

THE
Freedom
PARK TRUST

**Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale
Hosted at The Freedom Park**

13 March 2008, Pretoria, On Friday, 14 March 2008, at 9:00, the Parliamentary Millennium Project from the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa hosts a send-off ceremony for a South Africans delegation that will depart on a ten-day Heritage Trail to Cuito Cuanavale in Southern Angola. The ceremony takes place at the Sanctuary within The Freedom Park on Salvokop, Pretoria.

As part of the South African parliament's initiative to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, a convoy of South Africans, comprising military veterans from both sides of the erstwhile political divide as well as representatives from government, the Parliamentary service, scholars and civil society will depart from The Freedom Park, Pretoria to journey to the location of the historical battle.

The Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, which took place from 1987 to 1988, is regarded as one of the final battles of the Cold War. This battle is perceived to have changed the history and political landscape of the Southern African region irreversible. At the previously insignificant village of Cuito Cuanavale, Angolan, Namibian and Cuban forces triumphed over the Apartheid military forces, whilst South African liberation armies fighting in Northern Angola managed to contain the Angolan rebel armies, thus preventing them from reinforcing the apartheid armies. The peace negotiations that followed this battle led to the withdrawal of the South African military from Angola and Namibia, resulting in the independence of Namibia and spurring on South Africa's negotiated settlement.

This Heritage Trial will highlight the significance of the battle and encourage an appreciation of the importance that global solidarity played in the emancipation of Southern Africa and Africa. The commemoration of this battle pays homage to all those who made the ultimate sacrifice for South Africa's liberation. Through this project, Parliament also aims to encourage reconciliation and nation building.

En-route to Cuito Cuanavale, the convoy will visit places of historical significance and community projects initiated after years of conflict. The delegation will also gather information on areas requiring development assistance.

As a custodian of our constitutional democracy the South African Parliament expresses the hope that initiatives like this will assist in healing the divisions of the past and unite Africans, including those living in the African Diaspora, in the endeavour to building a sustainable and peaceful Africa and world.

The Freedom Park is currently open for visits. At present, entrance is free. Tours take place daily at 9:00, 12:00 and 15:00. For more information on tours and visits, call 079 837 9092 or email tours@freedompark.co.za.

Issued by The Freedom Park Trust
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