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1.1 Submission of the annual report to the executive authority

In accordance with the provisions of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999), we have pleasure in submitting for presentation to Parliament this report of the activities of Robben Island Museum for the financial year ended on 31 March 2010.

T Modise
Chairperson of Council

1.2 Applicable Acts and other information

This report is submitted in compliance with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996); the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999 as amended by Act 29 of 1999); Treasury Regulations, 2001; and other applicable Acts and Regulations.

1.2.1 Foundation

Robben Island Museum (RIM) was established in 1997. Robben Island was declared a world heritage site by UNESCO in 1999.

1.2.2 Vision

Robben Island Museum operates as a site and living museum. It aims to develop the Island as a national and international heritage and conservation institution for the millennium. In managing its resources and activities, RIM will strive to maintain the unique and universal symbolism of the Island, to nurture creativity and innovation, as well as to contribute to the socio-economic development and transformation of the South African society and enrich humanity.

1.2.3 Mission

In implementing its vision, RIM focuses on the following core purposes:

- Maintaining the unique political and universal symbolism and value of RIM.
- Conserving and managing the natural and cultural resources and heritage of RIM.
- Promoting RIM as a platform for critical debate and life-long learning.
- Managing RIM in a manner that promotes economic sustainability and development.

1.2.4 Corporate Governance

RIM is governed by a Council appointed by the Minister of Arts and Culture. The Council is appointed for three years. The duties of Council, as described in the Cultural Institutions Act, 1998 (Act 119 of 1998), are to:

- formulate policy;
- hold, preserve and safeguard all movable and immovable property of whatever kind placed in the care of or loaned or belonging to the declared institution concerned;
- receive, hold, preserve and safeguard all specimens, collections or other movable property placed under its care and management under section 10(1) of the Act;
• raise funds for the institution;
• manage and control the monies received by the declared institution and to utilize those monies for defraying expenses in connection with the performance of its functions;
• keep a proper record of the property of the declared institution;
• submit to the Director-General any returns required by him or her in regard thereto and cause proper books of account to be kept;
• determine, subject to this Act and with the approval of the Minister, the objects of the declared institution; and;
• generally carry out the objects of the declared institution.

In addition the Council:
• appoints, in consultation with the Minister, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO);
• determines the public operating hours of the institution;
• determines the conditions under which the public may visit the institution; and,
• determines the admission charges that may be paid.

1.2.5 Management

Executive Management

The Executive Management consists of the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Financial Officer.

1.3 Accounting Officer’s Report

Perhaps it is important to mention at the outset that I, the undersigned, served the Robben Island Museum at the request of the new Honourable Minister of Arts and Culture, Ms L. Xingwana, for a brief period of nine months during the financial period 2009-10. My appointment as interim CEO of the Robben Island Museum followed the much-publicized resignation of the entire RIM Council and interim CEO in May 2009. My appointment on 26 June 2009, which was initially set to be for three months, ended up extending to 31 March 2010.

This report outlines in brief some of the challenges encountered, as well as the milestones achieved, during the period that I spent at the Robben Island Museum.

Within the first few weeks of my appointment, the following challenges emerged:

• The non-existence of a Senior Management Committee (MANCO) as a legitimate and empowered management structure, with regular meetings to address the challenges of managing the organization effectively.
• The non-existence of an organogram that was recognized and accepted by all stakeholders. This was leading to confused roles and blurred lines of responsibility in some functional areas.
• The fragile NEHAWU-RIM leadership relations. The tension between the stakeholders was not conducive to effective working relations, at the time still quite fragile, following the May 2009 fallout.
• The contestations regarding the role of ex-political prisoners as both a stakeholder and as contracted employees of the public entity.

In dealing with some of the above challenges I immediately re-established MANCO and re-introduced a formal reporting culture within MANCO meetings. The interim organogram was facilitated by the Acting HR Manager, in consultation with senior management, and was subsequently endorsed as the only existing organogram recognized by all stakeholders. Following various meetings with NEHAWU some level of trust in relations was established. The 2009 wage negotiations were concluded efficiently with the cooperation of both parties.
After the RIM Executive office received formal clarity in early January 2010 from the Ministry on the status of the long-standing dispute of RIM’s former Chief Operations Officer with RIM and the Executive Authority, I appointed one of the Senior Managers as Acting COO in February 2010 for an agreed period (1 February 2010 to 30 April 2010). This was after a consultative process within MANCO. Following this development, an interim executive management committee structure (EXCO) was created. EXCO’s role was defined and communicated to the broader management team in order to enable it to effectively play its strategic role.

When it transpired that DAC had not received a Council-approved Strategic Plan (2009/10 – 2011/12) at the due date (28 February 2009), a process of developing a Strategic Plan was immediately put in place to ensure compliance. Almost simultaneously, a process was put in place to facilitate the development of a Strategic Plan for 2010/11 – 2012/13 - which was ready for approval by the new Council by the time of its inauguration in mid-March 2010.

Following the end of the contract with the financial consultants BDO Spencer Steward, who performed the CFO function, a new tender process was facilitated. This led to the appointment of PricewaterhouseCoopers on 1 October 2009, to stabilise and improve the financial function of the Robben Island Museum. An experienced Financial Manager was seconded to act as the Chief Financial Officer. The main focus was to address the Auditor-General’s qualifications, particularly in the following areas: Property, Plant and Equipment, Comparative figures and Deferred Revenue. To achieve this, a total asset verification process was undertaken.

Another area of focus was the re-establishment of the required control structures and to improve the financial administration department of Robben Island Museum.

The financial position of the business and activities of Robben Island Museum is clearly reflected in the annual financial statements. In the current financial year, the net surplus for the year amounted to R10.008 million (2009: R14.013 million), despite the increase in cash and cash equivalents from R36.392 million to R49.436 million. The short-term financial position is sound, but in the medium and long-term, the organization’s ability to meet all of its mandates will be reliant on obtaining additional funding for core expenditure. Despite the involvement of sister institutions – including the Department of Arts and Culture – more funding is required to meet core heritage mandates and to sustain infrastructure development and maintenance of the museum.

Despite some of the challenges mentioned above, there were a number of areas where notable achievements were made. A number of built environment capital projects were completed during the reporting period. These included, among others, the rehabilitation and restoration of the Guest House on the Island, the harbour facilities and the Female Asylum. An integrated team comprising RIM, DAC and NDPW was established to develop a maintenance and facilities management plan for RIM.

Some of the challenges of the unbalanced ecosystem due to a rapid increase in animal population were also addressed. A culling programme was implemented to reduce animal population numbers. A 40% reduction of the rabbit population was achieved within a relatively short period. After securing the necessary permits, part of the deer population was relocated to the Free State.

To conclude: I am confident that the new Council and management will fast-track some of the work-in-progress alluded to above, and take RIM to the next level where it belongs – a universally recognized and respected World Heritage Site.

It has been a pleasure, a challenge and an honour to have had the privilege to work at the Robben Island Museum. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister and the Department of Arts and Culture, the Council and executive team of Iziko Museums, and the Robben Island Museum staff and management for the support and opportunity to serve in this institution of both national and international significance.

Prof. Henry C (Jatti) Bredenkamp  
Chief Executive Officer Iziko Museums of Cape Town;  
Interim CEO: Robben Island Museum; &  
President: ICOM-SA