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Shared Legacy, Common Responsibility



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Associated Workshops
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CULTURAL LANDSCAPES – THE CHALLENGES OF CONSERVATION

FERRARA

CONCLUSIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

Hosted by the Province of Ferrara and the City of Ferrara
Organized by the University of Ferrara and UNESCO's World Heritage Centre in
collaboration with ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN
With the support of the Nordic World Heritage Foundation (NWHF)

World Heritage 2002

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The meeting was attended by 51 participants from 19 countries representing governmental institutions, inter- and non-governmental organizations, including the Council of Europe, IUCN, ICOMOS, ICCROM, IFLA, IGU, as well as foundations (including the German Environmental Foundation, the Nordic World Heritage Foundation, the Aga Khan Trust and the World Monuments Fund), universities, training institutions (including the Conservation Study Institute, the IPOGEA Centre for Traditional Knowledge (Matera), and the International Centre for Mediterranean Cultural Landscapes (Province of Salerno), local authorities, World Heritage site managers and other partners.

1. Celebrating 10 years of the cultural landscape concept

The participants of the workshop celebrated cultural landscapes as a concept and a mechanism linking nature and culture in the World Heritage Convention. They acknowledged the milestone achievement of the World Heritage Committee in adopting the cultural landscape concept in 1992. This made the Convention the first international legal instrument to recognize the importance of the relationship between nature and culture and to protect cultural landscapes.

To date, 30 World Heritage cultural landscapes have been inscribed. Taking this experience into account and noting the conclusions and recommendations of previous regional and thematic expert meetings on cultural landscapes and the results of an in-depth evaluation of World Heritage cultural landscapes 1992-2002, the participants discussed the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the outstanding cultural landscape heritage of the world. They recognized the great variety of landscapes around the world which are representative of the combined works of nature and humankind, and which express a long and intimate relationship between people and their natural environment. The three basic cultural landscape categories adopted in 1992 have been tried and tested in many regions of the world and found to be an excellent tool for identification, management and protection. The 1993 Cultural Landscape Action Plan, which identified many of the main issues which are still being addressed, remains a useful document.

However, over the past ten years, a number of challenges have emerged:

- insufficient co-operation between countries;
- limited implementation of the Global Strategy for a balanced World Heritage List;
- regional imbalances: 21 of the inscribed sites are in Europe;
- lack of capacity to bring forward credible nominations of cultural landscapes;
- restricted resources and weak institutions for effective management;
- difficulties in sustaining traditional forms of land-use, which give rise to cultural landscapes, in circumstances of rapid socio-economic change and limited capacities to deal with tourism; and
- the need to strengthen linkages between the cultural landscape concept and other designation systems, notably IUCN Category V protected areas (protected landscapes/seascapes) and the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve network.

World Heritage 2002

Shared Legacy, Common Responsibility

2. Innovative tools in cultural landscape management and legal protection

As World Heritage cultural landscapes provide models of stewardship for landscapes as a whole, a particularly well informed and sensitive management is required. This management needs to take into account not only cultural and natural values, but also their interaction, and the presentation of this process to the public. Many forms of traditional resource management, often supported by customary law, have been recognized in cultural landscapes and found relevant for the management of other types of properties and other contexts.

Cultural landscapes need a sound legal framework. This is especially necessary for transboundary initiatives and as a basis for co-operation between local authorities and other interested parties.

The European Landscape Convention will raise governmental and public awareness of landscape issues, especially through the strong involvement of local populations and local authorities. This should assist the effective management of the cultural landscapes inscribed in Europe.

3. Transmitting the character, significance and values of cultural landscapes: cultural diversity and future generations

Many cultural landscapes continue to evolve: the challenge of management is to guide this process of change so that the essential qualities of the area survive.

Cultural landscapes provide people with a sense of identity: both social groups and individuals derive from them a sense of belonging to a place. They can provide classic examples of sustainable land-use and often create niches for important biodiversity. Furthermore, many cultural landscapes contain important reservoirs in genetic diversity within the crops and livestock used in traditional land-use systems. Collectively, these landscapes capture a range of cultural diversity, and each of them can provide a demonstration of interactions with the natural environment in a particular place. One of the great innovations of the cultural landscape concept is that it provides the opportunity for nominations from parts of the world which express their culture in ways other than through monumental heritage towards which the Convention had evolved during its first 20 years. This allows for the expression of the intangible and spiritual values. This means, that through cultural landscapes, a select number of World Heritage sites now exists whose validity is based on intangible values and traditional knowledge. The transmission of such knowledge, practices and skills is a major challenge for the next decade.

4. International collaboration, research, training and capacity building

Innovative approaches in international collaboration, including transboundary co-operation, long linear or serial nominations, and new regional and thematic concepts can provide the way forward. The difficulty that some State Parties experience in bringing forward credible cultural landscape nominations needs to be addressed, in particular through regional co-operation and international financial and technical support. This is a priority if the current regional imbalances are to be corrected.

World Heritage 2002

Shared Legacy, Common Responsibility

Training and capacity building are key elements for the effective management and monitoring of cultural landscapes. New approaches in territorial management training courses are strongly encouraged, such as those of ICCROM. Such training needs to be multidisciplinary, bringing together ecological, cultural, social, economic and other expertise in an integrated fashion. Other capacity building initiatives also need to be stimulated and supported, such as those offered by university and training programmes of local agencies in charge of cultural landscapes.

Research into the character of cultural landscapes often reveals new levels of understanding, for example about the importance of indigenous knowledge in managing natural resources. Continued encouragement of interdisciplinary approach of this kind is therefore essential.

Since cultural landscapes link culture and nature, it is essential that ICOMOS and IUCN as Advisory Bodies continue to co-operate in the cultural landscapes' evaluation, monitoring and related matters.

5. Cultural landscapes and regional sustainable development

Many cultural landscapes are outstandingly important for the practices of sustainable use of natural resources. Their inscription and good management can be used to demonstrate this more widely. Thus, cultural landscapes can contribute to regeneration and regional development far beyond their boundaries. At the same time they can provide opportunities for economic and social development within the area concerned and its immediate vicinity. Moreover, listed landscapes are not only key sites in themselves, but can also be linked with other protected areas in a regional approach to conservation and sustainable development. However, the survival of cultural landscapes requires not only the support for traditional sustainable practices, but also the adoption of new sustainable technologies.

6. Shared perspectives and new partnerships in landscape conservation

Cultural landscape management and conservation processes bring people together in caring for their collective identity and heritage, and provide a shared local vision within a global context. Local communities need therefore to be involved in every aspect of the identification, planning and management of the areas, as they are the most effective guardians of the landscape heritage. The outstanding landscapes are selected examples which could offer stewardship, models in effective management and excellence in conservation practices.

7. A vision for the next 10 years

The participants concluded that the vision for the next 10 years lies in:

- providing a framework for future nominations through thoroughly prepared thematic studies in areas identified as gaps, such as landscapes which are representative of the world's cultures, agricultural landscapes (e.g. a study of the staple food crops of the world), sacred mountains, and the relationship between water and civilizations;

World Heritage 2002

Shared Legacy, Common Responsibility

- encouraging new approaches in international co-operation under the Convention which support cultural landscapes (e.g. Alpine Arc, the Ruta Inca in the Andes, trade routes around the Indian Ocean, slave routes, pilgrimage itineraries, landscapes of reconciliation, transfer of landscape heritage from one region to another)
- strengthening co-operation between natural and cultural heritage institutions;
- enhancing partnerships in landscape conservation and management at all levels, overcoming the administrative divide between institutions dealing with natural and cultural (national and international) issues and supporting an integrated and holistic management approach;
- supporting social structures, traditional knowledge and indigenous practices which are vital for the survival of the cultural landscapes, and recognizing the crucial role of intangible and spiritual values;
- providing guidelines for national legislation for cultural landscapes, including transboundary areas and buffer-zones;
- re-assessing cultural and natural sites already on the World Heritage List, to ensure that cultural landscape potential is recognized through re-nomination if appropriate;
- extending the concept of cultural landscapes from its present rural focus to include other landscapes, including cityscapes, seascapes and industrial landscapes;
- demonstrating how the recognition of cultural landscapes can generate economic development and sustainable livelihoods within the site and beyond;
- using cultural landscape conservation to promote new approaches in international co-operation among nations and peoples;
- promoting the lessons being learnt from cultural landscapes in other international instruments;
- using the World Heritage processes for training and capacity building and promoting better communication and public awareness about cultural landscapes;
- developing a stronger system to ensure rapid intervention and mobilizing resources for cultural landscapes under threat;
- addressing as a priority for advice and assistance the specific challenges of agricultural change and tourism pressures within cultural landscapes; and
- continuous advocacy and promotion by all partners in the World Heritage system of the importance of cultural landscapes.

Finally, the meeting deeply appreciated the food products of the cultural landscapes and welcomed the international support for the "slow food movement" which originated in Italy.

It expressed its sincere thanks to the authorities of the Province and the City of Ferrara for hosting the meeting and the University of Ferrara for acknowledging the importance of the cultural landscape concept by establishing a new research and training institution, the "International Centre of Studies on Cultural Landscapes".