

The destruction of the Bamyán Buddhas by the Taliban has greatly shocked the international community and has prompted a vast response by both governmental and non-governmental institutions worldwide in favour of the protection of this important cultural heritage.

UNESCO took a leading role in the drive to try to protect these pre-Islamic sculptures. No holds were barred in the attempt to convince the Taliban authorities in Afghanistan to save the statues.

UNESCO Director-General, Koichiro Matsuura, called the destruction of the Bamyán Buddhas 'a crime against culture'. This is a far-reaching concept, which firmly places cultural and natural heritage within the reach of international law, and has implications that go beyond Bamyán.

The recent decision by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia to extend its indictment to the 1991 attacks on the city of Dubrovnik has opened up whole new areas of consideration. UNESCO has taken note of this important legal precedent and is exploring ways of developing it.

The 'crime against culture' is a fresh interpretation of existing conventions. When new legal avenues are defined, UNESCO will have international law on its side in order to carry out its mission better and to ensure that sites such as Bamyán everywhere in the world are respected in the future.

Due to war and conflict in the region, the pre-Islamic statues in Afghanistan were not inscribed on the World Heritage List. There are numerous examples of natural and cultural sites around the world that are threatened daily by similar conflict. But the recent events surrounding the destruction of the Bamyán Buddhas show that the international community is developing an awareness and the necessary instruments to safeguard cultural and natural heritage, even in areas under threat.

The destruction of the Bamyán statues is a great loss to humanity. UNESCO's appeals to the international community, its special missions to the region at the height of the crisis, and its determination to find international legal solutions, have all served to bring the problem of safeguarding World Heritage to the forefront of the international stage.

This crisis has shown that UNESCO and the World Heritage Convention have been instrumental in sensitizing public opinion and convincing large sections of the international community of the importance of protecting what belongs to us all. The efforts to shore up existing international legal means to prevent and punish abuse in the future have given new impetus to the fight to preserve the world's heritage.

Francesco Bandarin, Director, World Heritage Centre

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The *World Heritage Newsletter* has undergone a facelift. We've changed our size, our colours and our editor. We will still be coming to you every two months. In our new format we hope to bring you all you need to know about the work and the people who make World Heritage conservation possible around the world.

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Prevent Crimes Against Culture

Following the destruction by the Taliban in March of the world's largest standing Buddha statues at Bamiyan in Afghanistan, UNESCO is determined to continue mobilizing international support for the protection of Afghanistan's heritage. It is also re-examining what legal means may be used to prevent what Director-General Koichiro Matsuura has called 'crimes against culture' from happening in the future.

■ Race Against the Clock

The Taliban decreed in late February that the pre-Islamic statues would be destroyed, since they were contrary to Islam. Amid protests from around the world over the threatened demolition, UNESCO began a race against the clock to convince the Taliban, through Muslim leaders and special UNESCO envoy, Pierre Lafrance, to spare the statues, considered to be a part of humanity's unique cultural heritage.

Mr Matsuura held talks with the Permanent Delegates to UNESCO from the 54 Member States that belong to the Organization of the Islamic Conference, consulted with numerous Ulemas and garnered unconditional support from representatives of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Tajikistan for his campaign to save the Bamiyan monuments. Peter King, Chair of the World Heritage Committee, backed the Director-General's initiatives and expressed concern for 'these barbaric acts'.

The destruction of the Bamiyan monuments was confirmed on March 12th.

'It is abominable to witness the cold and calculated destruction of cultural properties which were the heritage of the Afghan people, and indeed, of the whole of humanity,' Mr Matsuura declared.

The Bamiyan Valley statues, along with other Afghan sites, have not been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. But Mr Matsuura said that 'efforts to bring the Taliban to respect these archaeological riches will be maintained'.

■ Legal Means

With a view to what legal action may be taken in the future, Mr Matsuura welcomed, as an historic precedent, a recent decision by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia to include the 1991 attacks on the ancient port city of Dubrovnik, Croatia in its indictment.

Although the indictment was based on the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, Mr Matsuura said a study was being undertaken to 'examine all the means available to prevent and punish crimes against cultural properties' within other existing conventions.

■ Conflict

Afghanistan, whose heritage is marked by the influences of Persia, Greece, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, has suffered from the conflicts and disasters that have plagued the country in recent times. Apart from the Taliban destruction of the



Great Buddha of Bamiyan, Afghanistan © A. Bruno

Bamiyan monuments and small statues in museums across the country, the irreplaceable collection of the Kabul Museum, which came under attack in 1995 and 1996, has been subject to theft and vandalism.

During the height of this crisis UNESCO received more than 1,000 e-mails a day expressing support for the Organization's efforts to save the heritage of Afghanistan. In response to the international outcry over the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan, UNESCO has opened a special bank account for the cultural heritage of Afghanistan. It is to be used for emergency funding of any measure that would safeguard Afghanistan's pre-Islamic heritage. In the long term the funds are to be earmarked for the preservation of the country's heritage, both pre-Islamic and Islamic.

For UNESCO petition and special emergency fund see: UNESCO's Afghan Cultural Heritage Crisis homepage <http://www.unesco.org/opi2/afghan-crisis/>

Interview with Peter King

Chair of the World Heritage Committee



What do you feel were the lessons learnt from the destruction of the pre-Islamic statues at Bamiyan, Afghanistan in March?

First of all, Bamiyan was a magnificent site. It is a world cultural tragedy that these statues were destroyed along with other Buddhist artefacts and sculptures. No sound reason whatsoever can be given for such an act. I might add that I was delighted that the supporters of World Heritage around the world in their many thousands have contacted the UNESCO web site to express support for UNESCO's efforts to prevent the destruction and limit the loss. So let me say 'thank you' to those wonderful people.

There were several lessons to be learnt.

The first one concerns the issue of evaluation of the sites. In 1983 the inscription of the Bamiyan statues on the World Heritage List was deferred due to insufficiencies in the proposed protection scheme. Further action became impossible because of the conflict situation. Yet there was much information which would have supported inscription. So I think the first lesson is that where an evaluation can be done from reliable sources, the process of inscription of a site in a conflict area should be continued, to allow the inscription at the earliest possible opportunity.

Second: This tragedy shows that the application of the World Heritage Convention needs to be reviewed to give it more 'teeth' to deal with wanton destruction of World Heritage. I think it is time to study ways to give the World Heritage Committee the possibility of including sanctions in its means of action, in order to prevent loss of World Heritage.

Third: This problem has underscored how insufficient the budget of the World Heritage Fund is in coping with urgent matters and unexpected problems. The annual contribution of a State Party to the World Heritage Fund is 1% of its contribution to UNESCO. This is ridiculously small for most countries. Indeed, many countries pay less than US\$100.

So I would like to propose to the General Assembly of the States Parties meeting in November this year, the adoption of a resolution inviting an additional voluntary annual contribution to the Fund that equals the compulsory contributions. This would give us better resources to take action, especially when World Heritage is in danger.

Fourth: We need to augment the outreach capacities of the World Heritage Centre. In today's world it is very important to react quickly to inform the public of events which may affect the conservation of World Heritage. Public awareness and education on World Heritage are of primary importance.

How important do you think the List of World Heritage in Danger is to preserving the sites inscribed?

Once a site is on this List it obtains both support and resources. Expert assistance, as well as funds for training and for mitigation of threats are more readily allocated. Therefore it is very important that there be a consensual approach to the inscription of a site on the List in Danger. I am keen to increase the size of the World Heritage Fund, as well as to increase the resources of the World Heritage Centre to give it greater possibilities and influence in dealing with these sites in co-operation with the States Parties.

What do you feel has been your greatest contribution since you have held the post of Chair of the World Heritage Committee?

So far there have been important reforms decided at the 24th session of the World Heritage Committee, in Cairns, Australia, in December last year: the initiative concerning the enhancement of the representivity of the World Heritage List, the issue of equitable representation of the different regions and cultures of the world within the World Heritage Committee, reducing paperwork and administrative costs, the reform of the timetable of the meetings. I am also supporting the improvement of the budgetary position of the Centre, for the reasons I mentioned. This is the challenge, if World Heritage should grow and have greater credibility.

A New Partnership

The Italian Government and UNESCO have signed a Joint Declaration on Co-operation, worth approximately US\$750,000 a year, which will provide technical expertise, support for the implementation of the Global Strategy and long-term financial input for the World Heritage Centre itself.

The Joint Declaration on Co-operation between UNESCO and the Italian Government, signed on March 15th in Rome by Director-General Koichiro Matsuura, Italian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Franco Danielli, and Italian Minister of Culture Giovanna Melandri, is aimed at mobilizing Italian technical capacities in support of World Heritage technical assistance projects.

By integrating training into small projects, this type of co-operation has worked extremely well with France over the past three years. The World Heritage Centre is hoping to expand this model in order to develop new agreements between UNESCO and other countries.

■ Strengthening the work of the Centre

'The Italian declaration emphasizes a trend which strengthens the work of the Centre,' said WHC Director, Francesco Bandarin, citing the allocation of funds to be used specifically for data banks on World Heritage, and information, research and communications activities.

The document promises technical experts from the Italian Culture Ministry and from the Public Administration for missions to sites, periodic reporting, preparation and project definition and setting up of training programmes.

The UNESCO delegation to Italy, which was headed by Mr Matsuura and included Executive Director of the Office of the Director-General, Françoise Rivière, Assistant Director-General for Culture, Mounir Bouchenaki, and WHC Director Francesco Bandarin, was also received by Pope John-Paul II at the Vatican. They met later with Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Secretary of State, and Monsignor Jean-Louis Tauran, Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See. The delegation was also received by the President of the Italian Senate, Nicola Mancino, and high level representatives of Parliament.

Conservation and Biodiversity Get Grants

March 15th was a red-letter day for World Heritage conservation and biodiversity, when Ted Turner's United Nations Foundation (UNF) and the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP) approved two proposals and two planning grants, totalling some US\$1.9 million.

Natarajan Ishwaran, Chief of the Natural Heritage Section at the World Heritage Centre, whose team prepared the projects, is hopeful that the new funding will bring in matching grants.

'We hope the two planning grants will reach full project status, and, of course, we hope to raise additional funding for the two full proposals to meet specific project objectives. What we need is partners, matching grants. This is a challenge to the private sector,' he said.

■ Projects

The largest project grant is for US\$1.4 million allocated over two years to study five national parks and reserves in south-eastern Madagascar, with a view to their nomination to the World Heritage List.

Due to Madagascar's isolation, 90 per cent of the island's species are not found anywhere else in the world. The aim is to protect the moist forests, their rare ecosystems and endangered species, as extreme poverty, an ever-growing population, logging and slash-and-burn agriculture begin to threaten these important habitat zones.

Additional funds of US\$5 to 8 million are being sought in multi-lateral assistance and private sources to expand the project beyond two years.

A planning grant of US\$50,400 is aimed at preparing a proposal for a World Heritage Biodiversity Program for India. It is to target five existing and several potential World Heritage sites in the country.

This grant will also look at new approaches to mixed, cultural and natural World Heritage nominations. Under consideration are ways of linking, for example, the cultural and religious significance of symbolic species like the elephant and the tiger to the conservation of their habitats.

Another planning grant (US\$86,100) will cut across borders in west and central Africa in order to come up with an African World

Heritage Forest Initiative (AWHFI). The aim is to have a full-fledged proposal for AWHFI by late autumn 2001 for consideration by the United Nations Foundation.

The last project (US\$646,800) has been set to improve the efficiency of UNESCO and the World Heritage Centre. It addresses UNF and UNFIP concerns over the World Heritage Centre's capacity to implement projects they have approved, worth US\$8.5 million in outright grants.

Cost cutting at UNESCO for the period up until late 2003 has made the recruitment of new staff impossible. This grant will take up the slack for a 30-month period, providing the Centre's Natural Heritage and Administrative sections with two programme assistants and a secretary. UNESCO is then expected to absorb the cost of the staff positions in its Regular Programme budget beginning in 2004.

France-UNESCO Travels the World

The list of projects included in the France-UNESCO Co-operation Agreement grew considerably in April ranging from plans for the historic centre of the island of Saint Louis in Senegal, to a national park surrounding Luang Prabang in Laos, from forgotten centuries-old villages in the north of Syria to private property in Eastern Europe.

The France-UNESCO Mixed Co-ordinating Committee met on March 21st at the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, followed by a technical meeting on April 12th, to approve projects under consideration.

■ People-to-People

'The beauty of the France-UNESCO Agreement is that it focuses on the establishment of partnerships: city-to-city, park-to-park, and university-to-university. And the charm of it is that it establishes a long-term commitment between professionals to work together. Projects are for a minimum of three years. It is not a question of capital investment, but an exchange of know-how,' said Minja Yang, Deputy-Director of the World Heritage Centre.

This year's crop is no exception.

The Island of Saint Louis in Senegal, for example, inscribed on the World Heritage List at the 24th session of the Committee in Cairns, Australia last December, has a long history of co-operation with the French city of Lille. Now 80,000 FF has been earmarked, through the France-UNESCO Agreement, to list and document buildings in the historic centre.

'This is the first step in preparing a realistic conservation and development plan with the aim of maintaining the city for

the local inhabitants rather than to "gentrify" it as a tourist destination. The idea is for visitors to share the joys of the inhabitants of this exceptional city,' said Ms Yang.

Another project which emphasizes the people-to-people aspect of the agreement, is the creation of a national park surrounding the World Heritage Town of Luang Prabang in Laos.

'This park will ensure the age-old relationship between the city and the countryside. The villagers of the many ethnic groups have always lived in the magnificent natural environment of the upland valley of the Mekong River. We hope that the contacts they have enjoyed traditionally with "the city as market place" can be maintained through the protection of their environment and way of life,' Ms Yang said.

Experts from the Loire Anjou Touraine Regional Park are involved in the park-to-park co-operation. This continuing project got an additional 50,000 FF in the 2001 budget.

■ Expertise

The France-UNESCO Co-operation Agreement also provides a framework for assistance in preparing nominations of sites for inscription on the World Heritage List, including technical and legal expertise to develop a management framework to ensure protection.

With the allocation of 40,000 FF, an area of stone villages in northern Syria, dating from the 3rd to the 6th century A.D., has now entered the first phase of this inscription process.

France-UNESCO also approved seed money for other projects, including 280,000 FF as a follow-up to a seminar and training for the management of private property in European countries in transition.

to look at our recent past and to define the categories of heritage worthy of protection,' Mr van Oers said.

■ Short 20th-Century List

The initiative was launched jointly with ICOMOS, which has done considerable work over the past twenty years on the representivity of the World Heritage List with regard to different regions and themes. Of the 690 properties currently on the World Heritage List, only seven are properties representing 20th-century architecture and town planning.

The Centre plans to organize two regional seminars on the subject in 2002 (one for South and Central America and one for Asia). They will coincide with the International Gaudi Year, marking the 150th anniversary of the birth of the famous Spanish architect. Three of Antoni Gaudi's buildings were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1984.



Virunga National Park, DRC

World Heritage in Danger

Sites in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), as well as a rush to mine highly-prized minerals inside national parks and reserves, have highlighted ongoing threats to natural heritage. Virunga, Garamba, Kahuzi-Biega and Salonga National Parks and the Okapi Wildlife Reserve remain on UNESCO's List of World Heritage in Danger.

A recent report by IUCN on the state of conservation of natural sites inscribed on the List, points out how the mining of coltan (columbite and tantalite) has become a major threat to the flora and fauna at both Kahuzi-Biega National Park and Okapi Wildlife Reserve.

Mining Rush

The lure of these extremely valuable minerals has sparked a mining rush to the area in just six months, with as many as ten thousand people pouring into Kahuzi-Biega, and another four thousand into Okapi to work in the mines. Coltan is used for computer chips, in nuclear medicine, mobile phones, and in metal alloys for jet engines. It is illegally mined in these parks and reserves, and then transported to Western markets by companies owned and operated in part by rebel groups.

In Kahuzi-Biega and Okapi, the IUCN report said, the miners are killing elephants and the endangered eastern lowland gorilla for food. It is feared that the entire population of these animals could become extinct.

In Virunga National Park the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP) has reported some good news, however. Despite the ongoing war in the DRC, the Virunga population of endangered mountain gorillas has increased by more than 10 per cent over the past 12 years. But Virunga continues to be threatened by heavy poaching, particularly by the military. In Salonga National Park armed men are poaching protected species such as elephants and bonobo chimpanzees.

A four-year UNF-UNFIP/UNESCO/DRC Government project on biodiversity conservation met with delays in its early stage. But staff at the parks and the reserve are now getting their monthly support payments. The project has also helped in stabilizing the poaching threat at Garamba National Park.

The UNF-UNFIP contribution to the project, of some US\$2.9 million, was instrumental in helping UNESCO negotiate an additional 300,000 Euros (ca. US\$270,000) grant from Belgium in 2000-2001 for a four-year project to launch community support activities for conservation at the five DRC sites.

Modern Heritage

How do you identify and document the World Heritage of the 19th and 20th century? Are new towns to be preserved? Where does the motorway fit in?

These are just some of the questions a group of experts began considering at a World Heritage Centre brainstorming session in early February on the Identification and Documentation of Modern Heritage.

Ron van Oers, consultant and project co-ordinator, says the Centre is the facilitator in this project for the States Parties' initiatives to preserve and nominate the heritage of the modern era to UNESCO's World Heritage List.

'We are in the middle of asking internationally renowned architects, town planners and historians to write position papers on several topics in order to develop a vision on how

World Heritage Convention Since the last Committee meeting, three countries have joined the World Heritage Convention: Rwanda, Niue and the United Arab Emirates. For a complete list of the 164 States Parties to the Convention, see our web site.

Guyana Workshop A workshop on the Management of Natural Heritage Sites, held in Georgetown, Guyana, at the end of last year, emphasized the importance of including indigenous peoples in the process of selecting and maintaining sites. The legal and institutional framework of conservation, the management of sites in the Guyana shield, how to cope with tourists, and how to educate the public were discussed. The participants also looked at ways of making economic sense out of conservation.

Peru At the end of February Lima hosted the first-ever World Heritage Youth Forum for Latin America. Students attended lectures and workshops and focused on how young people could promote sustainable tourism at and around World Heritage Sites. They particularly looked at ways of using multi-media and the Internet to promote World Heritage.

World Heritage Education Kit An Internet version of the Educational Resource Kit for Teachers is now available in English and French on the UNESCO World Heritage Centre web site.

Cinque Terre Experts met in Riomaggiore, Cinque Terre, Italy in March to discuss the final version of the *Management Guidelines for Cultural Landscapes* which will include a number of case studies from different regions of the world. It will be published in 2002 on the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the cultural landscape categories by the World Heritage Committee.

Habitat II + 5 The World Heritage Centre is to participate in the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements to be held in New York on June 6th to 8th, when UNESCO presents its report to the plenary committee. A World Heritage Centre brochure on the role of the historic centre in the life of the city, on the strategy for safeguarding and developing historic centres, and on the consequent quality of life in the city, will be distributed at the conference.

New World Heritage map The World Heritage Centre's 2001 map is now out, showing the 690 World Heritage sites. The map is in four colours, measures 62x90 cm, and is available at no cost in English, French or Spanish. Send orders to: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 7, place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France. Please include an address label.

What Are They Doing ?

WHC Director, **Francesco Bandarin**, has been busy with meetings around Europe, including talks with the United Kingdom Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Christopher Smith, on possible further co-operation between the United Kingdom and the Centre, and with patron-of-the-arts Lord Rothschild to discuss the private sector's role in World Heritage conservation. Mr Bandarin met in Spain with the Director-General of Cultural Affairs, Rafael Rodriguez-Ponga on proposals for bilateral cooperation: the WHC Director was also in the United States for discussions with the World Bank, the World Monuments Fund and the UN Foundation; **Minja Yang**, Deputy-Director of the WHC, apart from continuing discussions on France-UNESCO projects, headed a mission in Sri Lanka to evaluate the effects of the possible expansion of an airfield near Sigiriya; **Natarajan Ishwaran**, Chief of the WHC Natural Heritage Section, attended meetings with the United Nations Foundation, and went to a roundtable in Los Angeles on finance and conservation, sponsored by The Nature Conservancy, the United Nations Foundation, and the Milken Institute; **Mechtild Rössler** of WHC Natural Heritage and Cultural Landscapes, attended a meeting on cultural landscapes at the University of Mexico City; she is preparing a seminar on vineyard landscapes for July in Hungary; **Sarah Titchen**, WHC Pacific and Education, is busy working with Elspeth Wingham (World Heritage Officer, UNESCO

Apia) to organize World Heritage inputs into a number of events in the Pacific over the next few months – the Pacific Islands Roundtable on Nature Conservation in Fiji, a meeting with the Pacific Islands Museums Association on the interpretation of cultural heritage sites in Palau, Micronesia and a capacity-building workshop to take place in the Pacific later this year. **Giovanni Boccardi** is the newly-appointed WHC Desk Officer for the Arab States. He comes to Paris from Amman, Jordan where he was Programme Specialist for Culture at the Office for Culture and Communications. Mr Boccardi says 'streamlining' is the key word to his new job. He is already at work, returning recently from Ouadane and Chinguetti, Mauritania where he assessed the state of conservation of these World Heritage sites, once centres of trade and learning on the caravan routes; **Junko Taniguchi**, Programme Specialist for the Asia-Pacific region, was at Lord Buddha's birthplace, Lumbini in Nepal to discuss the conservation, presentation and development of the Maya Devi Temple; **Mario Hernandez** has also joined to the Centre to direct the development of Information Management Systems. He comes from the United Nations Environment Programme where he worked on various environmentally related issues.



Giovanni Boccardi



World Heritage Review No. 20, available since May in bookshops in Spain, France, Canada and the United States (and by subscription elsewhere). The leader article focuses on the recent destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan in Afghanistan. Other articles: the four World Heritage sites in the Netherlands associated with the struggle against the forces of water; Tres-Serols, Mont Perdu in the Pyrenees, a cultural landscape on both sides of the French-Spanish border; the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park in South Africa; the wooden churches of Chiloé in Chile; the Qadisha Valley and the Forest of the Cedars of God in Lebanon, a story from the early days of Christianity.

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Cinque Terre, Italy

31 May to 1 June

Colloque: Patrimoine et paysages culturels, (WHC, Renaissance des Cités d'Europe...), Saint-Emilion, France.

Information:
<http://www.renaissancecites.org/Actualite.html>

20 to 26 June

Conservation of World Heritage Sites, EUROPARC Expertise Exchange, Bieszczady National Park, Poland.

<http://www.europarc.org>

25 to 30 June

25th Session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris.

Information: www.unesco.org/whc/

25 to 28 June

Asian Places in the New Millennium, World Congress of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), Singapore.

Information: <http://www.asiabuilders.com/ifla/>; ifla@ifmasia.com.sg

5 to 9 July

Meeting of States Parties from the Alpine Arc, Turin, Italy. Information: Italian Permanent Delegation to UNESCO.

11 to 13 July

Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop for the Preparation of Periodic Reports on the World Cultural Heritage Sites, Kyongju, Republic of Korea.

Information: f.jing@unesco.org; sypark@mail.unesco.or.kr

11 to 14 July

Regional Thematic Expert Meeting on World Heritage Vineyard Landscapes, Tokay, Hungary (Hungarian Ministry for Cultural Heritage, WHC).

Information: m.rossler@unesco.org

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