



UNESCO / BEIJING ZHONGKUN INVESTMENT GROUP WORKSHOP

**“STRENGTHENING SOUTH-SOUTH COLLABORATION ON WORLD HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM”**

HONGCUN VILLAGE, CHINA

23-24 MAY 2014



**WORKSHOP SUMMARY**

From 23 to 24 May 2014, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in collaboration with the Beijing Zhongkun Investment Group organized the workshop *“Strengthening South-South collaboration on World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism”* in Hongcun Village, China.

[Hongcun Village](#) is one of the Ancient Villages in Southern Anhui inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000. The event gathered World Heritage site managers and practitioners from Cape Verde, China, Germany, India, Kenya, Laos, South Africa and Zambia, including international experts, representatives from international organizations and relevant business associations and research institutions in China.

The meeting was divided into three interactive sessions where the participants presented case studies, shared experiences and explored new ideas in terms of sustainable tourism management and World Heritage conservation.

The meeting included a technical tour of Hongcun Village and the unveiling ceremony of the UNESCO/Zhongkun Group Training Facility for World Heritage Conservation and Sustainable Tourism. The workshop was organized within the framework of the UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme and was the inaugural event associated with UNESCO partnership with the Zhongkun Group.

## **WELCOMING REMARKS AND TECHNICAL OVERVIEW**

### **SPEAKERS:**

- Mr Xu Bo, Special Advisor to ADG/BSP UNESCO
- Mr Zhou Tianwei, Deputy Mayor of the Huangshan Municipality
- Mr Abhimanyu Singh, Director and Country Representative, UNESCO Beijing Office
- Mr Huang Nubo, President of Beijing Zhongkun Investment Group
- Mr Peter DeBrine, UNESCO World Heritage Centre
- Mr Jin-yung Woo, Adviser on Tourism and Culture, UNWTO

The Workshop began with introductions from Mr Xu Bo, Special Advisor to the Assistant Director-General of UNESCO. Welcoming remarks from Mr Zhou Tianwei, Deputy Mayor of the Huangshan Municipality, Mr Abhimanyu Singh, Director and Country Representative of the UNESCO Beijing Office and Mr Huang Nubo, Chairman of the Beijing Zhongkun Investment Group followed.

The speakers stressed the need for new models and capacity building to protect World Heritage to enable heritage to become a positive ‘pillar’ of industry and provide skills to enable managers to cope with the challenge of increasing visitors and tourism growth. A key is placing culture at the heart of sustainable development that includes travel and leisure and safeguarding tangible and intangible heritage.

It was further stated that the protection of World Heritage depends on local people understanding and valuing their heritage. All agreed on the need to protect heritage but acknowledged the different approaches necessary to achieve this (ie. limiting tourist numbers, education and awareness of the values and benefits).

Mr Huang noted the need for local communities to derive benefits but also the need for businesses to give back, “As a business man and as a beneficiary of World Heritage I want to give back and encourage other businesses to do the same”.

Following the opening remarks, UNESCO and UNWTO provided technical overviews highlighting the challenges and opportunities for sustainable tourism at World Heritage sites and how through South-South cooperation these can be addressed.

## **SESSION 1 - MARKETING, PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATION OF WORLD HERITAGE FOR TOURISM**

### MODERATOR:

- Ms Beatrice Kaldun, UNESCO Beijing Office

### SPEAKERS:

- Mr Harald Marencic, The Wadden Sea, Germany
- Mr Geoffrey Chege, Lewa Conservancy, Kenya (presentation given at the end of the workshop)
- Mr Linmu Huang, Mount Huangshan, China
- Mr Xiaolan Wei, Director of World Tourism Cities Federation
- Ms Ruan Shaoqian, Hangzhou West Lake Scenic Area Conservancy
- Mr Phoulivong Ay, the Apsara, Town of Luang Prabang, Laos

### DISCUSSION SUMMARY:

The speakers addressed the marketing of World Heritage as a destination, interpreting and communicating Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and the need for mechanisms and incentives for World Heritage sites to undertake a more sustainable approach to tourism management and planning.

How the OUV of a World Heritage site could be communicated to visitors in simple, understandable and effective ways was raised as a challenge. The need for exchange, sharing of good practices as well as capacity building was also highlighted. It was noted that the OUV of the site must form the basis of any branding, marketing and promotion of World Heritage. The need for better visitor and stakeholder education and training was also addressed.

With regard to the leveraging the role of tourism to support, promote and preserve heritage was emphasized, the need for incentives and concrete support to better access and utilize available innovative technology for marketing, promotion, visitor management and interpretation was underscored. The panelists commented on the role of social media and the need to effectively apply this to World Heritage sites, especially in terms of sharing of knowledge and good practice and educating the traveling public.

## **SESSION 2 - CAPACITY BUILDING TOOLS AND STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT TO INCREASE SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

### MODERATOR:

- Mr James Rebanks, UNESCO expert

### SPEAKERS:

- Mr Charles Akibode, Cidade Velha, Historic Centre of Ribeira Grande, Cape Verde
- Mr Manvendra Singh Shekhawat, Rajasthan Fort and Palace, India
- Ms Fan Xu, Professor, UNWTO
- Mr Hu Ming, Vice President of the Zhongkun Group
- Ms Han Feng, Tongji University, China

## DISCUSSION SUMMARY:

Sustainable planning and management of tourism were agreed to be some of the most pressing challenges concerning the future of the World Heritage Convention and site managers in particular often lack the tools and know-how to effectively manage tourism to maximize its benefits and minimize its negative impacts.

In this context, and in order to enable a growing number of World Heritage site communities to make positive changes to the way they pro-actively manage tourism, innovative approaches will be needed for World Heritage site managers and other key stakeholders including:

- Local community empowerment, strategies and linkages,
- Integration of conservation management and tourism management,
- Stakeholder engagement and destination planning,
- Visitor management strategies, models and trends,
- Methods and models for assessing socio-economic benefits of tourism.

## **SESSION 3 - CREATING NETWORKS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT FOR SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION**

### MODERATOR:

- Ms Robyn Bushell, Institute for Culture and Society, University of Western Sydney, Co-Chair Task Force on Tourism and Protected Areas, World Commission on Protected Areas

### SPEAKERS:

- Mr Andrew Zaloumis, iSimangaliso Wetland Park, South Africa
- Mr Hui Chen, Representative from the World Heritage and Geo-park Office Lushan Scenic and Historic Area, China
- Mr Lingyun Zhang, Deputy Dean and professor of Beijing Union University of Tourism Department
- Ms Xu Ning, President, Nanjing International Culture Exchange Association
- Ms Musawa Musonda Hamusonde, Victoria Falls World Heritage site, Zambia  
(presentation given at the end of the workshop)

## DISCUSSION SUMMARY:

The third and final panel addressed mentoring and exchange mechanisms, regional and trans-boundary cooperation and effective multi-stakeholder cooperation and partnerships.

The need for value adding and sharing was identified as a key priority. An emphasis was placed on adding value through better connectivity at forefront of the World Heritage system (site managers) where expertise lies. UNESCO as a repository of expertise and resources was noted (regional and country offices) and was encouraged to do more to support site managers directly to empower and increase knowledge transfer.

In particular the session highlighted:

- How site managers can effectively communicate heritage values to their constituencies,
- Need to foster an appreciation and attachment to heritage to grasp the OUV and make explicit links between local needs and heritage,
- Need for tools for site managers and other stakeholders that respect local values and encourage everyone to understand the complexity, and contested nature of local values, histories and heritages,
- Need for capacity building and motivation for local communities to increase their knowledge, experience and perceptions of tourism to create appropriate products, services and visitor experiences of high quality and value,
- Need for highly functioning networks for regular exchange in a cost- and time-effective manner.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION

### CLOSING REMARKS:

- Mr Abhimanyu Singh, Director and Country Representative, UNESCO Beijing Office
- Ms Valerie Terranova, Secretary-General, Fondation Chirac, France
- Ms Xu Hong, Beijing Zhongkun Investment Group
- Mr Peter DeBrine, UNESCO World Heritage Centre

Overall the workshop emphasized the need for World Heritage stakeholders to work together to achieve the goals of sustainable tourism at and around World Heritage sites.

In particular, the importance of stakeholder engagement with local communities was identified as key to define priorities and needs and identify approaches that promote positive interactions between tourists and residents and provide local community benefits.

In addition, the workshop highlighted the need to:

- Share international good practice approaches and capacity-building tools to promote, recognize and incentivize sustainable tourism practices and products at and around World Heritage sites,
- Explore new ideas and trends in terms of visitation, connectivity,
- Create incentive mechanisms that foster positive change,
- Identify potential areas for international cooperation and how the UNESCO/Zhongkun Group partnership can leverage the results of the workshop to achieve this goal,
- Identify resources and innovative approaches to financing future collaboration, projects and initiatives.

In terms of South-South cooperation, it was agreed that in order to be successful this collaboration should focus on interdependent and mutually supportive objectives that:

- Foster self-reliance by enhancing the creative capacity to find solutions in keeping with an individual site's own aspirations, values and special needs,
- Promote and strengthen collective action through the exchange of experiences; the pooling, sharing and use of technical and other resources; and the development of complementary capacities,
- Strengthen the capacity to identify and analyze together the main conservation and development issues and formulate the requisite strategies to address them,
- Increase and improve communications, leading to a greater awareness of common problems and wider access to available knowledge and experience,
- Open additional channels of communication.

### **Recommendations for future priority actions:**

- Create mechanisms for the sharing of best practice and knowledge,
- Develop and promote tourism products that are of high quality and stress the heritage values,
- Strengthen communication between the different stakeholders (World Heritage management/local communities/tourism private sector),
- Develop incentive mechanisms for stakeholder collaboration,
- Develop capacity building, education and training,
- Create synergies and leverage additional resources to achieve sustainability,
- Develop marketing, promotion and communication that emphasizes the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

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