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FF: South Africa

Rome, 21 April 2021

Excellency,

I wish to express my deep regret for the tragic wildfire that has destroyed buildings and property at and around the University of Cape Town. The burning of the Jagger Library, which holds rare collections vital to South Africa's memory, and the impact of fire on historic buildings and landscapes around UCT, highlights the fragility of our invaluable tangible and intangible heritage. It calls for immediate actions for its sustainable protection.

On behalf of ICCROM, I express my solidarity with the Government of South Africa and its partners at the University of Cape Town in the wake of this devastating incident, as well as the affected communities, students and staff.

In recent years, ICCROM has been working with the University of Cape Town to protect and promote cultural heritage in Africa. In particular, ICCROM has been working with UCT, the African World Heritage Fund and others on the development of a project for the protection of the modern heritage in Africa. It has also been developing a heritage hub within the framework of our Youth.Heritage.Africa programme to establish creative and interdisciplinary heritage-related initiatives and spaces, and has been collaborating with the School of African and Gender Studies, Anthropology and Linguistics, on the publication of a collection of papers on the decolonization of heritage.

ICCRUM stands ready to provide technical assistance to secure and recover the affected heritage in coordination with its partner institutions and with the support of expert networks in the region.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Webber Ngoro  
Director-General

H.E. Mr Nkosinathi Emmanuel "Nathi" Mthethwa  
Minister of Arts and Culture  
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