

Freedom PARK TRUST

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The Freedom Park Trust Equips and Empowers the Khoi-San Youth

5 June 2008, Pretoria, On 6 – 8 June 2008, the Freedom Park Trust in association with South African First Indigenous and Human Rights Organization (SAFIHRO) hosts a Youth Conference with representatives from the Khoi-San youth at the Protea Hotel in Upington.

This initiative, which is geared specifically towards empowerment and mobilisation of the Khoi-San youth and ultimately the Khoi-San community, forms part of the Freedom Park Trust's recently launched nation-wide public awareness campaign. The campaign, which focuses on sensitising the nation, and more specifically the youth, to the importance of history, heritage and culture, includes collaboration with the Department of Education to link The Freedom Park and what it represents to the heritage outcome in the national curriculum.

"The Freedom Park is the heartbeat of all that is South African – our history, heritage and culture. A visit to the Park reveals the reality of exactly how vast, varied and rich our heritage and history is. Our mandate with the public awareness campaign is thus equipping our youth with an understanding of themselves and those around them by ingraining a deep appreciation for where we come from, the events that shaped where we are today and the diversity that characterises our nation," explains Dr M.W. Serote, CEO of the Freedom Park Trust.

"Our purpose is to empower and educate, but also to spark a sense of passion and pride. Our angle of engagement centers on five core principles: history, heritage, culture, Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and our national symbols. We envision the programmes to result in courageous young people, proud to be South African and African, fully conscious of the challenges that the country face and, more importantly, eager to shoulder the responsibility resting on the youth's shoulders to work through these challenges for a brighter future."

"We are presenting an opportunity for the youth to become part of the solution instead of the problem. Elders will address this conference on issues such as humanity and respect, moral values and life skills."

According to Dr Serote, the youth is a rich source of insight and often untapped knowledge. As such, a publication discussing highly relevant issues such as xenophobia,

racism and tribalism drafted by the Freedom Park Trust will be tabled for discussion during this conference for input and feedback.

“Apart from our mandate to equip and empower, this specific conference is also aimed at igniting a spark of interest in our youths’ minds regarding the importance of history as a social discipline. Heritage is the fingerprint of generations past and our country needs historians and researchers to uncover and document events past so that these can act as signposts for our future,” concludes Dr Serote.

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.

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