**The Road from Rutgers: Cultural Landscapes in the 21st Century**

**Initial Reflections and Recommendations from an international conference at Rutgers University**

<http://chaps.rutgers.edu/events/annual-chaps-conference.html>

On the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention and the 20th anniversary of recognition of cultural landscapes by the World Heritage Committee, and on the occasion of the international conference, “Cultural Landscapes: Preservation Challenges in the 21st century,” 330 participants from 30 countries (6 continents) met at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey from 12 -14 October 2012 to examine concepts, implementation and management of cultural and historic urban landscapes; reflect on the accomplishments and challenges; and recommend actions for the next decade.

**Recognizing:**

The heritage values of cultural landscapes and historic urban landscapes result from a long and complex relationship between people and their environment and are shaped and sustained by the stewardship of associated local and indigenous and communities whose knowledge systems, institutions, and perspectives can inform future adaptation, sustainability, and resilience.

Over the last 20 years, the cultural landscape concept has proven to be adaptable and useful in a wide variety of settings, scales, and contexts around the world, providing shared language for a diversity of values resulting from the interaction of culture and nature and represented through tangible and intangible heritage. The flexibility of this concept and associated methods and their continued evolution have been inherent strengths, creating an openness to ancient and new ideas and interpretations.

The inclusion of cultural landscapes under the World Heritage Convention in 1992 and other international, national, and local instruments and policies have shaped a concept of heritage which has become increasingly dynamic, inclusive and reliant on local and indigenous leadership, governance, and traditional knowledge systems and institutions, and integrated with other policies and programs.

The 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, based on a landscape approach, advances holistic, comprehensive strategies that integrate heritage conservation within a larger framework of overall sustainable development. This broad territorial view of heritage respects the historic layering of cultural and natural systems, and considers cultural diversity, creativity, and community vitality as key assets for human, social and economic development.

The serious challenges faced by cultural landscapes and historic urban landscapes around the world and that to address these challenges requires broad commitment and action that can benefit from learning from collective experience and research, sharing knowledge across communities and disciplines, and developing innovative responses.

### Toward a vision for the next decade:

Further develop the concept, language, and tools for the “cultural landscape approach” as a holistic and integrated way of understanding and engaging with place; using heritage to advance a community vision that builds governance capacity, respects human rights and traditional knowledge systems and institutions; guides sustainable development; and strengthens food security and climate change resiliency.

Advance practice and share experiences for integrating nature and culture; conserving biological and cultural diversity; sustaining livelihoods and traditional processes, strengthening governance approaches, and demonstrating forms of sustainable development. Develop guidance on more effective partnerships to achieve improved vertical integration from local to national and international level for implementation of policies and instruments such as the World Heritage Convention, and improved horizontal integration across organizations and across related conventions, policies and programs.

Increase capacity-building and research while engaging the next generation by strengthening a network of universities and other organizations including the World Heritage Centre, ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN and others. Develop a research agenda and case studies of good practice focusing on topics such as role of cultural landscapes in sustainable development, legal frameworks, economic impact of heritage conservation, landscape-scale conservation, ecosystem and cultural services, and resilience to disasters and climate change. Disseminate research findings and technical advice.

Enhance understanding and safeguarding of cultural and historic urban landscapes at local, national, and international levels and support initiatives at all levels that strengthen education and awareness.