

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL
ORGANISATION

Keynote Speech

"30 Years of the World Heritage Convention"

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at the 30th anniversary World Heritage Congress

“World Heritage 2002: Shared Legacy, Common Responsibility”,

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It is a great honour for me to address you at this Congress to celebrate 30 years of UNESCO's World Heritage Convention.

I am proud to be part of this moment in history. It is a significant milestone in our work to conserve the world's outstanding cultural and natural heritage.

I am glad to see so many friends and colleagues here today. I welcome my fellow members of the Committee and those who were my predecessors as Chairperson of the Committee.

In my capacity as the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee I would like to convey the thanks of the Committee to the Italian Government for offering to host and participate in the funding of the Congress.

At its most recent meeting in June of this year in my own country of Hungary, the Committee endorsed the objectives of this Congress.

The 21 members of the Committee also encouraged countries around the world to develop and implement activities to promote the Anniversary of the adoption of the World Heritage Convention by UNESCO's General Conference 30 years ago.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your participation in this Congress, and your work in favour of World Heritage, is a demonstration of your interest and commitment. This is a Congress about commitment and more particularly partnerships.

The World Heritage Committee in recently adopting the Budapest Declaration on World Heritage, has I consider, provided the strategic framework for existing and new World Heritage Partnerships

The World Heritage Committee adopted the Budapest Declaration in acknowledgement of 2002 as the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage, the World Heritage Committee and the 30th anniversary of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1972.

The Committee has also acknowledged that in 30 years, the Convention has proven to be a unique instrument of international co-operation in the protection of cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value.

Furthermore, the Committee has recognized the universality of the 1972 Convention and the consequent need to ensure that it applies to heritage in all its diversity, as an instrument for the sustainable development of all societies through dialogue and mutual understanding.

The Committee considers that the properties on the World Heritage List are assets held in trust to pass on to generations of the future as their rightful inheritance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are all aware, our shared heritage is facing increasing challenges.

Although nearly universal in membership, a number of countries still require encouragement to join the Convention as well as join other related international heritage protection instruments;

States Parties to the Convention are invited to identify and nominate cultural and natural heritage properties representing heritage in all its diversity, for inclusion on the World Heritage List;

They are also asked to seek to ensure an appropriate and equitable balance between conservation, sustainability and development, so that World Heritage properties can be protected through appropriate activities contributing to the social and economic development and the quality of life of our communities.

The Committee is calling for countries around the world to join together and co-operate in the protection of heritage, recognizing that to harm such heritage is to harm, at the same time, the human spirit and the world's inheritance;

The Committee is also committed to seeing the promotion of World Heritage through communication, education, research, training and public awareness strategies;

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Committee gives great emphasis to securing the active involvement of our local communities at all levels in the identification, protection and management of our World Heritage properties

Of course these tasks and objectives cannot be fulfilled by countries working alone, or by a top down approach of the intergovernmental World Heritage Committee.

Indeed, the World Heritage Committee, in updating its strategic focus has given its commitment and expressed its will to co-operate and seek the assistance of all partners for the support of World Heritage.

For this purpose, the World Heritage Committee invites all interested parties to co-operate and to promote the following objectives:

- a. to strengthen the **Credibility of the World Heritage List**, as a representative and geographically balanced testimony of cultural and natural properties of outstanding universal value;
- b. to ensure the effective **Conservation of World Heritage properties**;

c. to promote the development of effective **Capacity-building measures**, including assistance for preparing the nomination of properties to the World Heritage List, for the understanding and implementation of the World Heritage Convention and related instruments;

d. to increase **public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage through Communication**.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I shall conclude today by asking you all to take up the collective challenge. Let's all work together, with co-operation and commitment to ensure **CREDIBILITY, CONSERVATION, CAPACITY-BUILDING** and **COMMUNICATION** in support of our World Heritage.

Thank you.