MEDIA STATEMENT

Robben Island Museum celebrates Africa Month by recognising African languages

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Robben Island served as the ideal setting for Africa Day 2019 by hosting the annual celebration of the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the precursor to the African Union (AU) under the theme: Celebrating 25 years of democracy and freedom. Year of indigenous African languages. The OAU was formed by 32 countries on 25 May 1963 in Addis Ababa, Egypt. A further 21 countries have since joined, with South Africa becoming the 53rd member on 23 May 1994. Each year the Africa month

[Caption]. Robben Island Museum (RIM) hosted delegates from diverse cultural backgrounds to discuss how far South Africa has come in 25 years of democracy and how African indigenous languages play a role in realising individual identity and unifying people in South Africa. Pictured above: Dr Nomfundo Mali, Senior Provincial Manager at Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB), Ayanda Woji, Senior Manager for Public Heritage and Education (PHED) at RIM and Dr Ruben Richards of the Ruben Richards Foundation.
initiative encourages us to rethink what it is to be African and this year we are challenged to question the notion of categories of Africans divided along lines of culture and language.

Robben Island Museum (RIM) hosted 50 delegates from different cultural backgrounds to conclude Africa month with a workshop to discuss:

- South African democracy and freedom 25 years later. How far have we come?
- The role of indigenous languages in the quest for African unity.
- The role of Robben Island Museum World Heritage Site (RIMWHS) as a catalyst for African unity.

Keynote speaker, Dr Nomfundo Mali stated in her address, “Indigenous languages should be tools to express interests, hopes, aspirations, affirmations at all levels; politically, economically, socially and spiritually, without fear or favour, or without discrimination.”

Delegates were then separated into groups to discuss the progress that South Africa has made in 25 years of democracy and the role that RIM continues to play in our democratic country by reflecting on the diverse cultures, faiths, and ethnic groups that are brought together. Follow RIM’s social media pages to get insight into these discussions:

- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/robbenislandDAC/
- Twitter: https://twitter.com/robben_island
- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/robben_island/

Senior Manager, Ayanda Woji closed off the event by urging the audience of various African groups who were all dressed in traditional attire for the event to “use their indigenous languages”. Using our native languages is one of the most practical ways of keeping the African narrative alive and ensuring our story is told by our people and for our people.
To stay up-to-date with new developments and announcements at Robben Island Museum please visit their website http://www.robben-island.org.za/ or visit their social media pages.