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## Media release

Pretoria, 16 June 2010

### **Freedom Park showcases its new developments on Youth Day**

Today Freedom Park cements its position as one of South Africa's heritage tourism destinations of choice by showcasing its latest visitor offerings: various newly completed structures as well as numerous upgrades and additions to the existing Park.

These are:

- The architectural structure of //hapo;
- Temporary exhibitions within //hapo;
- A dedicated welcoming, ticketing and orientation space;
- A restaurant, coffee shop and gift shop;
- Temporary exhibitions in the Gallery of Leaders;
- Sculptures and other significant art forms; and
- Touch screens for the Wall of Names.

The upgrades and additions are all aimed at enhancing and enriching the visitor experience, thus ensuring a truly exceptional and unique experience for national and international tourists alike.

This ushers in a new phase for Freedom Park as it takes its final steps towards completion in a journey that started with the Park's conceptualisation in 2000. The subsequent years saw the emergence of elements such as Isivivane, S'khumbuto and Uitspanplek. Finally, //hapo will draw all these elements together in one conclusive offering, telling the story of South Africa and its people through the lens of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), thus showcasing our unique history, heritage, spirituality and culture.

In //hapo, which is KhoiSan for 'dream', the rich and colourful history of Southern Africa dating back 3.6 billion years unfolds in seven epochs or eras, starting with 'Creation' in epoch one and concluding in the present day with epoch seven – 'Nation and Continent Building'.

With its distinctly African welcoming and orientation space, //hapo not only enables each of the Freedom Park elements to be viewed and understood in context, it also allows visitors the option of customised tours, choosing to visit selected elements within Freedom Park.

//hapo's architecture is highly symbolic and adds to the significance of the offering. The structure was designed to blend into the landscape, rather than impose on it. By sculpting the building frames using steel structures and overlaying them with copper, //hapo was shaped to resemble a group of boulders. Each of the seven epochs or eras will be depicted in a separate boulder. Over time, the copper will fade and turn the colour of the boulders in the area. Surrounded by large trees and other vegetation, //hapo will thus resemble a series of boulders on the side of Salvokop.

Starting in mid-2008, construction on //hapo and its surrounding structures have now been completed. Conceptualisation and design of the exhibitions is currently in its final stages and the completed product will be ready in early 2011. In the meantime, //hapo hosts various temporary exhibitions, using text, audio, visuals and storytelling to bring to life the seven epochs and tell of the significance behind the architectural design.

Apart from //hapo itself, Freedom Park now also offers its guests a fully operational restaurant and coffee shop. In line with celebrating our country and continent, the restaurant boasts a menu with the finest offerings from the African continent. The gift shop, entitled *Tshifiwa*, which means 'gift' in Tshivenda, allows visitors to purchase distinctly South African and Freedom Park-specific memorabilia.

Today also sees the launch of a temporary exhibition on ten of the leaders currently verified for inclusion in the Gallery of Leaders. The temporary exhibition will provide visitors with a glimpse of the permanent exhibition to come in March 2011. The ten leaders are:

#### *South African*

- General Christiaan De Wet
- Helen Joseph
- Lilian Ngoyi
- O R Tambo
- Robert Sobukwe
- Steve Biko

#### *Continental*

- Julius Nyerere
- Kwame Nkrumah

#### *International*

- Che Guevara

The Gallery of Leaders pays tribute to the achievements and represents the leadership qualities of those exceptional leaders who brought about qualitative leaps in the struggle for humanity and freedom nationally, continentally and internationally. To date, 28 names of South African, African and international leaders who are deemed exemplary role models in terms of the above criteria have been researched, verified and selected for inclusion.

From today, visitors will be able to use touch screens to locate a name on the Wall of Names within S'khumbuto. Users simply type the specific name into the system and receive feedback as to the name's status: captured on the wall (with reference to its exact location), captured in the database but still awaiting a verification process or not yet captured. Where a name has not been captured, users have the option of submitting the name, together with all relevant details, using the touch screen. Freedom Park will validate the submitted names and present it for verification.

The Wall of Names have currently been inscribed with approximately 75,000 names of those who died fighting for humanity and freedom in South Africa.

Lastly, Freedom Park also boasts two proudly South African artworks:

- Ilanga Elekhulu (isiZulu for 'Big Day'), erected at Tiva Origin. This sculpture by Micky Korzennik depicts a South African family ready to vote for the first time; and
- Circle of Peace, erected at the entrance of Moshate. This bronze work by Speelman Mahlangu is a tribute to the peace initiatives brokered by various local community leaders between township people and the hostel dwellers during the violent 1980s.

Ends

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### **Editor's notes**

#### **About Freedom Park**

Hailed as the most ambitious heritage project of our democratic government, Freedom Park is located on a 52-hectare site on Salvokop in Pretoria. The Park offers a unique and exceptional opportunity to experience and appreciate South Africa's history. As a national and international icon of humanity and freedom, it weaves the story of where we come from and the historical and cultural events that shaped what South Africa is today.

Freedom Park is the heartbeat of all that is South African – the hub through which to know this land of promise in all its diversity.

The Park comprises a number of areas, each with its distinct symbolism and attraction. Entrance fees range between R20 and R25 for adults and R10 for senior citizens and children.