



# Foreword

by Deputy Minister Paul Mashatile

Africa offers an indisputable wealth and diversity of heritage, only a small sample of which is represented here; just enough to whet the appetite. Over the past century, the continent has offered up a multitude of archaeological and palaeontological evidence to support its claim to being the cradle of humankind. With the discovery of Mrs Ples in Sterkfontein, South Africa in 1947, Lucy in Hadar, Ethiopia in 1974, and most recently of *Australopithecus Sediba* – still awaiting a name – in Sterkfontein in 2008, the continent has repeatedly laid claim to an unrivalled heritage stretching back to the very origins of humanity, and arguably tracing its first forays into the development of art and culture.

This is apparent in the thirty-odd African countries that are home to remarkable rock art, some of which date back tens of thousands of years. Many of these have attained the status of World Heritage Sites – among them Ukhahlamba/ Drakensberg Park in South Africa; Tsodilo in Botswana; Tassil n'Ajjer in Algeria, Air and Ténéré Natural Reserves in Niger, and Kondoa in Tanzania, to name but a few.

There is no way that we could create a truly exhaustive and comprehensive guide to all of our nation and continent's cultural heritage but if this guide encourages you to go out and learn about Africa, then it has served its purpose. We invite you to discover the rich cultural history of Africa.