



SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY

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DATE: 21 June 2011
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OUR REF: 3/3/8/4/3/1

The Vice Chancellor
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Dear Professor Balintulo

CONCERNS REGARDING THE STORAGE, SECURITY AND CONSERVATION OF THE BROSTER BEAD COLLECTION

The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), established in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act, No. 25 of 1999 (Act), is responsible for identifying, managing, conserving and promoting South African heritage resources.

SAHRA is concerned about the storage facilities and conservation of the Broster Bead Collection. About ten years ago, the declaration of the Broster Bead Collection was placed on the agenda of SAHRA (formerly the National Monuments Council). At the time, Dr Lamla was responsible for the collection. As a result of the condition of the collection, a conservator from the the East London Museum assisted with the conservation of the collection.

The Broster Bead Collection is a significant collection and there has been discussion with both Dr Lamla and Mrs Luso that the collection may be Specifically Declared as a heritage collection on account of its significance. Unfortunately, declaration has been hampered and delayed because in order for the collection to be Specifically Declared, it has to be stored in a designated space that has adequate security. Both Dr Lamla and Mrs Luso had indicated that the University intends providing adequate storage and security but this has not been forthcoming.

In 2009, due to concerns about the state of the collection, SAHRA provided the services of Mrs June Hosford a conservator who did a conservation assessment of the Broster Bead Collection at our expense. Mrs Hosford made certain recommendations that the University must implement in order to ensure that the Collection is conserved according to best practice (see attached). As is evident, some of the short-term recommendations may be carried out by the staff and others require the support and assistance of University Management.

SAHRA also approached East London Museum to assist Mrs Luso and staff to implement the recommendations made by Ms Hosford. The East London Museum was happy to comply but until such time that there is adequate storage facilities, conservation work as well as declaration will be hampered as has been the case thus far.

SAHRA's Audit Manager, Mrs Nkhasi, has been discussing an audit of the collection with Mrs Luso and Mrs Dunster (Library Management). During discussions, they raised concerns with the current storage facilities and indicated that the University Management has promised to provide adequate storage space. Mrs Nkhasi will be meeting with the Library staff on 22 June 2011. In order to prevent a situation where the Library staff again report on a lack of progress concerning storage, it would be appreciated if you could please indicate by when the new storage space would be available.

SAHRA would make the funding available for the audit. However, we need to know before the process of auditing is underway, when the new storage space is available as this may impact on the audit itself. We have already provided the funding for the conservation assessment and the East London Museum staff members are on stand-by in order to assist with the conservation of the collection and to transfer skills. In addition, the process to declare the collection is also dependent on adequate storage space. Therefore, it would be appreciated if you could give urgent attention to the matter concerning adequate storage and to revert back to us as soon as possible.

We look forward to your co-operation.

Yours sincerely



 **MS SIBONGILE VAN DAMME**
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Cc: Mrs. Luso
Mrs Dunster