



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Organización
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Организация
Объединенных Наций по
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
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World Heritage

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For over 30 years, UNESCO has been working with countries to identify World Heritage sites and ensure their safekeeping for future generations.

Places as unique and diverse as the wilds of Tanzania's Serengeti, the Pyramids of Egypt, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and the Baroque cathedrals of Latin America make up our world's cultural and natural heritage. To date, 812 cultural, natural and mixed sites have been inscribed on the World Heritage List. They are ours to share, to cherish and to respect.

The *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1972, and is founded on the premise that certain places on Earth are of "outstanding universal value" and as such should form part of the common heritage of humankind. 182 States Parties to the Convention are united in the common World Heritage mission.

Inscription on the World Heritage List is only a first step towards safeguarding these sites for future generations. Management and preservation efforts are an ongoing process, which involves local communities as well as site managers and national authorities.

The World Heritage Fund provides about US\$3.5 million annually to support activities requested by States Parties in need of international assistance. It includes compulsory and voluntary contributions from the States Parties, as well as from private donations. The World Heritage Committee allocates funds according to

the urgency of requests - giving priority to the most threatened sites. International Assistance from the Fund can support requests falling under five categories: emergency assistance, preparatory assistance, training assistance, technical co-operation and promotional and educational assistance.

When the very characteristics for which a site was originally inscribed on the World Heritage List are threatened, inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger can be a powerful tool for conservation. It calls the world's attention to sites endangered by natural conditions or human activity such as: armed conflict and war, earthquakes and other



The Cape Coast Fort, Ghana,
World Heritage site
(B. Jacquot © UNESCO)

natural disasters, pollution, poaching, or unplanned construction, and mobilizes international resources for emergency preservation measures. There are currently 34 sites on this List.

The nomination process and its actors

States Parties prepare a Tentative List (an inventory of sites within its borders considered to be of outstanding universal value) from which they can nominate sites for inscription on the World Heritage List. They submit nominations to the World Heritage Centre along with a plan detailing how the site is managed and protected. The World Heritage Centre reviews these nominations and then transmits them to the appropriate advisory bodies for

Bamiyan Valley in Afghanistan

This cultural landscape was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2003 simultaneously with its inscription on the World Heritage List. The property is in a fragile state of conservation considering that it has suffered from decades of neglect and vandalism. UNESCO, at the request of the Afghan Government, coordinates all international efforts to safeguard this site. Thanks to generous financial contributions from the governments of Japan (US\$ 3,2 million) and Germany (US\$1 million), several projects are carried out by UNESCO for the conservation of the fragments of the Buddha statues, the niches, the mural paintings in the caves, and the preparation of a Master Plan for the entire valley.

The National Parks of Garamba, Kahuzi-Biega, Salonga, Virunga and the Okapi Wildlife Reserve in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Since 1994, all five World Heritage sites of the DRC were inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger as a result of the impact of the war and civil conflicts in the Great Lakes region. In 1999, an international safeguarding campaign was launched by UNESCO together with a number of international conservation NGOs to protect the habitat of endangered species such as the mountain gorilla, the northern white rhino and the okapi. This resulted in a 4-year US\$3.5 million emergency programme to save the five sites, funded by the United Nations Foundation and the Government of Belgium. In 2004, international donors, non-governmental organizations and the governments of Belgium and Japan pledged an additional US\$50 million to help the Democratic Republic of the Congo rehabilitate these World Heritage parks.

evaluation: the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM).

The intergovernmental World Heritage Committee consists of 21 members elected for terms up to 6 years by the General Assembly of States Parties at their biennial meeting. Once a year, the Committee decides which sites to inscribe on the World Heritage List. It also examines reports on the state of conservation of inscribed sites and makes all other decisions needed to implement the Convention.

An ongoing commitment

Inscription on the World Heritage List is a catalyst to raising awareness about heritage preservation on the part of governments and citizens alike. Heightened awareness, in turn, leads to greater consideration and a general rise in the level of protection and conservation afforded to heritage sites. Regular reporting on the state of conservation of inscribed sites and technical missions, when necessary, ensure the upkeep of their outstanding qualities.

Today, more and more sites are preserved thanks to partnerships developed with governmental and non-

governmental stakeholders, local and regional authorities, research institutions, the media and the private sector.

World Heritage Centre

Established in 1992, the World Heritage Centre is the focal point and co-ordinator within UNESCO for all matters related to World Heritage. Assuring the day-to-day management of the Convention, the Centre organizes the annual sessions of the World Heritage Committee, provides advice to States Parties in the preparation of site nominations, organizes international assistance from the World Heritage Fund and co-ordinates both the reporting on the condition of sites and the emergency action undertaken when a site is threatened. The Centre also organizes technical seminars and workshops, updates the World Heritage List, database and web site, develops teaching materials to raise awareness among young people of the need for heritage preservation, and keeps the public informed of World Heritage issues.

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To find out more

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