There have been several important changes affecting the life of UNESCO and World Heritage since our last Newsletter.

As I write, the 32nd session of the UNESCO General Conference and the 14th General Assembly of the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention are in session. In the General Conference, discussions have focused on new initiatives to recognize and enhance cultural diversity and the intangible cultural heritage, and tremendous support for World Heritage has been expressed by many Member States.

On 1 October, we celebrated the return of the United States of America to UNESCO as a Member State after a 19-year hiatus. We are confident that the United States, a founding member of UNESCO, will contribute its energy, talent and creativity, bringing back its intellectual resources, as well as its partnership. We look forward to joining forces so we can empower our common action for cultural and natural preservation.

In another recent development, the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) undertook to recognize World Heritage properties as ‘no-go’ areas. Shortly afterwards, the Royal Dutch/Shell Group of Companies (Shell) announced that they will not explore or develop resources on natural World Heritage properties. These commitments reflect the ongoing work of those concerned with World Heritage and their efforts to raise awareness about World Heritage and conservation issues.

World Heritage has also received further commitments from the United Nations Foundation (UNF). A first formal partnership project between Conservation International (CI) and the World Heritage Centre has been approved by the UNF board, focusing on the conservation of the Espiritu Santo Island complex in the Gulf of California, Mexico. The two-year US$0.5 million project will consolidate conservation gains, rationalize fishing activities in the area and support the eradication of invasive alien species on the island.

UNF has also approved the Rapid Response Facility project WHC submitted in co-operation with Fauna and Flora International. This project is designed to provide rapid emergency response financing to World Heritage sites in need.

We are currently awaiting approval for the Eastern Tropical Pacific Seas project proposal, submitted jointly by the WHC and CI to the UNF. The US$5 million, four-year project involves high-level participation from authorities in Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia and Ecuador and aims at strengthening the conservation of marine protected areas.

The World Heritage Convention is receiving increasingly growing support and recognition from public and private organizations. We hope that this will bring a long-lasting and significant contribution to the conservation effort worldwide.

Francesco Bandarin, Director, World Heritage Centre
The Vth IUCN World Parks Congress, held in Durban, South Africa from 8 to 17 September 2003, approved the Durban Action Accord, which outlines a new commitment to protected areas and celebrates their role in achieving conservation and development goals. The Vth IUCN World Parks Congress set a 10% target for the surface of the globe to be included in protected areas. Coverage is currently at approximately 12% per cent, raising concerns now over financing and management. The Congress identified new sites for under-protected ecosystems, defined tools to improve management effectiveness, considered new legal arrangements, and brought new constituencies, particularly from local communities, on board. A new host of protected areas was announced in countries such as Madagascar, Senegal and Brazil. World Heritage was one of the three cross-cutting themes of the Congress.

The choice of World Heritage as one of the cross-cutting themes of this Congress illustrates the growing realization that the World Heritage Convention is a versatile instrument which can be applied to conservation. It reflects the importance of World Heritage issues for the design, planning and management of a wide range of protected areas.

One of the concrete results of the Congress was the launching of a new World Heritage Marine Site Managers’ Network. World Heritage marine site managers, managers of sites who are preparing World Heritage nominations, as well as partner organizations, institutions and experts, will now be able to work together during the World Heritage nominations process. Effective management of the sites will also be enhanced through a system of mentoring, which will use the experience of existing and new sites, as well as that of other World Heritage Centres. The network will serve as a clearinghouse to ensure regular contact and information exchange.

The World Heritage Convention can be effectively used in collaboration with national, regional and international instruments for marine conservation, such as the Ramsar Convention, Man and Biosphere Programme, and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.” Said Francesco Bandarin, Director of the World Heritage Centre. Ahead of the Congress twenty representatives from ten WHC World Heritage sites met in Durban to review progress on the implementation of the Enhancing Our Heritage four-year project, which is funded by the United Nations Foundation with the support of the WHC.

One urgent question addressed by the Congress was the problem faced by natural and mixed World Heritage in conflict zones. Eulalie Bashiige of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Protected Areas Management Authority warned that park staff is on the frontline, in such war-ravaged countries as the DRC. Eighty park rangers have been killed in recent violent clashes with armed poachers, she said.

Protected areas have suffered from increased poaching by armed groups, the presence of large groups of displaced people and refugees inside and on the outskirts of protected areas, as well as from the destruction and looting of infrastructure and the systematic exploitation of natural resources, Ms. Bashiige said.

In a Congress workshop several cases studies on conflict zones were presented, including a case study on protecting the Five World Heritage sites in the DRC (which are all currently on the List of World Heritage in Danger). The WHC, with funding from the United Nations Foundation, is supporting the DRC Protected Areas Management Authority. ‘...Without this support of the program, the impact of the conflict on the sites might have resulted in an irreversible loss of their outstanding value,’ Georgina Pearde of IUCN’s Protected Area Program said.

The Congress noted that although the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict is designed to protect cultural heritage, there is no similar international legal instrument for the protection of natural heritage. Delegates to the workshop recommended the development and implementation of international and national instruments to strengthen the protection of World Heritage sites, and other protected areas in times of armed conflict.

During the Congress, Marc Ravalomanana, the President of Madagascar, announced an environmental protection plan that will triple the protected areas surface in Madagascar. Up to six million hectares of protected areas and new World Heritage serial sites are to be identified in the country as part of the plan. Brazil announced the creation of six new protected areas, covering 3.8 million hectares. Senegal announced it was creating four marine protected areas, the first-ever in that West African nation.

World Heritage site managers, WHC staff, and other UN agency representatives gave 39 World Heritage-related presentations during the Congress. Two pre-congress workshops (Management Effectiveness; Marine World Heritage) were held. There was also a two-day ‘Lessons learned’ workshop for 11 UNF-funded projects being carried out in World Heritage sites. Well-attended side events were held for sustainable tourism, marine World Heritage and for new partnerships.

I n January 2002 the OHWC asked mayors to select young people who would develop and implement projects on awareness raising related to heritage preservation. Throughout 2003 the selected youths engaged in a variety of activities in their cities. They made maps, games with stickers for children, produced documentaries, radio programmes, CD’s and posters, all raising the issue of their city’s heritage. They also organized outdoor activities and exhibitions for young adults in their community. Festivals and concerts were ideal occasions to reach out to other young people. They also organized outdoor activities and exhibitions for young adults in their community. Festivals and concerts were ideal occasions to reach out to other young people.

At the Forum in Rhodes the young people shared their experiences, difficulties and successes among themselves. ‘Discussions and exchanges among the young people were incredibly lively and motivated and the quality of the presentations was very high. The spirit of tolerance and interest in other cultures thoroughly marked this event’, said Vesna Vujicic-Lugassy, responsible for the World Heritage in Young Hands Project at the WHC.

The conclusions and recommendations of the Youth Forum were then passed on to the mayors, scientists and decision makers attending the 7th Symposium of the OHWC and received strong support from them. The young people particularly underlined the need to establish regular forms of co-operation between the youth and decision makers and to reserve specific funds for young people’s heritage activities in the municipalities’ annual budgets. Establishing networks, both on the municipal level and on the international level - through the OHWC network - was one of the key issues for future involvement, they stressed. As one of the young participants in the Forum, Miss Dagnija Baltina from Riga, Latvia said: ‘I will make my efforts if our endeavours are based on true partnership rather than isolation or rivalry’.

Mr. Marc Ravalomanana, President of Madagascar, at the WHC in Durban.

Mr. Marc Ravalomanana, President of Madagascar, at the WHC in Durban.

Dance at one of the many cultural side events organized during the WPC.

The ultimate goal of BEGo is to assist national conservation authorities in strengthening their current conservation efforts by using satellite images to detect changes in the habitat of mountain gorillas. The habitat of the mountain gorillas is located in three different areas in the border region between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. In addition to critical infrastructure that is difficult to control, gorillas are subject to regular armed conflict and pressure from farming and refugees. For these reasons earth observation (EO) techniques are particularly valuable. Due to the very unstable atmospheric conditions in the area which prevent the use of a good optical instrument, satellite data from ERS-1 and 2, LANDSAT, SIR-C and ENVISAT will be combined with ground data and GIS information.

The ESA-selected consortium will derive a series of maps and vegetation change analyses from satellite images to support national conservation activities. It will also provide dedicated geo-information products and services to a variety of final users communities at international and local level that are active in the conservation and protection of gorilla habitats.

All products will be derived from satellite images and will be based on the requirements defined by the users. The outputs will be provided to the various conservation organizations/institutions assisting with field data collection. A document describing the methodology followed through out the BEGo project will be produced to assist local staff working in conservation in understanding the steps necessary to make use of satellite images in order to detect variations in the habitat of mountain gorillas.

For more information please contact: info@gorillamap.org
revived during the Parthian period in the 1st and 2nd century as the religious capital of the Assyrians, associated to the still existing mural paintings in the caves, looting and illicit property is in a fragile state of conservation since it has suffered statues by the former Taliban regime in March 2001. The testimony to the tragic destruction of the two standing Buddha fortified edifices from the Islamic period. The site is also testimony to the ruinous deterioration of the two standing Buddha statues by the former Taliban regime in March 2001. The funeral ceremony of six of the seven monument fragments of the destroyed statues, further deterioration of still existing mural paintings in the caves, looting and illicit excavation. Parts of the site are inaccessible due to the presence of antipersonnel mines.

The ancient city of Ashur, which dates back to the 3rd millennium BC, is located on the Tigris River in northern Mesopotamia. From the 14th to the 9th centuries BC, it was the capital of the Assyrian Empire, a city-state and trading platform of international importance. It also served as the religious capital of the Assyrians, associated to the god Ashur. The city was destroyed by the Babylonians, but revived during the Farthian period in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. When Ashur (Qal‘at Sherqat) was nominated before the recent conflict, a large dam project threatened the site, which would have been partially flooded. While the dam project has been suspended by the current administration, the Committee considered that its possible future construc- tion, as well as the present lack of adequate protection, justified the inscription of the site on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Walled City of Baku with the Shirvanshah’s Palace and Maiden Tower (Azerbaijan)

Built on a site inhabited since the Paleolithic period, the Walled City of Baku reveals evidence of Zoroastrian, Sasanian, Arabic, Persian, Shirvan, Ottoman and Russian presence in cultural continuity. The Inner City (Icheri Sheher) has preserved much of its 12th-century defensive walls. The 12th-century Maiden Tower (Giz Galasy) is built over earlier structures dating from the 7th to the 9th centuries BC, and the 15th-century Shirvanshah’s Palace is one of the pearls of Azerbaijan’s architecture. The site sustained significant damage during the earthquake of November 2000 and is increasingly affected by the pressure of urban development, threats to preservation policies, and by dubious restoration efforts. The Committee decided to inscribe the site on the Danger List due to the urgency of the situation and to ensure that concerned efforts by the State Party are made to halt ongoing demolition of historic buildings.

Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley (Afghanistan)

This site showcases the artistic and religious develop- ments, which – from the 1st to the 15th centuries – characterized ancient Baktiria, Iranian, Hellenistic, Roman and Sasanian influences into the Gandhara school of Buddhist art. The area contains numerous Buddhist monastic ensembles and sanctuaries, as well as fortified edifices from the Islamic period. The site is also testimony to the tragic destruction of the two standing Buddha statues by the former Taliban regime in March 2001. The funeral ceremony of six of the seven monument fragments of the destroyed statues, further deterioration of still existing mural paintings in the caves, looting and illicit excavation. Parts of the site are inaccessible due to the presence of antipersonnel mines.

Srebarna Nature Reserve (Bulgaria)

The Srebarna Nature Reserve is a freshwater lake adja- cent to the Danube and extending over 600 ha. It is the breeding ground of almost 100 species of birds, many of which are rare or endangered. Some 80 other bird species migrate and seek refuge there every winter. Among the most interesting bird species are the Dalmatian pelican, great egret, night heron, purple heron, glossy ibis and white spoonbill. The Committee decided to remove the site from the Danger List following efforts by Bulgaria to supply the reserve with water from the Danube, to stop damaging activities, as well as the adoption and implementation of a management plan.

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Natural and Cultural-Historical Region of Kotor (Serbia and Montenegro)

In the Middle Ages, this natural harbour on the Adriatic coast of Montenegro was an important artistic and com- mercial centre with its own famous schools of masonry and iconography. A large number of the monuments (includ- ing four Romanesque churches and the town walls) were seriously damaged by the 1979 earthquake. Noting that the most remarkable historic monuments and buildings have been restored and renovated using appropriate conservation techniques, the Committee decided to withdraw the site from the Danger List. Nevertheless it expressed concern over the threat posed by uncontrolled urbanization to the site. A round table for management planning will be organized.

List of World Heritage in Danger:

Sites Inscribed, Sites Withdrawn

Of the 754 properties currently inscribed on the World Heritage List, 35 are inscribed on the Danger List (17 natural and 18 cultural). These properties are deemed, by the Committee to be threatened by a variety of dangers arising from natural causes or human inter- vention, such as: armed conflict and war, earthquakes and other natural disasters, pollution, poaching or unplanned construction. They are thus entitled to par- ticular attention and emergency conservation action.

Thirty-five Properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger

- Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley
- Minaret and Archaeological Remains of Jam (Afghanistan)
- Butrint (Albania)
- Tipasa (Algeria)
- Walled City of Baku with the Shirvanshah’s Palace and Maiden Tower (Azerbaijan)
- Royal Palace of Aboumey (Benin)
- Angkor (Cambodia)
- Manovo-Gounda St Floris National Park (Central African Republic)
- Comori National Park (Côte d’Ivoire)
- Mounnt Nimba Nature Reserve (Côte d’Ivoire/Guinea)
- Vinaf National Park (DR Congo)
- Garamba National Park (DR Congo)
- Kahuzi-Biega National Park (DR Congo)
- Okapi Wildlife Reserve (DR Congo)
- Salonga National Park (DR Congo)
- Sangay National Park (Ecuador)
- Abu Mena (Egypt)
- Simien National Park (Ethiopia)
- Rio Plátano Biosphere Reserve (Honduras)
- Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (India)
- Group of Monuments at Hampi (India)
- Ashur (Qal‘at Sherqat) (Iraq)
- Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls (site proposed by Jordan)
- Trinbaktu (Mali)
- Kadhnum Valley (Nepal)
- Air and Tênérré Natural Reserves (Niger)
- Bahia Fort (Oman)
- Fort and Shahmar Gardens in Lahore (Pakistan)
- Chang Chan Archaeological Zone (People’s Republic of China)
- Rice Terraces of the Philippines Cordilleras (Philippines)
- Doiyaku National Bird Sanctuary (Sri Lanka)
- Ichkeul National Park (Tunisia)
- Rwenzori Mountains National Park (Uganda)
- Everglades National Park (United States of America)
- Historic Town of Zabid (Yemen)
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### What Are They Doing?

#### 1 October 2003

The 100-year-old Bamileke Royal Palace was confirmed. CONAE will provide space images, particularly useful in tropical areas. Two issues of the World Heritage Review (available in English, French and Spanish).

#### 15 to 17 December

Regional Seminar on Earthen Architecture Conservation, Muscat (Oman). Government of Oman and CRATerre. Information: m.raabe@unesco.org

#### 21 to 23 November


#### 28 to 29 November

World Natural Heritage: Development, Sustainability and Ethics, Forum UNESCO - University and Heritage, 8th International Seminar, University of La Laguna. La Laguna de Tenerife, Spain Information: m.richon@unesco.org

### Participants in ICOMOS’s Information Course for Palestinian Experts


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### World Heritage Review

September-October 2003

The Royal Dutch/Shell Group in August undertook not to explore for, or develop, oil and gas resources within any natural World Heritage sites. Shell is the first energy group to publicly make this commitment.

Fifteen of the world’s largest mining and metal-producing companies signed an undertaking on 20 August to recognize World Heritage sites as ‘no-go’ areas. The IUCN World Conservation Congress, which included a commitment to take all possible steps to ensure that operations are not incompatible with the outstanding universal values of World Heritage.

The 16th-century Monastery of the Virgin of Mercy, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, destroyed in 1993 during the Bosnian war, reached the final stage of reconstruction in August. As a crowd cheered a crane lowered the final stone slab into place, bringing the halves of the bridge’s arch together. The bridge, which has been nominated for the World Heritage List, was held open to the public in 2004.

In September heavy rains destroyed at least 180 mud buildings in 8 areas of the city of Timbuktu, Mali. The areas in which two mosques of the World Heritage site are located were affected by the damage. The WHC has called for a detailed appraisal report on the damage, which has affected the walls of most of the inhabited structures in the area.

An Information Course on the World Heritage Convention for Palestinian Experts took place at ICCROM in Rome, Italy (8-13 September) in order to familiarise participants with the workings of the WHC.

In July, the engagement of Argentina to support the World Heritage Convention through collaboration with the Comisión Nacional del Patrimonio Cultural Argentino (CONICET) was confirmed. CONICET will provide space technology expertise and participate in the management of the World Heritage nomination of the Gran Ruta Inca and training workshop. In September, the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) announced its commitment to support World Heritage Convention activities through providing radar expertise and cloud-free radar images, particularly useful in tropical areas.

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