

BHUTAN

1.1 Introduction

Year of ratification 2001

Organisation submitting the report

- The National Commission for Cultural Affairs
P.O. Box 233
Thimphu
Bhutan

1.2 Identification of cultural and natural heritage properties

The status of national inventories

- A basic inventory list for cultural heritage exists at the National level, “with the detailed inventory currently under process.”
- For natural heritage, a biodiversity inventory has been carried out at the local protected area level.

The preparation of a Tentative List

- “The preparation of the Tentative List is at a very preliminary stage. Currently the process of studying various properties and compiling detailed reports on these properties is in progress.”
- Consultation with the local authorities and population is considered integral to the process of compiling the Tentative List.

Nominations and the nomination process

- Not applicable as the State Party is new.

1.3 Protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage

Integration of heritage and planning

- The National Forest Policy of Bhutan (1974) covers forest conservation, grazing rights, shifting cultivation, watershed management, and regulations on the felling of trees.
- At least 60% of the total area of the country is under forest cover and 5 protected areas cover almost one quarter of the country.
- In 2001-2002, the Government identified 9% of the land as ‘biodiversity corridors’ linking parks.
- The Government has adopted numerous policies to promote sustainable rural livelihoods. New legislation is conceived only after extensive analysis of the appropriateness of international standards in relation to local conditions & values.

Participation of local communities

- “Policies that aim to give cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community has always formed an important part of Bhutan's policy of development.”
- Set up in 2002, the ‘Geog (block) Development Committee’ of each District has made communities fully responsible for the protection of all natural and cultural heritage sites.
- Local communities are encouraged to partake in the selection of projects to be implemented annually for the conservation of natural & cultural heritage.

Tourism Development

- The Government has adopted a ‘National Sustainable Tourism Policy’.

Financial measures and budget allowance

- The Government funds 3 projects per year for the protection & rehabilitation of cultural heritage in the 20 districts in Bhutan. No figures supplied.
- A Cultural Trust Fund & Bhutan Trust Fund for natural heritage have also been created.

Professional

- Approx. 30 and 31 staff are involved in the protection, conservation & presentation of cultural and natural heritage respectively at the national level.
- Staff are responsible for technical advice, studies, inventories, and the implementation of projects.
- A few staff have international postgraduate qualifications relating to natural heritage. Little training exists for the conservation of cultural heritage.
- The ‘Subsidiary Environmental Studies programme’ has been introduced with the help of WWF-Bhutan at Sherubtse College.

New and improved services

- No new specific services.
- Activities increasing awareness of the standards & principles of the WH Convention since ratification in 2001.

Issues to be addressed

- Equipment and better transportation.
- Lack of appropriately trained staff.
- Funding availability for scientific research.

1.4 International co-operation and fund raising

National and International Fund Raising

- Not applicable.
- International Assistance from the WHF: none.

1.5 Education, information and awareness-building

Information and awareness measures

- Small-scale national & regional workshops.
- Basic manuals & brochures.
- Education on natural heritage has been introduced into the primary, secondary & tertiary levels of the school curriculum. Basic information on cultural heritage is part of the history curriculum for most students.

1.6 Conclusions and recommended actions

Conclusions and proposed actions

- The main organisations are the National Commission for Cultural Affairs & the National Environment Commission of the Min. of Agriculture.
- Basic inventories of cultural and natural heritage have been compiled at the national & local levels.
- The preparation of a Tentative List is in its early stages.
- Bhutan's development philosophy is based on the "Gross National Happiness" of its people, the main principles being the protection of its environmental & cultural heritage, good governance and economic growth.