

AFRICAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION



IFLA AFRICA
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS



Photo ©Graham A Young

PREAMBLE

Landscapes are the result of unique combinations of biophysical, cultural and social processes evolving over time and interwoven with memory, perception and tradition. They include land, water systems, marine areas and island configurations and play a vital role in human nurture, fulfilment and in shaping individual and collective identity. Landscapes range from the outstanding and the memorable, to the familiar and the commonplace. All landscape architects practicing in Africa, notably members of IFLA Africa, representing a diverse array of cultures spread across the continent, have a duty to care for and ensure that the distinctive characteristics and potential of their landscapes are not compromised through insensitive or inappropriate change, and that their communities are not diminished or endangered by inappropriate development.

Landscape shapes the culture and identity of a community, a neighbourhood, a city and a nation. Landscape is the powerful connection between communities and the land, the places where people live, work and play. It is the physical, social and cultural context of our lives. It gives us a unique sense of place.

The sustainable management and planning of resilient landscapes and communities includes the preservation of common and distinctive heritage, improving ecological health and well-being, increasing the productive capabilities of land and encouraging sustainable approaches to development and change. This approach aims to maintain important life-supporting functions such as water quality and biodiversity, while providing for the appropriate utilisation of landscapes for sustainable social, cultural, and economic development.

The importance of the deep and fundamental relationship that indigenous and other peoples of the African continent have with the natural world must be acknowledged and respected. These attitudes and beliefs should influence and inform the ways in which we approach the protection, planning, design and management of our landscapes. The scope and nature of the pressures on the landscape continue to increase and a comprehensive set of principles is now required to counter these pressures and to support the diverse aspects of contemporary landscape practice in our Region.

This Landscape Convention sits within a global context and framework that comprises a series of National Landscape Charters and Conventions coordinated through the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA). Other significant statements about our approaches and attitudes to the landscape include, but are not limited to, the ICOMOS Charter (1964), the European Landscape Convention (2001), the Florence Declaration (2012), the Matera Resolution (2013) and the IFLA Global Accord (2017).

PURPOSE

The Convention is the IFLA Africa Region's declaration of fundamental principles to support the active stewardship of, advocacy for, enhancement and regeneration of the African landscape. It offers a set of guiding principles and a frame of reference to inform decision-makers about a broad range of landscape matters; it enables planning and design disciplines, government agencies, departments and other concerned stakeholders to cooperate on the processes of development and change.

AIM

The Convention is intended to apply to the entire territory of the African continent. Focusing on the relationship populations have with their territory whatever the scale or context, it covers all aspects of the landscape, including natural, cultural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas. It includes land, water systems and marine areas and applies to a diversity of landscapes including those having outstanding qualities, those that are spiritually, culturally or naturally significant or protected, as well as every day, productive or degraded landscapes.

AMBITION

National governmental, non-governmental organizations and institutions, including civic societies, charities and not for profits adopting the Landscape Convention shall undertake to work towards implementing its aims and policies in harmony with their own policies, ethical responsibilities and our national obligations to meet the 2030 UN Sustainability Goals.

Signatories to this Convention affirm the importance of safeguarding and improving landscape for:

- Ensuring quality of daily life, cultural identity and enhancing well being
- Combating many global crises, including climate change, land degradation, inequality, sustainability and resilience, sociological, economic or political migrations, desertification, food and water security, cultural depletion and diminishing bio diversity
- Encouraging the respect of the physical, cultural, environmental and decisional processes that safeguard communities and people

- Reacting in an adaptive and participatory way to risk and catastrophes.
- Preserving diversity, tangible and intangible heritage;
- Ensuring the ecosystems' continuity in providing services to communities
- Fostering respect for human rights including the rights of communities to ensure their livelihood and preserve their resources, identity and beliefs
- Integrating a multitude of sustainable development processes

KEY PRINCIPLES

Signatories will commit to the following key principles:

- Recognise the importance of good quality sustainable landscape planning, design and management to ensure the ecological health, economic viability, social vitality and cultural expression of communities
- Celebrate and affirm the value of unity in diversity, recognise and honour the principles of community self-management, equality and cooperation often embodied in the founding documents or fundamental statements about the birth and development of nations of this continent
- Acknowledge the responsibility we all have to nurture the continued health and diversity of landscapes, to ensure the sustainable integration of protection, production, preservation, and habitation for all living things
- Understand that landscape shapes culture and identity at both a local and regional scale
- Respect the extent to which people are grounded in place by tradition, forebears, or identification with 'home'
- Create well-designed, economically sound and resilient landscapes that sustain, enhance and revitalise physical, emotional, spiritual and cultural wellbeing
- Foster places to inspire, enrich, or reveal natural and cultural elements of landscape, creating regenerative settings in which people can flourish
- Encourage communities to actively participate in the sustainable planning, design and management of their landscapes, through the articulation of values associated with their beliefs and their national, regional and local places

SPECIFIC POLICIES

Each signatory undertakes to:

- Contribute to advocacy, education, development of assessment methodology, research and policy in respect of the landscape
- Strengthen the regional and national awareness on the need to safeguard and improve landscape as an integrating element of sustainable development processes
- Share information and make expertise available
- Establish effective partnerships and obtain national, regional and international commitments to deliver landscapes of excellence and quality
- Support immediate national and local government initiatives for the support and protection of landscapes including educational and awareness programmes and the use of traditional knowledge

ADOPTION

This Convention was adopted by

the.....(name)

at..... (event)

on.....(date) in(place).

SIGNATURE/

A register of organisations that have adopted this Convention will be maintained by the IFLA Africa secretariat and can be consulted upon request.

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ANNEX 1 DEFINITIONS

Landscape

The relationship a community has with its territory, a physical area, as perceived by people, whose character is the cumulative result of the action and interaction of natural and cultural factors. A landscape can be at a large regional scale, or as small as the space in front of what one calls home.

Landscape protection

Action taken to conserve, preserve and maintain significant landscapes based on their natural and cultural qualities, characteristics and value.

Landscape management

Responsible, creative, innovative and sustainable approaches to maintain, adapt or enhance landscapes in response to changing social, cultural, economic or environmental goals needs and dynamics.

Landscape design

Responsible, creative, innovative and sustainable proposition making for landscape conservation, development or regeneration in response to changing social, cultural, economic or environmental goals, needs and dynamics.

Landscape planning

Responsible, creative, innovative and sustainable making of long-term strategies, proposals or actions to promote large scale landscape transformation and change in response to changing social, cultural, economic or environmental goals, needs and dynamics.

Landscape policy

A set of general principles, strategies and guidelines established by relevant local or central government, that enable, or direct specific measures aimed at the protection, planning, design and management of landscapes.



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