

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,  
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE  
WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

BUREAU OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Twenty-second session  
UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, Room X (Fontenoy)

22 - 27 June 1998

**Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda: Report of the Secretary on the activities undertaken by the Secretariat since the twenty-first session of the Committee**

**SUMMARY**

This document presents an overview of activities carried out by the World Heritage Centre between December 1997 and June 1998 according to the following subject headings:

1. Introduction
2. New States Parties to the *World Heritage Convention*
3. Global Strategy
4. The World Heritage List
5. Monitoring and reporting of the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List
6. International Assistance
7. Follow-up to the Financial Audit of the World Heritage Fund for 1997 and the Management Review of the World Heritage Centre
8. Co-operation with the Advisory Bodies, other convention secretariats and organizations
9. World Heritage under threat and World Heritage in Danger
10. World Heritage Documentation, Information and Education

Further details may be found in the relevant working documents and information documents presented to the twenty-second session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee.

## 1. Introduction

This document provides a summary of the main activities carried out by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre since the twenty-first session of the World Heritage Committee in December 1997. This summary report will be supplemented by an oral report to be presented to the Bureau, and by the other working and information documents in the series WHC-98/CONF.201.

## 2. New States Parties

Since the twenty-first session of the World Heritage Committee in December 1997, Togo has ratified the *Convention* and become the 153<sup>rd</sup> State Party.

## 3. Global Strategy

### (i) Tentative lists

Of the 153 States Parties, 89 have submitted Tentative Lists in the format requested by the Committee. Further progress needs to be made by the States Parties in the preparation of Tentative lists.

### (ii) Global Strategy

At the request of the twentieth session of the World Heritage Committee in December 1996 a **World Heritage Global Strategy Natural and Cultural Heritage Expert Meeting** was held in **Amsterdam** from 25 to 29 March 1998. The meeting was hosted by the Government of the Netherlands and attended by 47 experts from around the world, the three Advisory Bodies and several staff of the World Heritage Centre and Culture Sector of UNESCO.

The Committee had asked the expert group to examine three issues: (a) the application of the "conditions of integrity" versus the "test of authenticity"; (b) the question of a unified or a harmonized set of criteria, and (c) the notion of outstanding universal value and its application in different regional and cultural contexts. The report of the meeting is provided as Information Document WHC-98/CONF.201/INF.9.

The Expert Meeting recommended that the criteria for natural and cultural properties be unified, that the conditions of integrity (to include the notion of authenticity, as appropriate) be related directly to each of the criteria and that section I, C and D of the Operational Guidelines be revised.

On the subject of "outstanding universal value", the Expert Meeting endorsed the Global Strategy's regional and thematic approach to ensuring a more representative and balanced World Heritage List. The Expert Meeting called for an anthropological approach to the definition of cultural heritage and people's relationship with the environment, the

identification of sub-themes and for the increased availability of information about the Global Strategy.

The Expert Meeting also addressed the issue of the credibility of the *World Heritage Convention* and the World Heritage List. A series of specific recommendations were prepared with the aim of indicating that inscription of a property on the World Heritage List is, and must be seen to be, part of a process, not an isolated event, preceded and followed by a long-term commitment to its conservation.

Two additional expert meetings were held in the context of the Global Strategy: one on the cultural heritage of the Caribbean and one on cultural landscapes in the Andean region.

A **“Workshop on the Cultural Heritage of the Caribbean and the World Heritage Convention”** was held in April 1998 in Martinique with the participation of experts from Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, France (including Guadeloupe and Martinique), Haiti, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis. The workshop examined themes that are of particular interest to the region, such as Arawak and Caribe heritage, colonial and vernacular architecture, fortifications, industrial heritage, cultural landscapes etc. The experts concluded that in the Caribbean a regional and thematic approach would be most appropriate to further explore these specific themes, as had been done already on the initiative of Colombia for the Fortifications of the Caribbean.

An expert meeting on **“Cultural Landscapes in the Andean Region”** took place in Arequipa (Peru) from 17 to 23 May 1998 with participants from Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, representatives from ICOMOS, IUCN and UNESCO. In their case studies, the cultural and natural heritage experts revealed the rich diversity of the Andean mountain range, produced by a North-South and East-West variety of climatic zones. The distinct cultural landscapes evolved on the basis of both the biological diversity (which includes the origins of the world’s crops such as corn and potatoes) and human creativity which is expressed in tangible products such as terraced agricultural systems with irrigation channels and intangible associations to the landscape, including sacred places, rituals and beliefs. The experts undertook a field visit to the Colca Valley, one of the steepest valleys on earth. A detailed report will be presented to the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee.

The collaboration between the **International Union for Geological Sciences (IUGS)** and the World Heritage Centre was enhanced through the “European geosites” project which aims at identifying geological and fossil sites for potential inclusion in the World Heritage List. A special World Heritage workshop was held at the IUGS conference at Sofia (Bulgaria) in June 1998.

A study on potential natural **World Heritage sites in the European Region** carried out by IUCN’s World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Europe has been finalized following a workshop on Ruegen Island (Germany) in November 1997. This

study may assist States Parties in identifying sites in Europe for potential inclusion on the World Heritage List.

The international symposium on “Maintaining and Sustaining Cultural Landscapes” was held in Wörlitz, Germany from 20 to 23 March 1998. More than 100 participants including the representatives of indigenous peoples, governmental bodies, NGOs, funding agencies and UNESCO. The symposium provided an analysis of the state of conservation of cultural landscapes in various regions of Eurasia. The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange experiences and explore possibilities for co-operation between governmental and non-governmental organizations. Landscape protection instruments were reviewed and their practical implementation for the sustainable development of cultural landscapes assessed. The *World Heritage Convention* was recognized as a successful international legal instrument in this regard.

Steps have been taken to overcome the imbalance caused by the low number of **natural areas** nominated and inscribed on the World Heritage List from States Parties in **South-east Asia**. In 1998 the deferred nomination (1993) of St. Paul’s sub-terranean National Park (Philippines) is expected to be resubmitted. The nomination of Lorentz National Park of Indonesia is ready though its submission may be delayed until 1999 due to recent changes in the Government. Malaysia, which ratified the *World Heritage Convention* in 1988, is convening a national workshop on the Convention, including field visits to potential sites, from 22 to 29 July 1998. Nominations of at least one, and as many as three natural sites of Malaysia are expected to be submitted in 1999. Thailand is also in the process of revising the deferred nomination of the Khao Yai National Park to submit a larger area which may extend up to the Cambodian border. Vietnam is exploring the feasibility for nominating the Phong Nha system of caverns in the Quang Binh Province.

In the **Pacific**, the World Heritage Centre has increased its co-operation with New Zealand and Australia, and Regional Organizations such as SPREP (South Pacific Regional Environment Programme) located in Apia, Samoa, to increase the World Heritage presence in the Pacific. Multi-lateral co-operative endeavours which aim to increase the number of State Parties in the Pacific from the current level of 3 (Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) to cover all 14 Pacific Island Member States during the next 2-3 years are currently underway. These endeavours would also generate new nominations of properties from Pacific Island States Parties to the Convention and thereby contribute to remedying regional imbalances in the representation of sites in the World Heritage List. This work is being conducted in conformity with the initiative of the 29<sup>th</sup> General Conference of UNESCO called “Focus on the Pacific”.

#### **4. The World Heritage List**

The Bureau will be asked to examine forty-one nominations at its current session. Detailed information can be found in the Working Document WHC-98/CONF.201/5B. Significant progress was made in the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* in **Central and Eastern Europe**. An increasing number of nominations for the World

Heritage List from this sub-region can be noted: the Bureau will examine nominations from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic and Ukraine. The World Heritage Centre is also advising Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Lithuania/Russian Federation, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Ukraine and other States Parties in the preparation and submission of nominations.

## **5. Monitoring and reporting of the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List**

In **Africa**, the World Heritage Centre organized a mission to Ethiopia and Lalibela from 5 to 12 February 1998. Detailed information can be found in the Working Document WHC-98/CONF.201/3B.

In the **Arab States**, the World Heritage Centre sent a monitoring mission to the Ancient City of Damascus (Syria) in February 1998 and another to Byblos (Lebanon) in April 1998. The Centre is planning to send another monitoring mission to Sana'a (Yemen) in June 1998. The findings of these missions are indicated in the Working Document WHC-98/CONF.201/3B.

Following the successful programme of monitoring cultural World Heritage properties in **Latin America and the Caribbean** (1991-1994), activities in the region are focusing again on the state of conservation. In this context, a workshop was held in Uruguay in March 1998 with the objective to develop indicators for measuring the state of conservation of historical cities. Furthermore, a national meeting was held in May 1998 in Cusco, Peru, for the Directors of cultural and natural heritage as well as the site managers of all Peruvian World Heritage sites. This proved to be an important step in initiating the process of the periodic reporting by the State Party. Similar national and regional meetings will be further promoted.

In **Europe**, a close collaboration is being developed with the States Parties and the implementation of international assistance under the World Heritage Fund regarding the state of conservation of World Heritage properties. A monitoring mission to the mixed site of Ohrid (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) is under preparation and continued attention is given to the site of Butrinti (Albania).

Reactive monitoring missions were sent to **Tchoga Zanbil (Iran)**, **Kandy (Sri Lanka)**, **Itchan Kala** and **Historic Centre of Bhukhara (Uzbekistan)**, and are being arranged for one of the **Baroque Churches of the Philippines** and **Hampi (India)**. A synthesis report of the state of conservation of cultural **World Heritage sites in Asia** will be presented to the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee.

The World Heritage Centre, in co-operation with the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO and other partners, is planning to launch a **systematic monitoring** exercise for the World Heritage sites of Mt. Taishan, Mt. Huangshan, Wulingyuan Scenic Area, Huanglong Scenic Area and Jiuzhaigou, China during August-

September 1998. The completion of this monitoring exercise will make available state of conservation reports, obtained during 1995-98, for all World Heritage natural and mixed sites for South and Southeast Asia. Together with regular information obtained concerning the Australian and New Zealand sites, the Centre and its partners, namely IUCN, ICOMOS and WCMC, now has information to compile a comprehensive volume of the "State of Conservation of World Natural and Mixed Heritage of Asia". The feasibility of publishing of such a volume for the year 2000 is currently under study.

## **6. International Assistance**

### **(i) Preparatory Assistance**

In **Africa**, preparatory assistance was provided for the nomination of Chongoni rock art site in Malawi.

In the **Arab States**, three Preparatory Assistance requests have been approved. The Syrian Arab Republic is preparing new nominations (US\$15,000), and also to prepare a technical co-operation for site management in Palmyra (US\$15,000). Egypt organized a seminar to establish a strategy for the revitalization of Islamic Cairo (US\$14,900).

In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, an additional preparatory assistance (US\$1,267) was provided to Guyana for the preparation of their tentative list and one natural nomination.

In **Europe**, preparatory assistance (US\$15,000) was provided to organize a joint meeting of Russian and Lithuanian experts in order to determine possible World Heritage value of the Curonian Spit which may be nominated as a transfrontier site by the States Parties concerned. Support was also provided for the nominations in Armenia (US\$6,465) and Azerbaijan (US\$15,000). The preparatory assistance approved for the City of Bardejov, Slovakia is in implementation.

In the **Asia-Pacific Region**, support is provided to the following activities: Updating the tentative list and nomination of the Indus Valley in Pakistan (US\$11,000) and preparing the nomination of the Historic Centre of Hoi An in Vietnam (US\$15,000).

### **(ii) Technical Co-operation**

In **Africa**, equipment support (US\$50,000) was provided for the management of "W" National Park, Niger in co-operation with UNESCO's Equipment Division.

In the **Arab States**, three technical co-operation requests have been approved for Yemen: the Preservation of Al-Maidan steam bath in Sana'a (US\$19,000), the Supplement for the handicraft centre in Shibam (US\$20,000) and the Construction of the furnace for making mud bricks in Zabid (US\$19,000).

In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, support (US\$9,000) was provided to Dominica's first natural site Morne Trois Pitons National Park for the revision of its management plan. In addition, Dominica is preparing a regional conference on World Heritage on the occasion of the inscription of this site.

In **Europe**, Poland is receiving a technical assistance (US\$20,000) for the International Expert Meeting on the Planning and Protection of the Surroundings of Auschwitz Concentration Camp.

In the **Asia-Pacific Region**, support has been provided to Indonesia (US\$20,000) to hold a training course on the preservation of rock art. Nepal is implementing a plan of corrective measures for safeguarding the seven monument zones of the Kathmandu Valley with support (US\$35,000) from the World Heritage Fund. Nepal is also conducting a structural survey of the 55 Windows Palace within the Bhaktapur monument zone (US\$19,800). A thorough study and documentation of traditional architecture, construction and conservation techniques is being conducted at Bhaktapur monument zone (US\$28,000). Vietnam is revising its urban planning regulations of the Complex of Hué (US\$35,000), with the co-operation of the Communauté urbaine de Lille, France.

### **(iii) Training Assistance**

In **Africa**, a meeting was held from 23 to 25 March 1997 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire to launch AFRICA 2009, a new initiative aimed at improving conditions for the conservation of immovable cultural heritage in Sub-Saharan African through its better integration into a sustainable development process. The elaboration of this new programme was a joint effort of ICCROM, the World Heritage Centre, and CRATERRE-EAG. The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Culture of Côte d'Ivoire with assistance from the French Mission for Cooperation and Cultural Action in Abidjan. The meeting was attended by cultural heritage professionals from nine African countries from across the continent, as well as representatives from a number of national and international institutions and development agencies. The Ministry of Environment of Norway, thanks to the Nordic World Heritage Office, has pledged 250,000 Norwegian Kroner (approx. US\$33,250) towards the programme in 1998.

A regional training workshop for World Heritage site managers from French speaking African countries was organized in Sangmelima, Cameroon from 23 to 26 May 1998. The workshop titled "Participative Management and Sustainable Development" of natural heritage sites was sponsored by the World Heritage Fund (US\$29,900) as approved by the Committee at its 21<sup>st</sup> session. The workshop included sixty participants consisting of country experts, NGO's, project and administrative staff, local and traditional authorities from Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Democratic Republic of Congo and Senegal. The workshop was supplemented by a one day of field excursion to Dja Wildlife Reserve.

A major outcome of this meeting was the need to develop and undertake a rapid assessment of bio-diversity in order to determine the state of conservation of natural sites and to train site managers. As a follow-up to the Dja meeting recommendations, the World Heritage Centre is in contact with the Government of the Netherlands with a view to financing a small pilot project in Dja on the rapid assessment of bio-diversity. Information resulting from this kind of activity may be useful in better determining whether or not a site should be placed in the List of World Heritage in Danger.

In the **Arab States**, a request for the training of national conservators and restorers on mural paintings in Tyre and Byblos, Lebanon was approved in 1998 (US\$20,000).

ICCROM is organizing three regional training programmes: “Regional training programme for conservation of historic and archaeological mosaics in the Mediterranean region” (US\$20,000), “ Training seminar for the conservation of archaeological sites in the Near and Middle East region” (US\$15,000) and “Seminar for NAMEC-ITUC urban conservation, Morocco ”(US\$15,000).

Training assistance was provided to two regional training courses for **Latin American and the Caribbean** site managers: the Protected Area Course at CATIE (Centro Agronomico Tropical de Investigacion y Ensenanza), Costa Rica, and the regional course at Fort Collins, USA.

In **Europe**, Armenia is receiving training assistance (US\$20,000) for the mobile training in anti-seismic technology for the preservation of monuments and sites.

In the **Asia-Pacific Region**, India received the support (US\$10,000) for organizing a training activity for the enhanced management and sustainable tourism development for Elephanta Caves. Laos is receiving support (US\$25,000) for producing audio-visual training materials in the Historic Town of Luang Prabang. This activity will be a part of the continued decentralized co-operation activity between the local authorities of Luang Prabang and Chinon supported by the Governments of France and the Laos, the European Union, and the World Heritage Centre, for safeguarding the urban historic fabric of this World Heritage Site. The Philippines is receiving support (US\$22,000) for conducting a training activity for enhanced management of two of the four Baroque Churches the Philippines site. Iran received support (US\$15,000) for conducting a sub-regional stone conservation training activity at Persepolis.

The World Heritage Fund also supported (US\$30,000) the first-ever meeting of Regional Training Centres and selected academic institutions was hosted by the Wildlife Institute of India, at Dehra Dun, **India** from 20-24 April 1998. Participants from selected Centres and institutions from Tanzania, South Africa, Costa Rica, USA, Australia and India, and representatives from IUCN, WCMC and the Centre discussed the Strategic Action Plan for Training Specialists in Natural Heritage, adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 19<sup>th</sup> session in 1995 (Berlin). Participants made recommendations with



regard to curriculum and training materials development and networking for co-operating between Centres, academic institutions and World Heritage sites.

A workshop on the “**Role of Local Communities in the Management of Natural World Heritage sites in Southeast Asia, West Pacific, Australia and New Zealand**” at Thungyai Huay Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary from 19-23 January 1998. The meeting was hosted by the National Committee for the World Heritage of Thailand. Contributions from the World Heritage Fund (US\$15,000) and the Japanese Environmental Agency (US\$14,290) were provided to support Southeast Asian and Pacific participants at the workshop. Thirteen site managers, representatives of the Centre, UNESCO offices in Bangkok and Jakarta, SPREP, IUCN and CIFOR also participated in the workshop.

#### **(iv) Emergency Assistance**

In **Africa**, support (US\$45,000) for the purchase and transportation of two vehicles to the Kahuzi-Biega and Garamba National Parks, Democratic Republic of the Congo is being finalized with the UNESCO Equipment Division.

Two requests for Emergency Assistance were approved in 1998 for the **Arab States**: protection of the city wall of Médina d’Essaouira, Morocco (US\$50,000) and safeguarding the minaret of the Mosquée de Ouadane, Mauritania (US\$50,000).

The impact of the **El Niño** phenomenon on cultural heritage in **Latin America and the Caribbean** region, particularly in Peru, has been of great concern. Emergency Assistance from the World Heritage Fund and UNESCO has helped to prevent major damages to the sites of Chan Chan (US\$50,000) and Chavin in Peru (US\$37,250). A request for Emergency Assistance for the Nasca Lines, Peru is under consideration.

In **Europe**, the World Heritage Committee at its twenty-first session decided to inscribe Butrinti on the List of World Heritage in Danger and to allocate US\$100,000 as emergency assistance. Consultations have been undertaken with the Albanian authorities and the Butrinti Foundation for the implementation of this assistance and the definition of short, middle and long-term corrective measures. A management workshop was held in Butrinti in April 1998, with funding provided by the Getty Grant Programme, with the participation of national and international experts and agencies. A draft management plan for Butrinti is in preparation.

In the **Asia-Pacific Region**, India is receiving Emergency Assistance (US\$39,800) for carrying out a thorough structural survey of the Sun Temple of Konarak. Furthermore, Nepal is receiving support (US\$19,969) for repairing the roof of the ritual kitchen of Taleju Mandir within Patan Palace, Patan monument zone, Kathmandu Valley. Emergency Assistance (US\$50,000) was also granted to Vietnam for undertaking repairs to the Queen Mother’s Palace within the Imperial City of Hué, part of the Complex of Hué Monuments, following the typhoon in September 1997. Further project proposals, to

be proposed to overseas development aid agencies, for repairing other damaged monuments within this site have been prepared by the Hué Monuments Conservation Centre under this Emergency Assistance.

## **7. Follow-up to the Financial Audit of the World Heritage Fund for 1997 and the Management Review of the World Heritage Centre**

### **(i) Follow-up to Financial Audit of the World Heritage Fund and Management Review of the World Heritage Centre**

In accordance with the decision taken by the World Heritage Committee at its twentieth session in December 1996 in Merida, Mexico, a financial and administrative evaluation of the World Heritage Centre was undertaken by the external auditors of UNESCO. This assessment led to recommendations which were approved by the twenty-first session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee in July 1997. The Director-General's comments were also included in the documents submitted to the twenty-first session of the Bureau. The Bureau requested the World Heritage Centre develop control procedures covering its financial activities as recommended by the auditors.

Following the decisions made by the Bureau, the World Heritage Centre has responded to each and every recommendation of the Financial Audit with assistance from other UNESCO services. The adapted procedures have been gradually put into effect since September 1997.

Detailed information is presented to the twenty-second session of the Bureau in the Working Document WHC-98/CONF.201/INF.5.

### **(ii) Management of Information Systems**

As approved by the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Committee, a group of six internationally recognized experts (including information specialists from NASA, ESRI, UNEP, WCMC and CITES), met with staff of the World Heritage Centre from 11 to 13 March 1998 to review the information resources, infrastructure and needs of the Secretariat. Its recommendations noted that substantial economies combined with increased efficiency could be achieved by the implementation of a professionally designed integrated information management system. This system would link all information relating to technical and financial aspects of the day-to-day management of the *World Heritage Convention* to produce a streamlined basis for swift responses to daily management issues. Discussions concerning the implementation of these recommendations are taking place with several States Parties.

## **8. Co-operation with the Advisory Bodies, other convention secretariats and organizations**

### **(i) Co-operation with the Advisory Bodies**

In February 1998, a meeting was held with the **Advisory Bodies**, i.e., ICOMOS, IUCN and ICCROM, at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. The format for periodic reporting by the States Parties on the application of the *World Heritage Convention* on the state of conservation World Heritage properties and improved co-ordination of the Advisory Bodies' advice on requests for international assistance were discussed at the meeting.

#### **(ii) Co-operation with other convention secretariats**

The World Heritage Centre participated in the Fourth Conference of States Parties to the *Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD) held in Bratislava, Slovakia, from 4 to 15 May 1998.

The World Heritage Centre is following, with great interest, the process for revising the *1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*. A representative of the Centre participated in the Third Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Hague Convention held at UNESCO Headquarters in November 1997 and was informed of the outcome of the Expert Meeting on the Revision of the 1954 Hague Convention which was held in Vienna, Austria from 11 to 13 May 1998.

The World Heritage Centre will continue its co-operation with UNESCO's Culture Sector to ensure the successful implementation of the *1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*.

A representative of the World Heritage Centre will attend the Meeting of Governmental Experts on the **draft Convention on Protection of the Underwater Heritage** to be held at UNESCO Headquarters from 29 June to 2 July 1998.

The Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee and the Director of the World Heritage Centre made a joint presentation to the **Intergovernmental Consultation Conference on the Draft European Landscape Convention** in Florence, Italy from 1 to 4 April 1998. They highlighted the experiences gained with the inclusion of cultural landscapes in the World Heritage List and welcomed collaborative efforts with the Council of Europe for landscape protection in the European region. The final draft of the Convention was transmitted to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for adoption and opening for signature by Member States.

#### **(iii) Co-operation with other organizations involved in the preservation of World Heritage**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> National World Heritage Committee meeting was held from 2 to 4 March 1998 in Cape Town, **South Africa**. The purpose of the meeting was to draw up South

Africa's tentative list for cultural and natural properties, and prepare a calendar for nominations up to the year 2000. A tentative list including 12 cultural and 9 natural sites and two nominations will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre before 1 July 1998.

A representative of the World Heritage Centre participated in the meetings of **the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS/CIBB)**. This International Committee was created in April 1996 by four NGOs active in the field of the protection of cultural property (International Council of Archives-ICA, the International Council of Museums-ICOM, the International Council on Monuments and Sites-ICOMOS and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions-IFLA) as a unifying body to facilitate exchange of information and to provide advice for conservation action in emergency situations.

The **International Conference for Mayors of Historic Cities of China and the European Union** was held in Suzhou, **China** from 7-9 April 1998. The meeting was jointly organized by the World Heritage Centre and the Ministry of Construction of China, Municipal Government of Suzhou (China) and the City of Chinon (France) in co-operation with the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO and the State Bureau of Cultural Relics of China with the support from the European Union and the World Heritage Fund. The meeting brought together 140 participants including mayors and their representatives from fifteen Chinese and seven European historic cities, among which were 12 World Heritage cities.

The L'OREAL Group announced a contribution of RMB Y200,000 ( approx. US\$24,000) for the safeguarding of the classical gardens in Suzhou.

The highlight of the meeting was the adoption of the 13-point "**Suzhou Declaration**", in which the mayors undertook to develop, in their respective cities, "effective conservation policies to preserve historic urban districts, both because these districts retain the collective memory of culture and because such districts provide the inhabitants with a sense of continuity of civilization from the past into the future on which sustainable social and economic development is based."

The World Heritage Centre has continued to strengthen its relations with the European Union and related organs. In addition to the collaboration with the EU for the above-mentioned conference in Suzhou, China, the World Heritage Centre executed an EU-funded feasibility study for the rehabilitation of the historic area of Balat and Fener of Fatih District of the **World Heritage Historic Areas of Istanbul**.

The European Union has also approved the funding (300,000ECU) of a project for the protection of the urban humid zone in **Luang Prabang, Laos**.

The World Heritage Centre is also actively involved in supporting the efforts of the local authorities of Asia and the European Union in preparing project proposals for funding under the new EU Asia-Urbs Programme. The decentralized co-operation

established under the auspices of UNESCO between Luang Prabang (Laos) and Chinon (France); Hue (Vietnam) and Lille (France), Bhaktapur (Kathmandu Valley), Nepal and Bath (UK), Patan (Kathmandu Valley) and Chester (UK) are being expanded to include other European local authorities. Discussions are also underway with the authorities of India, Pakistan and the Philippines for similar co-operation with local authorities in the European Union.

Co-operation between the World Heritage Centre and the EU has also been enhanced by the strong support for World Heritage protection adopted by the Asia-Europe Foundation, which was established in 1997 by the Asia-Europe Summit meeting (ASEM). A representative of the World Heritage Centre participated in the Asia-Europe Cultural Forum organized by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs held in Paris, France in February 1998 and in the Conference on Heritage Partnerships organized by the National Trust and Foreign Office of the United Kingdom in London, UK in May 1998.

The World Heritage Centre has also been actively co-operating with the International Union of Architects, International Federation of Landscape Architects and the Fundacion Valencia Tercer Milenio to prepare the **International Conference on Architecture and Cities for the 21st Century**. This Conference, to be held from 2 to 5 July 1998 as part of the multi-year Valencia/UNESCO -Third Millenium Programme, will focus on 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture and urbanism and sustainable development. The agenda includes a presentation by DOCOMOMO on the comparative study it has conducted with ICOMOS.

The Nordic World Heritage Office is now in its third year of existence and an in-depth evaluation is being undertaken on the basis of which a decision will be taken on its continuation. The Office has supported important initiatives such as the Nordic World Heritage Network, the preparation of harmonized tentative lists in the Nordic countries and the preparation of systematic state of conservation reports. It has also further developed its co-operation with Baltic States through the Sustainable Historic Cities Programme.

## **9. World Heritage under threat**

Information received by the Centre and IUCN indicated that a toxic spill in southern **Spain** has caused an ecological disaster, and may affect **Doñana National Park**. The crisis began on 25 April 1998, when a giant holding pool of the Aznalcollar Mine burst. The toxic spill affected the surrounding areas of the World Heritage site. The Ramsar Convention Bureau informed IUCN that whilst the main toxic flow may have been diverted away from the National Park itself, the adjoining areas, including the Regional Natural Park 'Entorno de Doñana' have been badly damaged. It is also likely that impacts of the spill may spread into the World Heritage area as the pollution becomes more widely dispersed in the days and weeks ahead. The Centre has contacted the State Party to obtain an official report on the spill, its impacts on the World Heritage site and mitigation

measures being taken. New information received will be presented to the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the Bureau.

A number of threats have to be reported at natural heritage sites in **Latin America and the Caribbean**, including a road project at Huascarán National Park in Peru, an electrical power line through Canaima National Park in Venezuela and the re-opening of a road at Iguacu National Park.

A positive report can be given on the situation with **Galapagos National Park**, which was an area of concern, discussed at the previous Bureau and Committee sessions. The "Special Law on the Galapagos" has been published by the Official Registry of **Ecuador** as Law No. 278 on 18 March 1998, and the Chairperson of the Committee was informed by the Government following the Committee's request at its last session. Detailed information and a review on the situation of the state of conservation will be provided to the Bureau. An ecological monitoring system is being currently developed with the technical assistance from the World Heritage Fund for Galapagos National Park.

#### **10. World Heritage Documentation, Information and Education**

**Electronic Archive of World Heritage Nominations.** As approved by the Committee at its twenty and twenty-first sessions, this project, which is in co-operation with ICOMOS, will make all 552 World Heritage Nomination dossiers available in electronic form. The complete text and selected images and plans are being scanned as "PDF" files and will be made available to other sectors of UNESCO, Advisory Bodies, and Committee members on request via Intranet or CD ROM. The project is expected to be completed by the time of the twenty-second session of the Committee in Kyoto, Japan.

The first World Heritage nominations prepared under the **new nomination format** are now being received for the 23rd session of the World Heritage Committee in 1999. Significantly, two of the five new nominations received by June 1998, were submitted in electronic format by less-developed countries. Nominations are being scanned and made electronically available to the Advisory Bodies as they are received.

**New web pages.** As approved by the Committee at its 21<sup>st</sup> session, a modernized look of the World Heritage Centre's **web site** is graphically improved and updated. These pages, in English and French, are expected to be online by the end of June (<http://www.unesco.org/whc>).

**WHNEWS and World Heritage Newsletter.** Six issues of the electronic WHNEWS have been distributed since the twenty-first session of the Committee. During the same period, two issues of the World Heritage Newsletter have been produced or are in press.

**Electronic retrieval of Bureau and Committee meeting documents.** As for prior meetings, all Bureau documents this session have been made available in electronic

format through the Internet for use by Bureau members with a user-name and password obtainable from the Centre.

The 1998 versions of the **World Heritage Map** and **brochure** were produced in English (10,000 copies), French (5,000 copies) and Spanish (3,000 copies). The **Information Kit** on World Heritage was updated and reprinted in English (4,000 copies), French (4,000 copies) and Spanish (2,000 copies). The basic information documents, such as the **World Heritage List**, the **List of World Heritage in Danger**, the **Brief Descriptions**, etc were also updated and reprinted. Three new issues of **World Heritage Review** (no. 6, 7 and 8) were made available with 20,000 copies printed. The **World Heritage Desk Diary 1999** is in its pre-printing phase, as well as the brochure "**Africa revisited**", a 44 pages- publication in full colour, based on the exhibit on African sites prepared by the World Heritage Centre in 1996. The **traveling exhibition** on the World Heritage Convention in English has been reproduced in a light portable version, while the French version is in preparation. The new set of **posters** on selected World Heritage themes is being planned for the second part of this year, as well as the finalization of the **slide pack** on the *World Heritage Convention*.

Several **on-site promotional activities**, which were proved to be effective in raising awareness both at the political level and among the public at large, have been carried out by the States Parties in different regions following the inscription of cultural and natural sites on the World Heritage List. In Europe, such events have taken place in Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Estonia, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovak Republic in the first half of 1998. In the Asia-Pacific Region, China organized a grand ceremony in Beijing to award World Heritage plaques to the Chinese cultural and natural sites inscribed on the World Heritage List. India and Indonesia will promote the *World Heritage Convention* and improve site interpretation for Elephanta Caves and Sangiran Early Man Site respectively.

The activities proposed by the World Heritage Centre as a part of its **Self-Financing Programme for partnerships with the media and publishers for 1998** are being carried out as foreseen.

The German public broadcaster **Südwestfunk**, in co-production with other television producers and broadcasters, has completed the first 104 episodes (15 minutes each) of the television series entitled "Treasures of the World" as foreseen by the Agreement between UNESCO and Südwestfunk. A new agreement is currently being negotiated with Südwestfunk which will foresee the production of a minimum of 25 new episodes per year on World Heritage sites which will be included in the television series.

**Walk Associates**, in association with Polygram, has completed its 50-film series produced under agreement with the Centre on World Heritage sites as planned. The series, commercialized as a ten cassette home video package in Japan only, will shortly be launched. The next series of 50 films to be produced by Walk Associates, in cooperation with the Centre, was initially planned for 1998. However, the producers of Walk

Associates have decided to postpone the production of the next 50 films due to the lack of financial resources for the project.

The **National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan (NFUAJ)** has proposed to create a home video version of the World Heritage television series, broadcast weekly on TBS. This proposal is currently being studied and may be the subject of a new agreement with NFUAJ.

**Beijing Television of China (BTV)** is scheduled to produce approximately another 50 films on World Heritage sites in 1998 for broadcast on BTV as a part of their series entitled "*The Common Heritage of Mankind*".

The World Heritage Centre, in cooperation with the Ministry of Construction of China and the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, published an illustrated large album pictorial entitled "**The World Heritage of China**" in early 1998.

The publishers Verlagshaus Stuttgart (Germany) and Plaza y Janes (Spain) have completed and published 12 volumes of the **World Heritage Encyclopaedia** and are preparing a shorter paper back publication on the World Heritage sites inscribed in 1997 which will be included for sale in the twelfth volume of the encyclopaedia. Kodansha (Japan) has published a total of ten volumes of the Japanese version of the World Heritage Encyclopaedia, three of which were published in 1998.

Many new proposals were also received and studied by the World Heritage Centre in 1997 and 1998. Examples of these proposals were presented to the meeting of the Consultative Body of the World Heritage Committee ( 29-30 April 1998) to assist them in reflecting on issues related to the use of the World Heritage Emblem.

The World Heritage Centre has also investigated possibilities of using **radio** as a means of introducing or presenting the World Heritage Convention to the general public, as requested by the World Heritage Committee at its twenty-first session in Naples. A brief introductory sheet was prepared by the Centre, in cooperation with UNESCO's Office of Public Information, to present possible strategies for the future together with a list of a selection of UNESCO Radio programmes (English and French).

The UNESCO Special Project "**Young People's Participation in World Heritage Preservation and Promotion**" continues to be implemented by the World Heritage Centre in very close co-operation with the Associated School's Project (ASP) Unit of UNESCO's Education Sector. The Project aims to develop new educational approaches to provide young people with the necessary knowledge, skills and commitment to protect the world's natural and cultural heritage.

After several years of development, an educational resource Kit for teachers entitled "**World Heritage in Young Hands**" is now finalized and ready for testing in schools throughout the world. The Kit has been prepared with the financial support from



the Rhône-Poulenc Foundation. Distribution of the Kit to schools via UNESCO National Commissions will commence in August 1998. With funds to be made available by NORAD (US\$ 250,000 in 1998) an international programme of sub-regional teacher-training courses in World Heritage Education will be initiated in the second half of 1998.

A regional World Heritage Youth Forum for Africa will be organized in Senegal in autumn 1998. In addition, a co-ordination meeting of European World Heritage Education teachers will take place in Croatia with financial support from the World Heritage Fund in late July. A new brochure describing the Young People's World Heritage Education Project will be distributed in English and French by the end of July 1998.