Call for Papers: The African Renaissance and International Cultural Heritage Law

By:

Senai Woldeab Andemariam

February 21, 2024

Is the 21st century destined to be ‘the African Century’? Will Africa surprise the world? Policymakers have called for an African Renaissance. The idea of an African Renaissance conveys the belief that the continent is going through a significant historical turning point and will prevail over the problems of poverty, inequality, and violence to achieve economic, political, and cultural renewal and a more just and equitable order. First articulated by the Senegalese historian Cheikh Anta Diop (1923–1986) in the wake of World War II, and further emboldened in many forms by Pan-Africanism, the concept encourages African peoples to be proud of their rich cultural heritage, to rebuild the economy, and to set Africa as a significant player in international relations.

The African Renaissance concept guides the ambitious objectives of the African Union, including the promotion of peace, human rights, and sustainable development. In addition to recalling this notion in many policy instruments,

the African Union has adopted the Charter for the African Cultural Renaissance. Its Agenda 2063, which has its roots in the African renaissance, offers a roadmap for a prosperous, politically united, and culturally vibrant Africa to actively pursue the African Renaissance in both theory and in practice.

Africa's rich history and culture are so diverse that they vary not only from one country to another but also within regions and countries. For the African Union, the continent should take advantage of and build on its rich diversity of cultures, religions, languages, and traditions in its quest for prosperity.3 Similarly, the United Nations Secretary-General has urged the continent to use its rich heritage as a catalyst for growth and transformation.4 One of the many tools to achieve these lofty objectives is the efficient use of the opportunities that international cultural heritage law creates at country, regional, and continental levels.

Against this background, the special issue – to be co-edited by Valentina Vadi (School of Political Sciences, University of Florence and Department of Political Sciences, Law, and International Studies, University of Padua, Italy) and Senai Woldeab Andemariam (Department of Law, College of Business and Social Sciences, Eritrea) – aims to focus on the protection of African Cultural Heritage in international law, focusing on the five types of cultural heritage: 1) world heritage; 2) intangible cultural heritage; 3) underwater cultural heritage; 4) cultural diversity; and 5) indigenous cultural heritage.

The special issue aims to spot the incommensurable potential of African heritage and encourage its local protection for the benefit of local communities and sustainable development. It also aims to highlight the promises and pitfalls of current international cultural heritage law in safeguarding African cultural heritage and harnessing its potential for promoting sustainable development. International cultural heritage law has developed using European conceptions of cultural property protection. As a result, it rarely reflects current African realities. Are there ways to adapt or use the existing legal frameworks to promote cultural protection and sustainable development in Africa? Discussions on alternatives for protecting African cultural heritage at the regional and continental levels, or reviews of any such extant mechanisms, are encouraged. Good practices that African countries can learn from or export to other countries are also welcome. Pertinent case studies are welcome too.

The call for papers welcomes proposals on the following topics:

1) World Heritage

- Why is Africa underrepresented in the World Heritage list?
- Are there ways to redress this imbalance?
- Is international cultural heritage law adequate to protect African heritage of universal value?
- What are the promises and pitfalls of listing African heritage sites on the World Heritage List?
- What are the challenges and major threats to the effective management and conservation of World Heritage in Africa?
- Can world heritage protection go hand in hand with the fulfillment of human and peoples' rights in Africa?
- Disputes concerning world heritage in Africa Heritage conservation and development: friends or foes?
- The protection of African heritage and war
- Contemporary African practices on the incorporation of global heritage treaties into domestic laws
- Border-crossing heritages and the challenges of their joint preservation

2) Intangible Heritage

- Protecting African traditional knowledge
- African traditional medicine and healing practice
- Promoting foodways and culinary practice as intangible heritage
- Geographical indications as a way to promote sustainable development, safeguard intangible heritage, and invest in agriculture
- African music industries African heritage and the fashion industry
- Review of African Union instruments for the protection and development of intangible heritage in Africa

3) Underwater Cultural Heritage

- Has the Convention on Underwater Cultural Heritage been widely ratified by African countries?
- If not, why? What is the regime applicable to underwater heritage in Africa?

- The challenges of recovering and protecting underwater cultural heritage Promises and pitfalls of safeguarding underwater cultural heritage

4) Cultural Diversity

- The concept of the African Cultural Renaissance and the African Union
- Creative industries
- Digitization and African heritage
- The African diaspora and cultural heritage

5) Indigenous Cultural Heritage

- Are minorities and Indigenous peoples' cultures adequately protected in Africa?
- What steps can be undertaken to enhance their cultural heritage?
- Are there jurisprudential trends emphasizing the need to protect Indigenous cultures and ways of life? Should an international UNESCO convention be adopted protecting Indigenous cultural heritage? Is the available legal framework adequate to protect Indigenous cultural heritage?

Submission Details

7000-8000 word papers or 4000-word case notes should be sent to the editors Valentina Vadi at **valentina.vadi@unifi.it** and Senai Woldeab Andemariam at **senaiwoldeab@gmail.com** by **15 June 2024**. A short abstract of the paper (500 words) and an author's short bio or CV should be added.

Please follow instructions for authors here. The authors will be notified about acceptance by the end of September 2024. The selected papers will be anonymously peer-reviewed.

The publication will be a special issue of the International Journal of Cultural Property, an international peer-reviewed journal and offprint of Cambridge University Press.

View online: Call for Papers: The African Renaissance and International Cultural Heritage Law

Provided by Afronomicslaw