

ANC POLICY FOR TRANSFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF HERITAGE RESOURCES (MUSEUMS, MONUMENTS, ARCHIVES AND NATIONAL SYMBOLS) FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA.

Discussion paper presented on behalf of the anc commission for museums, monuments and heraldry to the ANC Culture and Development Conference held at the Civic Theatre, Johannesburg, May 1993.

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PREAMBLE

Honoured guests, friends, comrades and compatriots, allow me to say that now is the time for positive symbolism to be reflected in the South African Cultural Institutions. Now is the time for the affirmation of cultural manifestations that strike deep responsive chords in the people.

Now is the time for a common integrated and integrating cultural framework that helps to promote the shared cultural identity and to put such identity at the centre of the development paradigm.

This is the time to veer away from the negative symbolism that characterises the cultural institutions of the establishment.

1. Introduction

1.1. Apartheid and heritage resources

1.1.1 For the majority of South Africans most cultural institutions in apartheid South Africa are seen as otiose, monuments of privilege, waste of money, institutionalised proof of white hegemony, abuse of the environment and culture:

- They are regarded as racist, sexist, elitist, eurocentric, alienated and irrelevant or as not belonging to the majority of the people;
- The sociology and ideology of apartheid inform the national, class and philodophical bases of these institutions;
- These institutions are notorious for marginalising the history and culture of the down-trodden and oppressed, who feature as brutes and negation of values and superior culture;
- Heritage institutions, intentionally or otherwise, fail to foster national consciousness based on the historical fact that all South Africans have a common history and destiny.

1.1.2 Planning in apartheid South Africa is embroiled in dogma, fragmentation, myopia and lack of co-ordination.

- With specific regard to museums, monuments, archives and national symbols such planning hardly exists;
- There is no coherent national policy for management of museums, monuments, archives and national symbols.

1.1.3 Empowerment of the people through participation, good governance, accountability and development is foreign to these cultural institutions.

1.2 ANC Policy : Museums, Monuments, Archives, Heraldry and National Symbols

There are four basic objectives of the ANC policy within which the ANC blueprint for heritage resources has to be embedded namely :

- i) To strive for the achievement of the right of all South Africans, as a whole, to political and economic self-determination as a united south Africa;
- ii) To overcome the legacy of inequality and injustice created by colonialism and apartheid, in a swift, progressive and principled way;
- iii) To develop a sustainable economy and state infrastructure that will progressively improve the quality of life of all South Africans and
- iv) To ensure democracy and encourage the flourishing of the feeling that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, to promote a common loyalty to and pride in the country and create a universal sense of freedom and security within its boundaries (1982:1).

The African National Congress recognises that

1.2.1 The museums, monuments, national archives, heraldry and national symbols in a democratic South Africa should foster national unity, reconciliation and democratic values and be accessible to and preserved for the education, benefit and development of all South Africans;

1.2.2 New structures for the management of heritage resources must be established to replace the current structures which are the product of years of colonial

exploitation and apartheid ideology;

1.2.3 Such new structures for the management of heritage resources should be based on

- i) democratic accountability and participation of the broader community,
- ii) internationally accepted standards;
- iii) commitment to national reconstruction, reconciliation, nation-building and negation of balkanisation.
- iv) dedication to the developmental programmes and integration with the education system

1.2.4 The role of organised cultural workers and professionals in terms of commitment and dedication to democratic principles should be given due recognition. To this end, national cultural organisations and the professional status of their members will be recognised.

2. Development strategies

The ANC realises that culture does not include only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the people, value systems, traditions and beliefs. The cultural dimension of development which receives every little attention, if any, in the cultural institutions under apartheid regime, will be fostered. To this end, the ANC policy for the heritage resources seek to ensure that

- 2.1 Staffing is a function of democracy and affirmative action;
- 2.2 Disadvantaged majority are empowered through training programmes that will facilitate their participation in all levels of governance;
- 2.3 Efforts are made to, where feasible, transform and strengthen the current heritage institutions so that they can reflect the values and serve the interests of a democratic South Africa;
- 2.4 Cultural institutions promote development programmes impacting on the national economic, political and social systems;
- 2.5 Heritage institutions equip the citizens of a democratic South Africa with strategies and managerial tools that will enable them to undertake pertinent analysis of cultural factors in development planning, management and environmental issues;
- 2.6 Attention is given to neglected and suppressed history and culture of the majority of the people (including women, workers, peasants, etc).

- 2.7 A Transitional Development Fund is established to redress imbalances in collections, appointments, development and educational programmes, and community involvement in the heritage institutions.

3. Specific policies

3.1 Museums

The ANC recognises that museums are cultural repositories, which are first and foremost educational institutions forming part of the scientific and cultural structure of the society and are, therefore, deserving the State support. To this end, the ANC policy will ensure that

- 3.1.1 Museums are funded according to the effectiveness and relevance of their developmental and educational programmes;
- 3.1.2 Educational programmes are made as widely accessible as possible, they are linked to other adult education and literacy programmes and integrate with the creative use of mass and popular media;
- 3.1.3 Efforts are made to provide mobile museum services focussing on deprived communities;
- 3.1.4 There is co-ordination between museums and tourism in order to foster socio-economic development;
- 3.1.5 Museums are primary custodians of and repositories for the material culture of the nation;
- 3.1.6 There is integration of research with national development programmes;
- 3.1.7 South African museums engage and integrate with the regional, continental and international museum community.

3.2 Monuments

The ANC recognise the need for a holistic strategy regarding the conservation of heritage resources. It is further recognised that conservation mechanisms should include the concerns of the communities both in the rural and urban areas. To this end, the ANC which believes that the State has ultimate responsibility for conserving the country's natural and cultural heritage resources seek to ensure that

- 3.2.1 Monumentalisation is integrated with the overall conservation policies;

- 3.2.2 Integration of social planning policies with environmental and conservation programmes;
- 3.2.3 Co-ordination between the different legislative structures tasked with protection of the environment and the cultural space;
- 3.2.4 Involvement of local communities in the monumentalisation and conservation programmes;
- 3.2.5 Monumentalisation is a function of affirmative action in order to redress the historical imbalances;
- 3.2.6 Better education of local authorities and deprived communities on the conservation programmes;

3.3 Graves of Victims of conflict

The ANC seeks

- 3.3.1 To consider a Heroes Acre for the burial of heroes, who died for the struggle;
- 3.3.2 To make efforts to identify all those unknown victims of past conflicts and their graves and to make appropriate arrangements for the restoration and care thereof;
- 3.3.3 To arrange for the care of graves outside of South Africa and where appropriate maintain them as symbols of solidarity with those nations with whom South Africans have in the past been allied and who have in particular supported South Africans during the Liberation Struggle;
- 3.3.4 To re-inter remains in situations where the geographical location of graves makes maintenance problematic or where the graves are under threat from natural forces and necessary development.

3.4 Memorials

The ANC believes that many memorials celebrate the history of colonial conquest and apartheid domination. Its policy will make provision for:

- 3.4.1 Re-assessment of the existing memorials to ensure that they foster reconstruction and reconciliation;
- 3.4.2 Efforts are made for erection of memorials commemorating personalities and events neglected or suppressed during the apartheid era and, where appropriate, provide expertise and technical and financial support;

- 3.4.3 Erection of a National Memorial commemorating the Liberation Struggle.

3.5 Heraldry and National Symbols

The ANC believes that heraldry and national symbols in apartheid South Africa foster apartheid ideology and serve sectarian interests and values. The majority of the South Africans do not identify with or bear allegiance to the current heraldic and national symbols because they represent oppression, dispossession, domination and disenfranchisement. The ANC policy will provide for :

- 3.5.1 Mechanisms for democratic re-assessment of the current heraldic and national symbols in order to determine their relevance and suitability in a new South Africa;
- 3.5.2 New heraldic and national symbols that are representative and reflect the interests and values of a democratic South Africa;
- 3.5.3 Heraldic and national symbols foster reconciliation, reconstruction and national unity;
- 3.5.4 Democratic mechanisms for deciding on the flag, coat of arms, national emblems, national anthem, public holidays, place names and the name of a new South Africa.

3.6 Archives

The ANC policy will ensure that :

- 3.6.1 People have the right of free access for research purposes to State and private information so that an informed democratic culture can be developed. It is accepted that certain exceptions to this right will have to be granted in order to protect the privacy of individuals and the security of the democratic state;
- 3.6.2 The records of the apartheid regime, its predecessors and the bantustans are appraised and preserved according to international standards and with the informed consent of the citizens and their democratically elected representatives in order to preserve a comprehensive record of the past;
- 3.6.3 The records of the liberation movements and of the individuals and other organisations involved in the liberation struggle, which were seized by the state security apparatus remain the property of those from whom they were confiscated and should, with their consent, be preserved in the broad public interest;
- 3.6.4 History programmes are fostered by the archives

service in collaboration with other cultural and heritage organisations.

4. Organisational Structure

The ANC recognises that the current statutes legislating heritage resource management are avertly racist, narrow and incapable to uphold democratic principles and values. Such statutes must be replaced by a non-racist legislation which should foster a holistic strategy regarding the management of heritage resources. To this end, the ANC policy will ensure that museums, monuments, memorials, heraldry and national symbols are administered as follows :

- 4.1 A National Heritage Council (NHC) responsible for co-ordinating and determining broad national policy and advising the government regarding legislation pertaining to material culture should be established. The Council should consist of standing committees, vested with statutory powers to apply broad national policy, and to manage appropriate divisions of culture : museums, monuments, memorials, war graves, national archives, heraldry and national symbols. The NHC should control the distribution of state funds for salaries and administrative purposes to regional and local levels;
- 4.2 At the regional level, councils and services should be established to implement the broad national policy, and, within the parameters of that policy, determine a regional policy, co-ordinate and rationalise cultural heritage service (including technical facilities). Institutions of national stature, where appropriate, should be attached to each regional organisation;
- 4.3 At the local level individual institutions should be managed by boards of trustees selected from and democratically accountable to their communities. A prime function of such institutions should be to address the interests and needs of the broad community, and at the same time emphasise unique themes which enhance their education value;
- 4.4 A National Heritage Trust Fund should be established to enable the implementation of the national policy by providing funds for approved projects by way of annual applications from other levels of administration;
- 4.5 The selection and appointment of representatives at local and regional levels should be democratically determined by the communities, which they serve. Representatives at the national level should be drawn from democratically selected regional bodies.

(Figures I and II are a diagramatic representation of the envisaged structures)

HERITAGE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE:

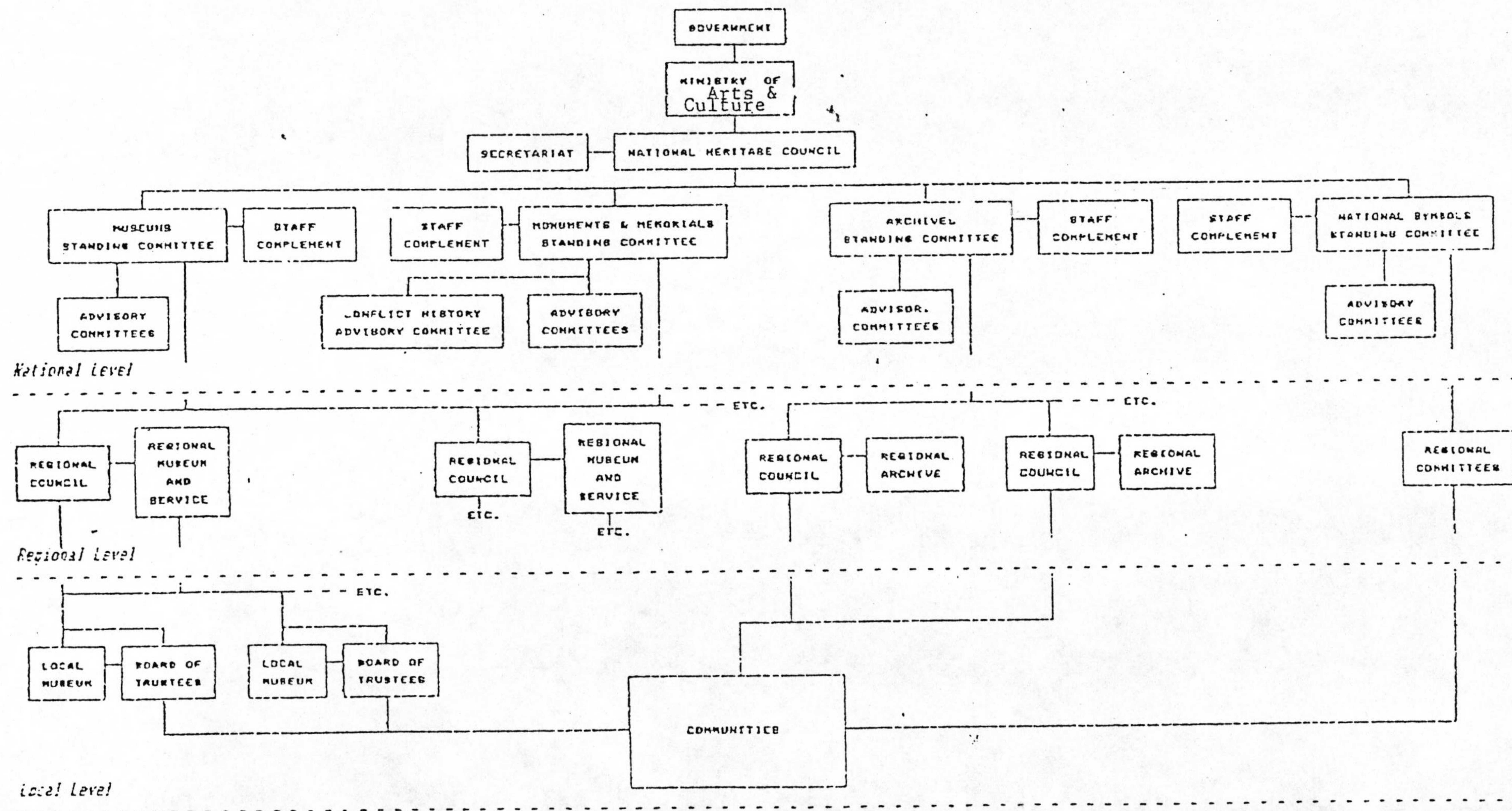


FIGURE I

PROJECT FUNDING STRUCTURE:

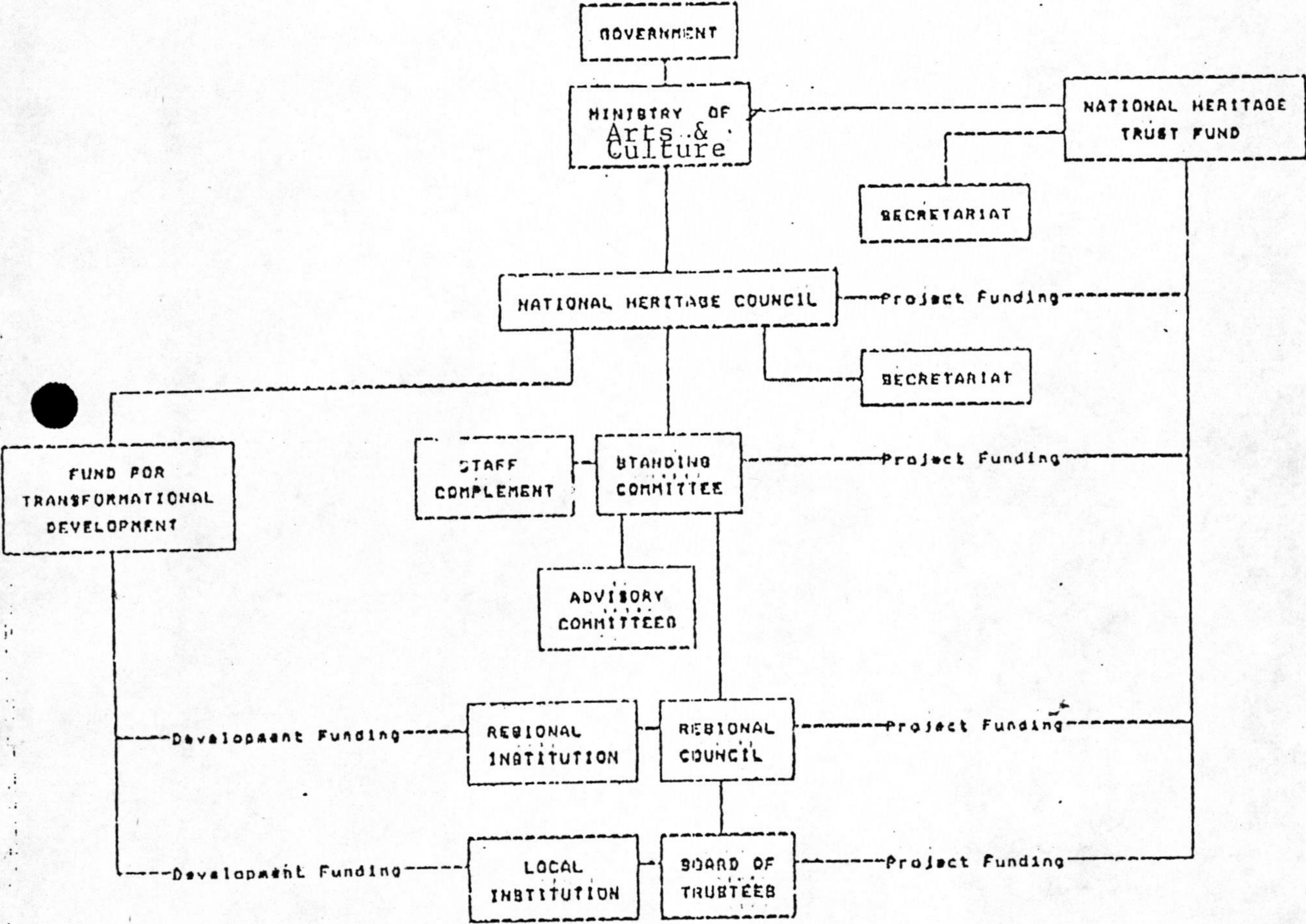


FIGURE II

5. Conclusion

We invite you to join our call for moratoria :

- i) On the revision of legislation regarding restructuring of heritage resources;
- ii) On the proclamation of new monuments except for provisional declaration of monuments under imminent threat of destruction;
- iii) On the government committee of enquiry into museums (MUSA) since it is unrepresentative and is squandering public funds;
- iv) On the introduction of new state symbols;
- v) On the destruction of both state and anti-apartheid records;
- vi) On the development of Robben Island until a representative forum is established that can decide on the future of the Island.

We further call for :

- i) immediate re-incorporation of white own affairs museums with their previous departments;
- ii) Establishment of interim governing structures to replace the current structures such as museum boards of trustees, national monuments council, council for environment affairs and heraldry council.