pm West Africa Time; 2-4:40pm SAST; 3-5:40pm East Africa Time; 7-9:40am EDT

Duration: 2:30h + 10 min break

Session Description:

“Thinking about restitutions implies much more than a single exploration of the past: above all, it becomes a question of building bridges for future equitable relations.”

Feline Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy, *The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage. Toward a New Relational Ethics*

It has been widely acknowledged that the vast majority of Sub-Saharan cultural and artistic heritage assets have been taken from Africa, impairing the ability of communities, and especially youth, to have - as the economist Feline Sarr and the art historian Bénédicte Savoy have stated - “access to their own culture, creativity, and spirituality from other eras.” As the only worldwide network of historic sites, museums and memory initiatives dedicated to remembering past struggles and addressing their contemporary legacies, the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC) has long advocated for the rights of those seeking access to their artistic and cultural heritage as a matter of reparations, and when carried out through broad community consultation and engagement this process can help to create a new future for all. In response to the looting of cultural assets illegally taken in the past from their places of origin in colonised African countries, Sites of Conscience in Africa are taking a leading role in ensuring that local communities in Africa have a voice in the process of regaining control over these artifacts and of framing their significance within local culture and heritage. This would finally allow African communities to benefit from these assets as those in Western countries have now for centuries.

As part of their efforts, the African Regional Sites of Conscience Network will host a workshop on November 11, 2020 to raise awareness of this growing global movement advocating for the restitution of cultural and artistic heritage, and to frame the movement within larger conversations about justice, accountability and reparations.

This workshop will be divided into 2 sessions:

In the first session (1h30), open to the general public and featuring introductory remarks by ICSC Board Chair and former UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination and intolerance, Dr. Doudou Diène, two leading African experts, Prof. Feline Sarr (Senegal) and Professor Wazi Apoh (Ghana), will share their views on the restitution of cultural and artistic heritage from a global and Pan-African perspective, and seek to identify guiding principles to navigate this complex, controversial and essential topic. For more about our speakers, see below.

In the second session (1h), open only to members of the African Regional Sites of Conscience Network, members will explore in three roundtable discussions possible conceptual and practical approaches to linking restitution of cultural and artistic heritage to African Sites of Conscience's programming related to memory, human rights, justice, reparations and accountability.

Presenters Bios

Mr Doudou Diène – Born in Senegal in 1941, Doudou Diène holds a Law degree from the University of Caen, a Ph.D. in Public Law from the University of Paris, and a diploma in Political Science from the Institut d'Études Politiques in Paris. In 2017, he was appointed by former President François Hollande of France to help lead the public interest group, "Mission on the Memory of Slavery, Treaties and their Abolition." And in 2018, he was appointed Chair of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi by the President of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

After serving as Deputy Representative of Senegal to UNESCO (1972–77), Mr. Diène joined the UNESCO Secretariat in 1977 and was appointed Director of the Liaison Office with the United Nations Permanent Missions and departments in New York in 1980. After a period as Project Manager of the "Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue," aimed at revitalizing East-West dialogue, he was appointed Director of the Division of Intercultural Projects in 1993. In this capacity, he directed various projects on intercultural dialogue, including the Slave Route, Routes of Faith, Routes of al-Andalus, and Iron Roads in Africa. In 1998 he was placed in charge of activities pertaining to inter-religious dialogue, and in 2002, he was appointed by the Commission on Human Rights as Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, a mandate that was later extended by the Human Rights Council. In 2011, he was appointed United Nations Independent Expert on the Situation of Human Rights in Côte D'Ivoire, and served as Member of the United Nations Independent Commission of Inquiry on Gaza from 2014-15. In addition, he is the author of numerous publications and has chaired and been the distinguished guest on various panels, radio, and television programs, including *Neuf siècles de guerres saintes*, UNESCO/ARTE; *Sur la piste des caravanes: L'endroit de toutes les rencontres*; *Sur la route des épices*, UNESCO/NDR/ARTE; and a programme in the Thalassa series on The Slave Route.

Prof. Feline Sarr is a humanist, philosopher, economist, and musician and the Anne-Marie Bryan Chair in French and Francophone Studies at Duke University. He is the author of *Afrotopia*

(University of Minnesota Press, 2019, tr. by Drew S. Burk). Well-known for his groundbreaking report "The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Ethics," Sarr taught at the University of Gaston-Berger in Saint Louis, Senegal, where he was previously dean of its Economics and Management department. His research focuses on economic policies, the development economy, econometrics, epistemology, and the history of religious ideas. In addition to *Afrotopia*, he has published the meditative essay *Dahij* (Gallimard, 2009), the collection of short stories *105, rue Carnot*, the philosophical text *Méditations africaines* (Mémoire d'encrier, 2011), as well as the essay "Habiter le monde" and the collection "Ishindenshin," both published by Mémoire d'Encrier. Further, he co-founded the Laboratory for the Analysis of Societies and Powers/Africa-Diasporas (LASPAD) in Saint Louis, as well as the publishing company Jimsaan in Dakar. In 2016, he co-created with Achille Mbembe the annual Dakar and Saint Louis workshops *Ateliers de la pensée*, which sought to stimulate a "non-colonial" school of thought. Sarr also co-founded with Achille Mbembe the *Ateliers de la pensée's* doctoral school. He is currently Research Professor in the Department of Romance Studies at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina – USA.

Prof. Wazi Apoh is currently an Associate Professor at the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, University of Ghana. In December 2018, he convened the international workshop, 'Issues of Restitution and Repatriation of Looted and Illegally Acquired African Objects in European Museums' at the University of Ghana. He started his appointment as a lecturer in the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, University of Ghana on 9th June 2009. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree and Master of Philosophy Degree in archaeology from the University of Ghana in 1997 and 2001 respectively. His exposure to new methods and techniques of archaeology and anthropology from the United States of America, where he obtained his Doctor of Philosophy Degree in archaeological anthropology in 2008, is indeed an indispensable asset needed in the training of students in this department. Prior to his coming to Ghana, he taught for a couple of years as a Frederick Douglass Teaching Scholar at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, USA. He also worked as a Senior Research Aide with the Public Archaeology Facility, Binghamton University from 2002 to 2007. During which time he was engaged in a variety of heritage impact assessment works and archaeological surveys at cultural resource management sites in Upstate New York.