

ABSTRACT

Interdisciplinary Conference

Managing Change: Urban Heritage between Conservation and Development

By: Oris Malijani

Cultural Heritage Programme Officer, Malawi Department of Antiquities, Box 264, Lilongwe, Malawi
PhD Candidate – International Graduate School: Heritage Studies, Brandenburg Technical University,
Cottbus, Germany

Email: omalijani@gmail.com

Title: Integrating Urban Cultural Heritage Resources in the Malawi Urban Planning Regulations and Policies

This paper will present the challenges of integrating the urban cultural heritage resources in the Malawi urban planning regulations and policies. The paper will thoroughly analyze and present the Malawi urban regulations and assess whether cultural heritage resources are adequately covered. In this context, urban planning regulations will be referred to as legal and institutional frameworks for urban planning areas to ensure that developments are strictly done according to approved plans or the provisions of the Planning Act and bye-laws. These urban planning regulations include the Town and Country Planning Act, planning standards, building by-laws, and development control code. The baseline assessment has observed that these urban planning regulations do not adequately regulate the developers from destroying the urban cultural heritage resources. This leads to damage and loss of cultural properties when development activities are taking place.

This paper will therefore have critical recommendations based on best practical models to integrate cultural heritage management and conservation in the Malawi urban planning development regulations and policies. The paper will present innovative propositions to national local governments and city councils to review the urban planning regulations and policies to ensure that cultural heritage resources located within urban set-ups are adequately protected by the town planning laws. In so doing, cultural heritage resources will be properly and

professionally managed and conserved when development activities like mining, construction, land development, agriculture, among others are taking place. In Malawi, cultural heritage resources like cultural landscapes, built heritage and archaeological sites are under threat due to the absence of clear clauses specifically covering cultural heritage in the national urban planning laws.

The paper will also present another institutional challenge faced mostly in sub-Saharan African countries when managing urban heritage. There is poor coordination and duplication of efforts for all relevant authorities responsible for management of cultural heritage within the urban landscape. It has also been observed that there is no harmonization of legal frameworks for the protection and management of cultural and natural environment, land administration and town and country planning. This lead to haphazard way of developing the urban physical environment with less attention paid to the cultural heritage resources. It is envisaged that this paper will share knowledge to scholars, researchers and practitioners in heritage and town/physical planning on how best to manage cultural heritage in times of physical development activities. The paper will emphasize on the significance of urban planning as a tool for dealing with the above mentioned issues both to present solutions for the continuous urban growth and rural development and to offer policies and strategies for the conservation and renewal of old and historic sites.