

# ***The Atlantic World and the Dutch, 1500-2000***

## ***Country Report for Ghana***

**Report on consultations with stakeholders**

**and other interested parties,**

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# 1. Introduction

Interest in the conservation, documentation and development of the mutual cultural heritage of Ghana and the Netherlands – especially the forts and castles and related monuments – dates to the 1880s, only a decade after the Dutch left their possessions on the Gold Coast. At the time the Netherlands government inquired into the state of some of the forts with a view towards restoration. Eventually this action came to nothing, and it was left to the British colonial authorities to recognize the importance of conservation of monuments (in the 1920s) and eventually to the Government of Ghana, who set up the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board and the National Commission on Culture to safeguard the heritage of Ghana, including the mutual cultural heritage between Ghana and the Netherlands.

The period between 1998 and 2006 saw a flurry of activities in which Ghana and the Netherlands recognized the importance of an active policy towards its mutual cultural heritage. Activities were developed, especially in the fields of conservation, revitalization and development of the built heritage, but also with regard to the paper heritage and historical and archaeological research and reports of research in the form of conferences and publications. Many projects were supported by the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Ghana, and / or received strong financial support from the Netherlands Culture Fund. Among the larger events and activities were the Elmina Cultural Heritage and Management Programme, the celebration of 300 years of diplomatic relations in 2001-2002, with a conference, exposition, book, and two royal visits – that of the Prince of Orange and Princess Máxima of the Netherlands to Ghana and that of the Asantehene to the Netherlands – and the conclusion of a Cultural Framework Treaty.

Now, in 2006, many of the projects and programmes are completed or in an advanced state of execution, and the Cultural Framework Treaty is running its course. The AWAD conference comes therefore at a moment in which cultural relations between the Netherlands and Ghana enter into a new phase. As such this report is two-folded: on the one hand it looks back at a large number of achievements, on the other hand the consultations and mini-workshops that stood at the base of this report brought forward suggestions for new pathways and new developments. Also, the consultations brought up a number of structural problems with the conservation and developments of the mutual cultural heritage that need to be solved to acquire sustainability.

The objectives of the reporting phase for the AWAD conference were:

- to draw up for each country an inventory of current activities, collections, expertise, needs and wishes regarding research and the preservation, restoration and accessibility of the mutual cultural heritage in its broadest sense;
- to discuss the improvement and extension of the AWAD online database/research guide as an integrating tool for developing and implementing the activities/projects for the second project phase;
- to establish priorities and points of focus for each individual country in the fields of preservation, accessibility and research of the mutual heritage.

General six discussion topics indicated for the consultations and workshop were:

- archives and libraries (the paper heritage, both printed material and manuscripts);
- museum/movable tangible heritage (tools, weapons, clothing etc.);
- monuments and archaeological sites;
- intangible cultural heritage (oral history, traditions of story telling, rituals etc.);
- universities/research;
- other subjects to be discussed (AWAD database/digital research guide; funding; activities for a broader public).

For Ghana we focussed on the first five discussion topics for this report, with the inclusion of the importance of cultural heritage for economic development. The Government of Ghana has identified tourism, especially cultural and eco-tourism as important foreign currency earners that need to be developed. This puts the mutual cultural heritage of Ghana and the Netherlands in a rather special position.

## 2. General setup of consultation rounds and mini-workshop

The country report on mutual cultural heritage between Ghana and the Netherlands was prepared in several manners. First, in January and August 2006, consultations were held with key-players in the field of cultural heritage in Ghana, including the chairman of the National Commission on Culture (NCC), the interim-director of the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB), the director of the Public Archives and Administration Department (PRAAD), the director of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana at Legon, the chairperson of the Historical Society of Ghana (HSG), and the Royal Netherlands Ambassador and his cultural attaché. These consultations resulted in a focus for the report and prepared the path for the organization of a full-scale workshop. However, for multiple reasons it turned out to be extremely difficult to call all interested parties together well before the Amsterdam conference. Therefore it was decided to organize a mini-workshop and an additional number of consultations between 13 and 17 November 2006. Mini-workshop and consultations were held on the basis of pre-distributed information, including an outline version of the report, which was in turn based on the earlier discussions, as well as a verbal introduction by the country coordinator where necessary.

On 13 November a meeting was held with professor George Hagan, chairman of the NCC, who forwarded information about the position of the NCC on mutual cultural heritage and its role in the preservation and development of culture. On 15 November a meeting was held at the office of professor Henry Wellington, at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) at Kumasi. Participants were professor Wellington, chair, Dr. Wilhelmina Donkoh, of the History Department of KNUST, and Mr. George Olympio of the Department of Architecture of KNUST. On 16 November a mini-workshop was held at the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board in Accra, with representatives of the of both the Museum and Monuments Sections of the Board, a representative of the Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations, and archaeologist professor J.K. Anquandah.

On 14 and 16 November two meetings were held at the UNESCO Cluster Office in Accra, under the chairmanship of professor Yoro Fall, with UNESCO staff, representatives of the GMMB, and professor Anquandah. The main objective of these meetings was to bring forward the project on *The Restoration of Ussher Fort / Phase 1: The Bastion and the Former Police Station and Its Conversion into a Museum on Forts and Castles* (see below). The opportunity was also used, however, to discuss the role and position of the UNESCO Cluster Office in Accra and its participation in miscellaneous mutual cultural heritage projects, in the AWAD project.

On 16 November a lunch meeting was held with professor Irene Odotei, chairperson of the Historical Society of Ghana, and an expert in the field of Ghanaian – Danish mutual cultural heritage and history, and dr. Kofi Baku, Head of Department of the History Department of the University of Ghana, in order to establish a final academic position.

The findings of all consultations were, whenever possible, presented to all parties and made part of an ongoing discussion. It was interesting to find that there was a high level of co-incidence and often consensus in the definitions, priority-setting, opinions, and ideas about the conservation and

development of the mutual cultural heritage between Ghana and the Netherlands between the different parties, and across disciplinary boundaries. This may have to do with the fact that the debate about (mutual) cultural heritage conservation, development, and policy has been going on for many years already. It means that in terms of the mutual cultural heritage Ghana knows where it is going and, as it seems, has known for quite some time.

### 3. Paper heritage

#### COLLECTIONS

##### Public Records

The Public Record and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD; formerly the National Archives of Ghana) is the keeper of all static or historical public archives in the country. PRAAD has several repositories (record centres) situated in the capital Accra and the regional capitals. For the Dutch-Ghanaian mutual cultural heritage the repositories in Accra (the national record centre), Cape Coast (Central Region), and Sekondi-Takoradi (Western Region) are of importance. In these areas the Dutch had their settlements, and by consequence it is here that one finds most remnants of the mutual cultural heritage.

The records of relevance for the Ghanaian-Dutch heritage inside Ghana are scarce. This has two reasons. In the first place, the Dutch took (almost) all their records with them when they left the Gold Coast in 1872. As a result the local archives of the Dutch in Ghana are currently all stored in the *Nationaal Archief* in the Hague. In Ghana there are in general no Dutch records available. For the period before 1872 there are some Dutch records in the British administration, in the form of treaties and correspondence. Records dating from after 1872 refer to consular and diplomatic relations between the two countries only.

The Lands Commission in Accra (Historical Section) houses a series of records with land deeds, mortgages, et cetera. These records start around 1844-1850 and for the early period they contain only material on the British possessions. From 1868 – for the area east of Elmina – and 1872 for the area west of Elmina, these records hold materials about the former Dutch possessions and are as such also a valuable source for the history of the Dutch in Ghana before 1872 (1868).

##### Private Records

Research by a number of historians (Ghanaian, Dutch, and of other nationalities) indicates that there is a considerable amount of archival material in the possession of private individuals and families. These records are usually of a private nature and normally do not reach further back than the second half of the nineteenth century. These private collections often include very old photographs.

##### Furley Collection

Between the 1930s and the 1950s, former British colonial official Furley collected a large amount of information from European archives, including the Dutch *Nationaal Archief*. This information, often complete transcription of (series of) records has the form of a series of notebooks and bound volumes

with Photostats. Part of the Dutch material was translated, mostly in abbreviated form. The Furley Collection is housed in the Balme Library in the University of Ghana at Legon, Accra.

## **MANAGEMENT, CONSERVATION, AND ACCESSIBILITY OF ARCHIVAL RECORDS**

With regard to the management and conservation of archival holdings in Ghana we can be brief. There is a modern Act governing the conservation and holding of archives in Ghana. However, funding for the adequate conservation of records is too limited, as is expertise. In the past, the *Nationaal Archief*, Danish institutions, and the Ghana Studies Council (an international group of scholars), have assisted PRAAD on a project basis with capacity building and conservation. Accessibility of the records is by class lists (inventories), most of which are typescripts, and need a fair bit of knowledge of the structure of the archives to use them well.

As (almost) all of the archives for the history of Dutch-Ghanaian relations are kept in the Netherlands, we also need to look at these holdings. For PRAAD and Ghanaian researchers it is imperative that access to these archives is improved. During the discussions it was pointed out that all the material is in Dutch and that the available English-language guides to the archives are out of date and limited in scope. This will be ameliorated in 2007, with a new English-language research guide for Ghanaian sources in the *Nationaal Archief* in the Hague. This guide will however not solve the problem of limited accessibility of the original sources, however, as they remain only available in Dutch and located in the Hague. For this problem no solution is as yet found.

The Furley Collection in the Balme Library is accessible through a handwritten index, prepared in the 1960s. This index will be incorporated into the research guide described above, with extra references to the original sources Furley's notes were based upon.

The physical state of both part of the archives in the Netherlands and of the Furley Collection is poor due to past neglect, bad conditions of storage, climate, bad handling, attacks by termites and other insects, and other forms of decay.

So far, no concrete solutions have been discussed with regard to conservation and accessibility of the paper heritage. The publication of the research guide is an important step for the latter, but as yet not part of a greater plan.

## **4. Monuments and archaeological sites**

### **MONUMENTS**

#### **Forts and castles**

The most important expression of the Ghanaian – Dutch mutual cultural heritage are the forts and castles dotted along the Ghanaian coastline and once occupied by the Europeans trading with Ghana. Nowadays, the castles and forts are most importantly an icon of the infamous Atlantic Slave Trade which was organized in large part from the forts. Best known in this respect are the Castle of St. George d'Elmina in Elmina, the main Dutch settlement from 1637 to 1872, and Cape Coast Castle at Cape Coast, the British headquarters.

All the forts and castles of Ghana were listed as World Heritage in the late 1970s, and are treated as such. Their relationship to the Atlantic Slave Trade has made the more notable forts into important tourist destinations, especially for African Americans. Over the years numerous projects have been undertaken in order to restore and conserve the forts and castles. In all cases the first responsibility for the forts and castles lies with the GMMB, but in many projects other partners have taken and are taking part. The conservation and usage of the forts and castles has received much attention from the Royal Netherlands Embassy and the Netherlands Culture Fund over the last decade.

To name just a few more recent restoration projects:

- Fort Amsterdam at Kormantin (Abandze): restoration of ruin with financial assistance of the city of Amsterdam (1980s);
- Fort St. Anthony at Axim: touch-up by GMMB with financial assistance from Netherlands Embassy / Netherlands Culture Fund (2004);
- Castle St. George d'Elmina at Elmina and Fort Coenraadsburg at St. Jago Hill, Elmina: restoration in conjunction with Cape Coast Castle with assistance of UNDP, USAID, Smithsonian Foundation, MUCIA, Cedecom (1990s);
- Castle St. George d'Elmina at Elmina: restoration of crucial elements as part of the Elmina Cultural Heritage and Management Programme (see below; 2002-2006);
- Ussher Fort, Accra (formerly Fort Crevecoeur): re-assignment of building and planning of re-usage in the form of museum and documentation centre, and execution of archaeological excavation, with the assistance of the UNESCO Cluster Office in Accra, University of Ghana, University of Groningen, D&B Investments and others (1998-2000) and European Union and Royal Netherlands Embassy / Netherlands Culture Fund (2006-2007).

Currently under development are:

1. Restoration of Ussher Fort with funds from the European Union, Phase 1: *The Bastion and the Former Police Station and Its Conversion into a Museum on Forts and Castles* (UNESCO and PMLDC – Project Management and Local Development Committee). In two meetings held on 14 and 16 November 2006 at the UNESCO Cluster Office in Accra, details were discussed about the cooperation between partners on a contractual basis, especially with regard to the collection of available documentation and illustrations. Also, a team of expert historians was set up to assist in the implementation.
2. Setting up of a Documentation Centre for GMMB at Ussher Fort, supported by UNESCO.

Maintenance and restoration of the forts and castles are an ongoing project for GMMB, which is often hampered by inadequate resources in the form of local funding, expertise, and manpower. Therefore larger restoration and improvement projects were and are often linked to external funding. An important priority for GMMB is capacity building in the form of training of local personnel at all levels. This has been so for a long period of time.

In 2000, an official mission of the Netherlands Department of Conservation (*Monumentenzorg*) inspected almost all the forts and castles of Ghana and discussed with the GMMB the importance of international cooperation and the development of mutual projects. Eventually, the mission and the report emanating from it, formed the basis for the development of the *Elmina Cultural Heritage and Management Programme* later that year through the further assistance of the Royal Netherlands Embassy and Dr. Michel Doortmont.

On the forts and castles and their history there exists a fair body of academic literature, going back to the 1950s. For the next phase of the AWAD-project it is suggested to include a biography of materials in the database. Much of the work for the production of a comprehensive biography has been done already as part of numerous documentation and research projects, but editorial work is still necessary. Also, it may be advisable to include in the biography original materials (maps, documents, etc.). For the *Nationaal Archief* these will become available through the research guide (see above). Also, GMMB itself has a very rich collection of documents relating to the forts and castles, accessible through an index, and dating from 1957 to the present day.

### **Other monuments**

Important for the mutual cultural heritage between Ghana and the Netherlands is the tangible heritage around the forts and castles. European and African settlement patterns around the forts were a response to the characteristic societies that were formed here over the centuries, with a cosmopolitan social and economic character and very specific political structures. Physical evidence of the special relationship can be found in:

- (Mainly) nineteenth-century buildings in towns like Elmina, Accra, Axim, and others, which housed European, Euro-African and African merchants and their families;
- *Posubans*, decorated posts or houses (in Elmina) identifying the former local military companies that defended the towns and often cooperated with the Dutch defence force;
- Other monuments, like the Dutch cemetery (1806), the remnants of the government garden with watchtower (eighteenth century) and urban defence works or redoubts (nineteenth century), all in Elmina;
- Streetscapes and townscapes as a whole, which developed under the strong influence of the Dutch presence, i.e. Java Hill, the Potters Krom, and Lime village in Elmina; the area called Dutch Accra in Accra; the so-called Brazilian quarter in Accra, which developed under the auspices of the Dutch in the 1840s and housed many successful emigrants (mostly former slaves) from Brazil.

In Elmina, the *Posuban*, Dutch cemetery, first Dutch-African church in town, several merchants' houses and other elements in the built environment were made part of the *Elmina Cultural Heritage and Management Programme* (2002-2004) and the follow-up *Elmina Strategy 2015* urban development plan.

For Accra, there are preliminary plans for an integrated urban development approach to Ussher Town or Kinka, the old Dutch part of Accra. These plans were first developed in 1999-2000 under the name *Old Accra Integrated Development and Conservation Framework* or *Old Accra Redevelopment Project*. Ever since, UNESCO has been advocating, working and raising awareness in the framework of this project, with, as a result, a recent revitalization of the plans and the start of the implementation phase in the form of the restoration of Ussher Fort and building a museum.

### **Contextualization of monuments**

There is an ongoing – though not always very strong – debate about contextualizing the forts as World Heritage in their historical urban environment. Members of the UNESCO family are taking part in this debate and there seems consensus that the forts should not be looked at in isolation, but rather as part and product of a larger, living, historical environment.

This approach was first put into practice with discussions about the restoration and re-vitalization of Ussher fort in Accra, in conjunction with an urban improvement scheme for the town areas of Dutch and British Accra in 1998-2000, on the initiative of GMMB, the Accra Municipal Authority (AMA), the UNESCO Cluster Office in Accra, and others. From 2000 onwards, when the Accra project temporarily

stalled, the initiative was actively and successfully put into practice in the Elmina Cultural Heritage and Management Programme, which is currently in the second and third phase of execution (see for full description of the programme Appendix B). In an early phase UN-HABITAT joined the programme because it found the initiative and set-up fitting well into the organizations own approach towards urban renewal.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES**

All the towns where the Dutch resided over the centuries are potential archaeological sites, including the forts and castles themselves, houses, compounds, streets, and other public areas, but also riverbeds and lagoons, the foreshore, and the area off-shore along the whole of the Ghanaian coastline.

To start with the latter: marine archaeology is still in its infancy in Ghana and only a few projects are currently executed, mainly by experts from the USA. Land (and riverbed) archaeology is more widespread and has a strong Ghanaian academic tradition – with the centre at the University of Ghana at Legon – as well as a strong foreign interest. Professor Anquandah has undertaken a large number of excavations in and around the forts, unearthing a wealth of Dutch material, most of which is in storage. The most important physical products of his research and that of fellow Ghanaian archaeologists, including a host of undergraduate and graduate students, are academic papers and articles, some of it is on display.

The most important completed foreign excavation is that of professor Chris DeCorse of Syracuse University in the USA, who excavated the site of the old town of Elmina – destroyed by the British in 1873 – and wrote a comprehensive academic study about his findings. This publication goes beyond the mere findings, however, and makes a valuable effort at comprehensive historical contextualization.

## **5. Museums, moveable tangible and intangible heritage**

### **MUSEUMS AND MOVABLE TANGIBLE HERITAGE**

The National Museum in Accra is the National Repository of all national movable tangible heritage. The collections of the Museum contain little materials from the mutual cultural heritage of Ghana and the Netherlands, however. 'Deep' historical presentations are mainly of an archaeological nature. Apart from the museum in Accra, the GMMB is responsible for a number of other museum in the country, some of which are located in the forts.

With regard to the Atlantic slave trade, the museum in Accra has a presentation of the voyage of the Danish slave ship *Fredensborg*, and the museum in Cape Coast Castle has a general display of the history of the slave trade to and slavery in North-America in connection with Ghanaian history (of an ethnographic nature) and black resistance to slavery and oppression (*inter alia* with a presentation about Pan-Africanism).

Cape Coast Castle also has an exhibition about its building and restoration history, which is exemplary for all the forts and castles. St. George d'Elmina has an exhibition about the history of the town, mainly

in the form of text and images. The history of the Dutch presence in the town is not highlighted in this exhibition.

Besides the exhibitions named, it is important to highlight the museum nature of the forts and castles themselves. As was already pointed out, the castle of St. George d'Elmina has come to epitomize the horrors of the slave trade. This is embodied in the form of guided tours provided by GMMB guides, with often vivid descriptions of the horror and terror of the slave trade era. Within the castle one also find signs, indicating the male and female slave dungeons, the slave prison, and the door of no return, the archetypal exit into the oblivion of chattel slavery for so many Africans during several centuries of mutual European – African history. On the other hand, the emphasis on the A point for debate and research is.

An interesting alternative museum is the *Elmina – Java Museum* in Elmina, set up by a private trust under the inspiration of professor Thad P.M. Ulzen, M.D., a native of Elmina, and with assistance from different sides. This museum offers a presentation of images and documents relating to the African soldiers that were sent to the Netherlands East Indies in the nineteenth century, and of whom some returned to Ghana, while others stayed in the East Indies. Some of the descendants of the latter group eventually migrated to the Netherlands. In this respect the museum helps to highlight and document this little known but important phase of Dutch-Ghanaian relations and history. The initiative for the museum came to the fore with the research of Dr. Ineke van Kessel of the Africa Studies Centre in Leiden into the history of the African soldiers in the East Indies.

The *Elmina – Java Museum* also takes the local lead in the presentation of the history of the so-called Euro-African family groups in Ghanaian society with a Dutch origin. We will discuss this topic further under the heading Research & Universities.

In the discussions with the GMMB management it was clearly stated that currently there are no real clear-cut policies towards new approaches for exhibitions. In this respect the new plans to build a museum in the restored Ussher Fort, under the auspices of the GMMB and the UNESCO Cluster Office in Accra is a challenge here. The new museum should address a number of topics, including the building and usage history of the fort (including the Atlantic slave trade), the history of the town, and the history of independent Ghana. However, it should not replicate the exhibitions in Elmina and Cape Coast in any way. Suggestions were made to look into current developments elsewhere in the presentation of the colonial past and colonial society. A suggestion was made to GMMB to get in touch with the Royal Tropical Museum in Amsterdam, which assisted the National Museum in Accra before.

## **INTANGIBLE HERITAGE**

Intangible heritage is regarded as an important cultural asset in Ghana, by both the government and people of Ghana. Intangible heritage is very much alive in daily life in the form of festivals, cultural practice, et cetera. The National Commission on Culture is the official institution to look after the preservation and development of the intangible cultural heritage of Ghana. Despite the above, to date Ghana has not yet approved, accepted or ratified the UNESCO *Convention for the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003, in force 2006).

In relationship to the mutual cultural heritage of Ghana and the Netherlands the following are worth mentioning:

- The Elmina festivals of *Bronyibima* (Dutch Christmas) and *Bakatue*.

*Bronyibima*, celebrated on the first Thursday of January represents the century-old alliance between the government and people of the Netherlands and the government and people of the independent state of Elmina, whereby at the beginning of each new year gifts were exchanged, libation poured, and festivities held.

*Bakatue* is the annual festival of the opening of the Benya Lagoon in Elmina, after a period of closure for inland fishing. It is the most important festival of the State, involving the *Omanhene* (king), chiefs and civil and military organizations of the state. The festival exemplifies the unity of the state through the mutual celebration of the most important activity of the town of Elmina: the fishing industry. In the time of the Dutch presence in Elmina, the Dutch government played an active role in the celebrations, as a sign of the mutual interests of the Dutch and the Elmina state.

- Families of mixed Euro-African descent with Dutch names.

Ghana counts a relative large number of families with Dutch surnames which trace their origin to mixed Dutch-Ghanaian relationships in the nineteenth, eighteenth, or even seventeenth centuries. The original relationships between West India Company (WIC) officials and Ghanaian women were often durable marriages according local customs and rites, arranged between important local families and the more important WIC officials, to forge economic, political and social ties. Their descendants often remember their family heritage and ties with the Netherlands, and are proud of it. In terms of research we refer to the next section for a further discussion.

- The tradition of the Atlantic slave trade, exemplified in the UNESCO Slave Route Project

This UNESCO Slave Route Project combines tangible and intangible cultural heritage elements but emphasizes the international links of Africans in Africa and the Diaspora and the necessity of international atonement and reconciliation in the light of the horrific history of the Atlantic slave trade. The UNESCO approach is predominantly educational and scientific.

The Government of Ghana, through the Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations, has developed *The Joseph Project*, with the purpose 'to make the 21st century the African century', to uplift Africa, and celebrate African excellence (see Appendix C). The Project looks at the tradition of Pan-African solidarity and also aims at the development of cultural tourism.

## 6. Research & Universities

Discussions with members of the Ghanaian academic community enhanced the priorities set above by the management and policy organisations. Also, all individuals consulted showed a degree of consistency in their ideas about the further development of research into mutual cultural heritage issues.

For one, there is agreement about the fact that the Netherlands can not be looked at in isolation, but only as one of the European nations with which Ghana has a mutual historical relation and shares cultural heritage of all sorts.

Secondly, the academic relations with Denmark seem to be slightly better developed than those with the Netherlands, whereas those with the United Kingdom *are absent in the field of mutual heritage*. All Ghanaian academics consulted deplore the latter.

The academic relationship between Ghana and the Netherlands leaves much room for cooperation in the field of study of the mutual cultural heritage of the two countries. Relatively little has been developed in this field so far, except for individual and usually ad-hoc relationships.

In terms of the topical priority list one is also in agreement:

- better accessibility of sources, which are almost all in the Netherlands (especially archives);
- development of a comprehensive research programme on the Dutch Euro-African social network that developed for centuries, both with regard to the higher and lower social levels of that network. The preferred implementation of such a programme is through biographical and prosopographical study, funding through joint application to national and international funding organisations.
- development of a comprehensive research programme on the theme cultural heritage, identity and development, to study the role of cultural heritage in Ghanaian society, as well as the possibilities to build up heritage assets for economic development.
- further development of projects to study the history of the forts and castles of Ghana in all respects, including the building history, usage, town and community histories. Much work has already been done in this respect, but more is needed to fully understand the intricacies of the centuries-long relationship between Europeans and Ghanaians on the Gold Coast.

## **7. Mutual cultural heritage and economic development**

In Ghana, the development of tourism as a foreign currency earner started in the early 1990s. The Central Region of Ghana (with the castles and towns of Elmina and Cape Coast and several other assets for tourism development like beaches, and wildlife sanctuaries) was made a pilot area for economic development. A large number of cultural heritage projects – including the restoration of Cape Coast and Elmina Castle – were set in this context. Also, the projects were linked to the development of the Kakum Rainforest Reserve, with a visitor's centre, canopy walkway, and craft village. Included too was the slave trade village of Assin Fasso, last stop of trade slaves on their route to the coast, and the development of a public pleasure beach with bathing facilities for visitors and a restaurant at Brenu Akyinem.

Ever since, tourism development is a central issue in the development of the cultural heritage assets, the more so because cultural heritage tourism is the mainstay of Ghana's tourism industry. In the consultations leading to this report, the tourism angle was not fully developed and exploited, because its direct link to the mutual cultural heritage of Ghana and the Netherlands is not automatic. However, the other way round, it is absolutely impossible to talk about the importance of research into, and conservation or development of the mutual cultural heritage of Ghana and the Netherlands, without considering the tourism factor.

## **8. Conclusion**

For the Ghanaian position on its mutual cultural heritage with the Netherlands it is important to develop the inventory of past and present projects in all categories further. The academic documentation and

analysis of projects and programmes so far runs behind the actual projects in the field of conservation, re-usage studies, and empirical research. Due to the long history of active interest by government and academia – the latter both in Ghana, the Netherlands, and elsewhere – the number of projects and studies in the field is very large. A good review seems necessary and useful.

In view of the developments in the last decade or so, it is safe to say that the mutual cultural heritage of Ghana and the Netherlands is put on the map solidly, with a number of joint and local projects either concluded, in progress or being planned. Also, the contextualisation of mutual cultural heritage in terms of actual projects in combination with political and academic debate has been dealt with extensively.

For further discussions – apart from stock taking and review – we can therefore think about the importance of mutual cultural heritage for Dutch-Ghanaian relations in itself, and in a wider European context (Denmark, Portugal, Great Britain), and a wider global context (Diaspora Relations, development issues, tourism, etc.).

More concretely, we should elaborate the discussion about current and wished-for-positions in Ghana towards the mutual cultural heritage of Ghana and the Netherlands, funding instruments, management and organization, and empirical and academic priority-setting for the immediate future. Of importance here are the future commitment of the Ghanaian and Dutch government to the development of the mutual cultural heritage, (further) cooperation between sister institutions, development of joint academic research projects, et cetera.

## **Appendix A: Participants in consultation and workshop**

### ***Ghana Museums and Monuments Board***

Mr. Ray Agbo  
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**Appendix B:  
The Elmina Cultural Heritage and Management Programme /  
Elmina Strategy 2015**

**Appendix C: The Joseph Project**