

World Heritage 2002

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Associated Workshops
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PARTNERSHIPS FOR WORLD HERITAGE CITIES: CULTURE AS A VECTOR FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

URBINO - PESARO

CONCLUSIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

*Hosted by the City of Urbino and the City of Pesaro
Organized by the Institute of Architecture of Venice (IUAV) and UNESCO's World Heritage Centre
With the support of the France-UNESCO Cooperation Agreement, ICOMOS, the International Federation of Housing and Planning (IFHP) and the Istituto nazionale di Urbanistica (INU)*

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The UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia (IUAV) organized a Workshop on Partnerships for World Heritage Cities: Culture as a Vector for Sustainable Urban Development, at the invitation of the City of Urbino and Pesaro, with the support from the Governments of Italy and France and in cooperation with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), International Federation of Housing and Planning (IFHP) and the Istituto nazionale di Urbanistica, Italy (INU).

About 200 historic centres illustrating the diversities of cultural achievements are inscribed on the World Heritage List. This figure is more than 300 sites inscribed, if one considers the monuments located in an urban context and towns included in cultural landscapes.

The historic cities are confronted with intense pressure caused by the demands of urban mobility, housing, commerce, public services and other demands linked to development. The need to obtain support of all actors, whether inhabitants, local authorities or the business sector, compounds the challenge of urban heritage conservation.

The representatives¹ of international, national and local authorities, and NGOs, professionals in urban planning, management and conservation as well as experts from the private sector who met in Urbino to debate the theme of Partnerships for World Heritage Cities – culture as a vector for sustainable urban development”, considered that much could be learnt from the exposé on the history of Urbino given by Prof. Leonardo Benevolo. He demonstrated that:

- the succession of projects, all respecting Urbino's history, have provided a base for an “ideal city” which justifies World Heritage listing: creation in the Middle Ages, embellished during the Renaissance, and with a strong university influence in the second half of the 20th century;
- at the end of the 15th century, the global effort by Federico de Montefeltro to confer upon Urbino a recognition that prefigured the notion of outstanding heritage. In fact, he based the project for the embellishment of his city upon an active diplomacy, the association of the best artists in Italy in the elaboration of his political project and a heritage activity respectful of the Medieval urban structure that he adapted and greatly magnified through many developments.

Following the examination of the projects presented during the two days and the ensuing debates, **the participants concluded** that urban heritage is a human and social cultural element that goes beyond the notion of "groups of buildings", as defined under the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. This reality is clearly demonstrated by the cities inscribed as World Heritage, but concerns all historic cities.

Presentations on cities² from all over the world have shown that the accumulation of cultures and traditions, recognized as such in their diversity, are the basis of heritage values in the areas and towns that these cultures have produced or reused. These values must be made clear from the outset and serve in defining urban development strategies, policies, programmes and actions.

¹ see Annex 1 for List of participants

² among others the 6 canal towns of the lower Yangtze, Baalbek, Barcelona, Bergen, Byblos, Georgetown, Huê, Istanbul, Luang Prabang, Mexico, Ouidah, Penang, Porto-Novo, Pondichéry, Sana'a, Tripoli, Tyr, Urbino, Venice, Zabid.

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Urban heritage practices must today adapt to the historic, economic and cultural context of each city and to the eventual difficulties caused by issues of past identity conflicts or more recent immigration.

The principals of authenticity, integrity and coherence constitute common references. Their application, to be measured in the context of local cultural values, validate actions for the protection and the social and economic development of these historic centres.

The participants identified three fundamental guidelines for the implementation of safeguarding and developing projects for historic cities and in the mobilization of partners:

1) Take account of the territorial dimension of historic centres

Historic centres are intrinsically linked to the urban, peri-urban and rural territories which surround them, from both the urban functional aspect and the cultural and historical values that comprise the genius of the site.

The acknowledgement of this territorial dimension is dependent on a better coordination between the policies guiding the protection of historic centres and territorial strategies. This coordination should permit an improvement in urban projects throughout the agglomeration in respect to these specific territorial values.

An ambitious definition of the role of historic centre within the territory would clarify its relations with other areas. Fringe areas too often separate the historic centre from the rest of the city, and are disfigured by equipment servicing the protected areas. They should be integrated into the heritage-based development project. Partnerships with public and private entities, whether they be international, regional or national, developing public infrastructure and determining land-use, was deemed to be essential to ensure that the public and private projects transforming the setting will not undermine its heritage value.

2) Elaborate an economic and social development strategy

Heirs of well established urban traditions, World Heritage historic centres should once again become emblematic places of “art de vivre” in the city.

A global strategy for safeguarding and development, based upon respect for heritage values and the strengthening of identity, to which the historic centre is a symbolic witness, will thus contribute to reinforcing social cohesion. This strategy aims at preventing its exclusive transformation into a business or tourist centre. To achieve this improvement, programmes for the residential community, small businesses, artisans and other activities must be encouraged within its centre. Specific actions to maintain or welcome populations from all social, ethnic or religious categories should also be promoted.

The outstanding cultural image of the historic centres and the specific potentials emanating from their history can be used in developing economic strategies for the city, particularly targeted at industry and up-and-coming activities such as new technologies and industries connected to culture and knowledge.

This image must be strengthened by the exemplary quality of architectural and urban creations, particularly concerning public spaces and construction projects in a protected

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periphery. Strengthening of partnerships with the concerned national and municipal authorities, non-governmental organizations, community leaders, as well as the private sector in defining an integrated socio-economic urban development strategy was therefore stressed to be of paramount importance.

3) Strengthen the institutions and political framework

Protection and economic and social development projects should be based upon a long-term political vision, which is clear, coherent, and democratically approved.

The legal and prescribed responsibility of the State Party to the Convention, cannot be lessened or totally delegated and, as a last resort engages its capacity as protector. In this framework, the involvement of the legitimate local authorities is an essential element for success. Sometimes involved in the elaboration of the protection policy, and its approval, they should be responsible for the coordinated management of conservation and development interventions.

The inclusion of heritage issues in national law and their declination in the explicative documents as well as in the implementation of protection laws and strategy for economic and social development, are indispensable for the establishment of efficient partnerships.

The democratic process should be supported by major local associations. Private landowners, inhabitants and economic actors of protected areas participating in conservation and development policies of general interest, should be supported by public funding.

Participants insisted on the modalities required to create truly profitable partnerships for the inhabitants, the visitors and the actors involved in the protection of historic centres and in particular those inscribed on the World Heritage List.

At the local level, all efforts must be made to associate the network of actors able to mobilise support within the territory to the benefit of the global strategy for safeguarding and development. Particular attention will be given to local peoples' associations and to modalities to bring together all persons interested in the project.

At the global level, the urban historic centres need strengthened cooperation among organizations, funding agencies and partnership networks involved in the global strategy for the development of cities and poverty alleviation, so as to coordinate the strategies for safeguarding and social, economic and environmental development.

Transparency in partnerships and the rapid implementation of benefits for inhabitants are essential elements for the credibility of these partnerships and, for the local authorities.

Experience has shown the need for a strengthened mobilisation of partnerships:

- city-to-city to benefit from the exchange of experiences and technical assistance;
- with universities, to systemise inventorying and support research on urban heritage and undertakings;

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- with schools and open training institutions, privileged places of transmission and elaboration of cultural and heritage values;
- professional circles, through training courses to encourage the integration of traditional know-how with modern techniques;
- with proprietors, public and private investors.

The responses to problems posed by the safeguarding and development of urban historic centres has above all been perceived as “political”: based on democratic expression and public will. Exchanges have convinced the participants of the need for the support and partnerships of international organizations, UNESCO and its World Heritage Centre, to give their full legitimacy to the actions and discussions concerning these issues. The participants recognized the increasingly important role played by the World Heritage Convention to promote the politics of safeguarding and development of historic cities.

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