



2nd World Heritage Site Managers' Forum on
Role, Responsibilities and Capacity-Building Needs
at the 42nd session of the World Heritage Committee
Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain
21 – 28 June 2018

Statement of participants:

RECOGNITION AND INCLUSION

PREAMBLE

The 2nd World Heritage Site Manager's Forum was held in Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, from 21 June to 28 June 2018. We, the participants of the Forum, included 44 "Site Managers" of their respective World Heritage properties in 33 States Parties (Australia, Bahrain, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cuba, Cyprus, Germany, Jordan, Italy, Lesotho, Lithuania, Malaysia, Malawi, Mali, Myanmar, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

The participants of the Forum discussed and exchanged stimulating, constructive debates on their roles and responsibilities as well as the challenges they face in the management of World Heritage properties. The Forum also served as a platform to assess their capacity-building needs in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention at the local and regional level. As an outcome of these discussions and exchanges, the participants of the Forum would like to address the following observations and recommendations to the honourable delegates of the World Heritage Committee:

RECOGNITION

We observe that while our World Heritage properties differ greatly in size, type, age and scope and our management systems are very diverse, our role as coordinators of these management systems and the daily challenges and responsibilities we face are very similar. We as "Site Managers" require interdisciplinary experiences and knowledge and deal with complex and time-sensitive issues to ensure the sustainability of our sites. The term "Site Manager" does not fully capture this complexity and incorrectly implies that it is a task undertaken by a single person.

We suggest that the World Heritage system could better recognize, in a formal way, the complexities of “Site Managers” roles and responsibilities and strengthen their mandates and recognition in the national and international context. This would better enable us to act, through our formal recognition, institutional backing, adequate resources and timely access to information and data, as bridges delivering the values and ideas of the Convention to the local fabric of society.

We understand our tasks to conserve and protect the World Heritage properties goes beyond the physical attributes of the site and includes the entire environment and interaction with communities. Further, we acknowledge that our duties are sometimes carried out during times of conflict and crisis, and as such there is the need to protect our site management teams in their daily duties.

As guardians, we require your assistance to protect the OUV of our precious properties we care for on a daily basis by means of transparent, informed, and responsible decision-making, which emphasizes the needs of the heritage, above short-term political and diplomatic interests.

As communicators, we play an important role in the empowering of local participation, inclusive of various communities and historical narratives, identification with and ownership of World Heritage. In this role, we ask you to assist us in creating networks and channels for the exchange of our concerns, experience and knowledge among each other, including at the sub-regional, regional and global levels.

INCLUSION

We recognize the importance of exchanging our experiences and good practices in World Heritage management and we highly recommend that the organization of an annual “Site Manager” Forum in the context of World Heritage Committee sessions, is continued and institutionalized to allow for our better inclusion in the World Heritage system.

It is vital, to involve “Site Managers” in this process at an early stage to strengthen our capacities and to recognize needs and opportunities in this context. We therefore encourage States Parties to develop national capacity-building strategies and to support “Site Managers” participation in this annual forum and other capacity building opportunities. We invite the State Parties to include “Site Managers” in their delegations to the World Heritage Committee, to allow us to understand the circumstances of development and adoption of the policies and decisions we are expected to implement.

Our presence and inclusion could be a mechanism to enhance and guarantee credible and transparent decision-making through dialogue. We can offer informed insights, which could lead to more effective and efficient management processes prevention and resolution of conflicts that might arise. As “Site Managers”, we are both recipients and disseminators of the policies and decisions you create and our understanding and implementation of these, is essential to the wider public awareness and a sustainable transmission of our World Heritage properties to future generations.