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Address by  
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(UNESCO)

on the occasion of the official inscription ceremony  
of the Pitons Management Area (PMA) on the World Heritage List

St Lucia, 14 February 2005

Your Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy, Governor-General of St Lucia,  
Honourable Prime Minister,  
Distinguished Ministers,  
Members of Parliament,  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome you to this Official Inscription Ceremony of the Pitons Management Area on the World Heritage List of UNESCO.

I would like to express my warm congratulations to the Government of St Lucia for obtaining this first World Heritage site, which is a great achievement for your country. This inscription also has wider significance because it secures better representation of the Caribbean region, in particular the Eastern Caribbean, on the prestigious World Heritage List. This is in keeping with the sustained efforts of the World Heritage Centre, through its Global Strategy in general and the Caribbean Action Plan in particular, to promote a more representative and balanced World Heritage List.

Today, with the inscription of this site, there are 15 World Heritage Sites in Caribbean countries compared with just 4 in the early 1990s. Of these 15 sites, however, 7 are located in Cuba. The other 8 sites are in 7 different countries. This means that 6 Caribbean region states (Antigua and Barbuda; Barbados; Grenada; Guyana; Jamaica; and St Vincent & the Grenadines) have no sites as yet on the World Heritage List. The Bahamas and Trinidad & Tobago have not yet ratified the Convention and, therefore, have no sites. Having said this, the existing 15 sites are representative of the broad definition of heritage recognised by UNESCO, with 10 being cultural sites and the remainder, like this one in St Lucia, being natural ones.

Sites protected under the World Heritage Convention enjoy several benefits. Designating an area as a World Heritage Site is an occasion for boosting national pride and increasing a society's commitment to protecting and developing that area in a sustainable manner. The status of World Heritage also brings international attention to the site and its surrounding area, attracting international funding and potential increases in tourism. Furthermore, it enhances the possibility to obtain protection and conservation aid.

The Pitons Management Area (PMA), with its Soufrière Volcanic Centre and its two Pitons, will surely benefit from these possibilities, which are completely in keeping with the needs expressed at the recent Mauritius International Meeting. Both the Declaration and Strategy Document that were adopted at that meeting, and the recommendations formulated at UNESCO's Culture Panel that was hosted by Governor-General Dame Pearlette Louisy, stressed the importance that Small Island

Developing States (SIDS) place on culture, not just as a way of preserving their identity but also as a means of achieving economic advances and ensuring a sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While the inscription of the Pitons Management Area is a cause for much celebration, all those responsible for its conservation will know that the real work has only just begun. An important element of the Global Strategy of the World Heritage Committee is to draw the attention of States Parties to the post-inscription processes, particularly the proper management and monitoring of the site as well as the provision of information and education on the site's significance and values. This is an on-going process and will require political commitment, strategic planning and stamina. Looking around me today, I feel that St Lucia is well-equipped for this task.

Building on a series of workshops, expert meetings and thematic studies during the past decade, in the framework of the World Heritage Centre's Global Strategy Action Plan for the Caribbean, UNESCO will continue to support St Lucia and the wider Caribbean Region in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

With the presentation of the 'Periodic Report: the State of the World Heritage in Latin America and the Caribbean' at the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee in Suzhou, China, in July 2004, a new cycle of activities was initiated. Based on a Caribbean Action Plan in World Heritage (2004-2014), which was developed by 14 Caribbean States Parties representatives and the World Heritage Centre at a meeting held in February 2004 in Castries, here in St Lucia, the information gathered from the thematic studies and expert meetings will be utilised in programmes and projects focused on the four strategic objectives established by the World Heritage Committee in 2002, namely, credibility, conservation, capacity-building and communication. These aim to better structure and guide individual States Parties' actions with regard to World Heritage conservation and management. It may be noted that the World Heritage Centre has established a special programme for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to provide enhanced assistance in the preparation of nominations to UNESCO's World Heritage List. We must seek to help in particular those 6 Caribbean SIDS identified earlier which do not have any sites on the World Heritage List.

Our collective work to conserve the diversity of the world's heritage also requires new instruments to give greater protective coverage to all types of heritage. As a complementary instrument to the 1972 World Heritage Convention, which focuses on the protection of cultural and natural properties, we now have a Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which was adopted in October 2003.

The safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage encompasses, among others, oral traditions and expressions, including language; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; and traditional craftsmanship. I believe that intangible cultural heritage is important for St Lucia and the wider Caribbean and therefore I truly hope that your country and its neighbours will soon be parties to the 2003 Convention, which opens up other avenues for the safeguarding of cultural and natural diversity in all its forms. This is a duty we owe to future generations.

UNESCO has established a process for promoting interest in and respect for intangible cultural heritage called the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. So far, there have been two Proclamations of these Masterpieces, in 2001 and 2003, when 19 and then 28 masterpieces respectively were chosen by an independent international jury. Out of the 47 proclaimed masterpieces, just four belong to countries in the Caribbean region, namely, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Jamaica and Belize. The third Proclamation will take place in July 2005.

Given the fact that 12 countries have already ratified the 2003 Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage, it is likely that it will come into force in 2006, in which case the Third Proclamation will be the last in its present form. Once it comes into operation, the Convention will have its own mechanism for inscribing outstanding examples of intangible cultural heritage from around the world. Thus, while I hope that the Third Proclamation will bring more representation of Caribbean countries, I also hope that St Lucia and other countries in the region will seek representation of their intangible cultural heritage through the 2003 Convention in the years to come.

Let me close by saying that I am delighted to be here in your beautiful country and to be with you in person for this historic ceremony.

Thank you.