



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



World Heritage Convention

Human Evolution

Questionnaire

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SPAIN



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PREHISTORY AND THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION: PREHISTORIC HUMAN EVOLUTION SITES

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INTRODUCTION

Towards a World Heritage Action Plan for Human Evolution related Prehistoric Sites

Following the meeting *Prehistory and the World Heritage Convention: Towards an Action Plan and Thematic Studies*, held at UNESCO Headquarters on November 3 to 4, 2008, several points of discussion were identified in order to propose an Action Plan to the World Heritage Committee for its 33rd session in June 2009, Sevilla, Spain.

Prehistory is an immense field in terms of scientific approach and heritage conservation, which has been identified as being underrepresented on the World Heritage List. It ranges from sites where the heritage is hardly visible by sight (e.g. hominid fossil-bearing sites) to monumental sites (e.g. many prehistoric rock art or megalithic sites).

Defining categories among 'Prehistoric Sites' (e.g. Settlements, Human Evolution, Rock Art) is not an easy task in relation to the *World Heritage Convention*¹. In all cases it constitutes a pragmatic approach, grounded on the acknowledged scientific value of the sites and the Outstanding Universal Value selection criteria. Defining such categories is intended to:

- foresee how conservation may help research in the field of Prehistory;
- develop thematic studies and prioritize them in order to help the World Heritage Committee to give Prehistory its actual place in the World Heritage List and in the Tentative List;
- foster fruitful, efficient and transversal collaborations between the Advisory Bodies (ICOMOS, ICCROM, IUCN);
- assist the World Heritage Centre in encouraging transversal approaches such as serial transnational nominations or good practice studies in the development of several sites (dissemination of knowledge, international training networks, analysis of the mutual impact of initiatives developed on several sites, etc.).

¹ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>

Several issues and points for discussion regarding Human Evolution were identified during the preliminary meeting on Prehistory held at UNESCO in November 2008. One of the objectives of the *Human Evolution and the World Heritage Convention* meeting in Burgos in March 2009 is to discuss, validate and complement these points in order to progress towards the proposal of an Action Plan.

Within the context of this objective, three core considerations will be requested of participants:

1. The most pragmatic notions to be considered in defining a prehistoric Human Evolution site. Which evaluation features are relevant?
2. The most important narrative aspects of the sites in identifying and prioritizing possible thematic studies to be proposed to the Committee.
3. Good practice studies to be carried out on an international scale to help the development of Human Evolution sites (individual sites or serial nominations benefiting the whole community, and transversal initiatives such as documentation or training networks).

The following properties on the World Heritage List and Tentative List have been identified as Human Evolution related Prehistoric Sites:

WORLD HERITAGE LIST

- Ethiopia - Lower Valley of the Awash
- Ethiopia - Lower Valley of the Omo
- South Africa - Fossil Hominid Sites of Sterkfontein, Swartkrans, Kromdraai, and Environs
- China - Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian
- Indonesia - Sangiran Early Man Site
- Spain - Archaeological Site of Atapuerca

TENTATIVE LIST

- Chad - Site à Hominidés anciens du Djourab
- Ethiopia - Konso-Gardula (paleo-anthropological site)
- Kenya - Great Rift Valley Ecosystem
- South Africa - Pleistocene occupation sites of Klasies River, Border Cave, Wonderwerk Cave and comparable sites relating to the emergence of modern humans
- China - Yangtze Gorges Scenic Spot
- Philippines - The Tabon Cave Complex and all of Lipuun
- Uzbekistan – Boysun
- Georgia - Dmanisi Hominid Archaeological Site
- Italy – The Murge of Altamura

The World Heritage Convention is the most comprehensive and widely ratified among UNESCO treaties on the protection of cultural and natural heritage. *The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* aim to facilitate the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*, and are periodically revised to reflect the decisions of the World Heritage Committee. The most recent version of the *Operational Guidelines* (2008) is available on the UNESCO World Heritage Centre website:

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/>

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DEFINITION AND EVALUATION FEATURES

Taking into account:

- *the main concerns of the scientific community regarding Human Evolution and the related disciplinary fields;*
- *the selection criteria of the World Heritage Convention;*

the meeting is not only intended to define Human Evolution related sites and their evaluation features, but also to foresee the development of the mandatory synergy between Science and Conservation. Scientific issues most often ground the evaluation of the authenticity of the concerned properties, and integrity concerns are of the utmost importance for their current and future scientific approach.

2.1. How to define Human Evolution related sites?	
2.1.1. How far should natural and cultural processes regarding human lineage be considered as part of the record of life and of the earth's history?	
2.1.2. Which processes and related adaptations at the global level need to be considered in Human Evolution?	
a. Biological evolution	
b. Cultural changes	
c. Dispersals and migrations	
d. Cognitive changes	
2.1.3. Is a clear interface with geologically and/or palaeontologically	

<p>meaningful properties most often specific to Human Evolution sites?</p>	
<p>2.2. Which features should be pertained for evaluation?</p>	
<p>2.2.1. Scientific recognition (e.g. publications in international journals)</p>	
<p>2.2.2. Ongoing or potential scientific and cultural interpretation of the site</p>	
<p>2.2.3. To what extent does eligibility depend on the possibility to highlight discoveries and disseminate knowledge than on the spectacular, aesthetical or monumental character of the remains</p>	
<p>2.2.4. How far would interdisciplinarity be considered in producing the nomination file and in the evaluation?</p>	
<p>2.2.5. What is the importance of comprehensive research, including the interpretation of the palaeo-ecological context?</p>	
<p>2.2.6. Which mandatory facilities should exist for the interpretation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the site?</p>	
<p>2.2.7. To what extent should the project carried out on the property show a clear concern regarding the involvement of local communities as actors in the conservation and development of the site?</p>	

NARRATIVES AND THEMATIC STUDIES

Grounded on:

- *important scientific questions presently faced by the scientific community;*
- *the need for a balanced representation of Human Evolution related sites on the World Heritage List and on the Tentative List (from the thematic, geographical and chronological points of view);*

such narratives and thematic studies are intended to help to identify relevant geographical zones (national, regional and international) or chronological periods presenting a clear need for integrated comparative/synergic actions under the umbrella of the World Heritage Centre (e.g. South Western Europe oldest human settlements; Southeast Asian archipelagos colonization and endemic processes; Levantine corridor related early human dispersals; colonization of the American continent, etc.).

3.1. What are the central narratives concerning Human Evolution?	
3.1.1. Origins and diversity of genus <i>Homo</i> (please provide examples in the following categories):	
a. Biology and physical anthropology	
b. Genetics	
c. Social organization	
3.1.2. Fossil traces of major cognitive steps (e.g. articulated speech, symbolic behaviours), please specify	
3.1.3. Fossil traces of technological innovations (e.g. domestication of fire), please specify	
3.1.4. Colonization of new environments, please specify	
3.1.5. Main dispersals in human history, please specify	

3.2. What are the priorities to consider in the thematic studies for the purpose of comparative analysis?	
3.2.1. The oldest ancestors of human lineage	
3.2.2. The colonization of new ecological niches	
3.2.3. With reference to 3.2.2., should the Americas, Asia and the Pacific be given priority?	
3.2.4. Adaptive capacities of hominids to severe environmental and climate changes:	
a. 2.6 million years	
b. 1.8 million years	
c. 0.8 million years	
d. 0.13 million years	
e. LGM and following global change)	

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GOOD PRACTICE STUDIES AND AN ACTION PLAN

Needing a more visible representation on both the World Heritage List and the Tentative List, Prehistoric Sites as a whole, and especially Human Evolution related sites, must set up transversal good practice instruments. Case studies carried out on specific sites or more general networking initiatives dealing with dissemination of knowledge, training and scientific/conservation concerns imply an active collaboration of the scientific community.

4.1. Towards an Action Plan: priorities for good practice case studies and related sites inscribed on the World Heritage List or Tentative List		
4.1.1. Scientific management of Human Evolution heritage, please specify site(s)		
4.1.2. Fostering scientific visibility and dissemination of knowledge, please specify site(s)		
4.1.3. Developing interdisciplinarity, international teams, synergy with Advisory Bodies and concern towards the role of local communities, please specify site(s)		
4.1.4. Applying principles in the monitoring process in both cave complexes and open air sites, please specify site(s)?		
4.2. What are further feasible developments to foster the World Heritage Centre's endeavour towards conservation for the purpose of advancing research?		
4.2.1. Publication through World Heritage Centre media (Papers Series, website) of up-to-date information about discoveries, and thematic and good practice studies		
4.2.2. To make best use of existing international networks to promote transnational activities, by developing:		
a. Intensive training programmes in conservation and scientific interpretation	Undergraduate level	
	Graduate level	
b. Field schools		

<p>c. Training in museography and dissemination of knowledge</p>	
<p>d. Circulating exhibitions</p>	
<p>4.2.3. To create a networking structure (e.g. UNESCO chair) in the multi-faceted field of Human Evolution, by developing:</p>	
<p>a. Networking activities mentioned in 4.2.2.</p>	
<p>b. Internationally-acknowledged teaching modules about site conservation and interpretation</p>	
<p>c. The documentation of scientific and conservation states of Human Evolution related sites (inscribed or not on the World Heritage List and Tentative List)</p>	