Ensuring that World Heritage sites sustain their outstanding universal value is an increasingly challenging mission in today’s complex world, where sites are vulnerable to the effects of uncontrolled urban development, unsustainable tourism practices, neglect, natural calamities, pollution, political instability and conflict. World Heritage preservation costs money and takes collective effort, and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre welcomes assistance in many different forms to carry out this important work. Since 2002, the World Heritage Partnerships for Conservation Initiative (PACT) has helped raise awareness, mobilize funds and implement activities through creative and innovative partnerships with a diverse range of private sector companies.

The challenge

Promoting awareness and access to information about World Heritage is the first step towards getting people involved in its conservation. Harnessing the media to disseminate the message about World Heritage values is key to ensuring greater visibility, leading to widespread involvement.

The response

Tokyo Broadcasting System (TBS) has partnered with the World Heritage Centre to communicate important messages about World Heritage to a large public audience, using television, radio, and other media. TBS strives to support the current generation, and the world they will inherit, in three main areas – the environment, education and social responsibility. The partnership between TBS and the World Heritage Centre is the perfect illustration of the reciprocity of partnerships – by supporting TBS’ coverage and access to information and helping them produce top-class materials, the World Heritage Centre in return enjoys the resulting media exposure.

Actions on the ground

Since 1996, a partnership between Tokyo Broadcasting System and the World Heritage Centre has been in effect for the production of documentaries on World Heritage that are broadcast throughout Japan. Originally concluded between the World Heritage Centre and the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan, this has been a direct partnership between TBS and the Centre since 2006. TBS started its
documentary program "The World Heritage" at a time before the World Heritage Convention was well known among Japanese public. But the weekly 30-minute program, with its striking images, compelling narration and inspiring music, rapidly generated interest among the Japanese people. The program contributed to increase World Heritage-related tourism, publications as well as television programs, which helped bring about broader understanding and convey the true value of the Convention to a wide public. TBS has completed the broadcast of 800 episodes as of September 2012 and is working towards establishing a “Digital Video Heritage Archive” that will be accessible to generations for years to come.

About TBS
Tokyo Broadcasting System Holdings, Inc. heads the TBS Group, which provides television, radio, satellite broadcasting, and other entertainment services throughout Japan. Established in 1951, TBS is one of the leading private broadcasters in Japan, and is known for its drama, news, and documentary programs. With its 27 television and 33 radio affiliates, TBS’ media products are enjoyed in every corner of the nation. “The World Heritage” documentary series has been one of its flagship programmes for the past 17 years.

About the World Heritage Centre
Established in 1992, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre oversees the day-to-day management of the World Heritage Convention. The Centre provides advice to States Parties in the preparation of site nominations and Tentative Lists, organizes international assistance from the World Heritage Fund upon request, and coordinates both the reporting on the condition of the sites and the emergency action undertaken when a site is threatened. As the focal point within UNESCO for all matters related to World Heritage, the Centre keeps the public informed of World Heritage issues – especially young people, who are the future guardians of World Heritage. The World Heritage Centre seeks to establish successful partnerships for World Heritage conservation with a diverse range of stakeholders, governments, civil society and the private sector.

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“Alone, we can make a difference – together, we can change the world”
Irina Bokova
Director-General of UNESCO