BIENNIAL REPORT
2008-2009

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Dear friends,

During the 2008–2009 biennium, the World Heritage Centre undertook a remarkable number of projects, with key support from extrabudgetary financing. Your collaboration is critical to our work, and I wish to thank each of you personally for helping UNESCO to take forward its mission in heritage preservation. This biennium has been a success thanks to the competence of our World Heritage experts and the willing collaboration of governments, national and international organizations, universities, companies and private individuals. Together, we are working to ensure that our precious World Heritage exists for future generations.

The opportunities for the application of the World Heritage Convention regarding the identification and conservation of the world’s most outstanding cultural and natural areas are limitless. Every year, the World Heritage Committee identifies new activities it considers important to carry out. In many cases, it calls on the support of the international community to help to finance them. The World Heritage Centre is fortunate in that there is strong support for the Convention among its States Parties. These provide an important part of the additional funding required to implement many of the most innovative and important activities under the World Heritage banner. We also recognize and appreciate the support provided by multilateral agencies, foundations, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. This report highlights the crucial contributions made by these partners and we wish to thank them for the important role they play in implementing the World Heritage Convention.
The idea of creating an international movement for protecting heritage emerged after the First World War. Then in 1956, after an appeal from the governments of Egypt and Sudan, UNESCO launched the first successful international safeguarding campaign to restore the Nubian temples affected by the decision to build the Aswan Dam, which caused massive flooding in the region. The campaign cost about US$80 million, half of which was donated by some fifty countries, showing the importance of solidarity and shared responsibility in conserving outstanding cultural sites. Its success led to other safeguarding campaigns, such as saving Venice and its Lagoon (Italy) and the Archaeological Ruins at Mohenjodaro (Pakistan), restoring the Borobodur Temple Compound (Indonesia), and eventually called for a system of regular oversight and protection for heritage sites around the world. The resulting 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (usually referred to as the World Heritage Convention) merged two separate movements: the first focusing on the preservation of cultural sites and the other dealing with the conservation of nature. The World Heritage Convention defines the kind of natural or cultural sites which can be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List, and sets out the duties of States Parties in protecting and preserving them. By signing the Convention, each country pledges to conserve not only the World Heritage sites situated in its territory, but also to protect its national heritage. The States Parties are encouraged to integrate the protection of the cultural and natural heritage into regional planning programmes, set up staff and services at their sites, undertake scientific and technical conservation research and adopt measures which give this heritage a function in the day-to-day life of the community. UNESCO and its World Heritage Centre, as Secretariat of the World Heritage Convention, are working for the conservation and promotion of the sites inscribed on the World Heritage List. These diverse places are all of Outstanding Universal Value and are listed as globally important examples of humanity’s heritage. They are a compelling testimony to the biodiversity of our planet and to centuries of major cultural accomplishments. This heritage is everyone’s legacy. All are invited to help in its conservation. In a variety of ways, States Parties, international and national organizations, and civil society, demonstrate their commitment to this important aim. The projects highlighted in these pages give a sense of how this is achieved from day to day.
BUILDING CULTURAL BRIDGES
NIGER-LOIRE GOVERNANCE AND CULTURE PROJECT

Rivers are a source of water for drinking and agriculture, and the path for cultural and commercial exchanges that have advanced and shaped the populations living along their banks. As mighty rivers go, the Niger is a veritable life-support system 4,200 km long that courses through West Africa. Especially in Mali, the Niger is the lifeblood of this landlocked country. After a preliminary study of the needs of the riverside population and local authorities, the Niger-Loire Governance and Culture project was born. Through this project, the World Heritage Centre was able to set up an innovative river-river cooperation between the Niger and the Loire River in France, involving sixteen French and Malian partners such as the national departments of culture, universities, local authorities and water agencies. Using a multidisciplinary approach guided by UNESCO experts, the Niger-Loire cooperation merges research and inventory activities, training programmes, and pilot actions on development and education, all with the goal of raising awareness among the river communities on how best to safeguard the river. With €2,125,402 in assistance from the European Commission plus seed funding provided by the French Government, the project is successfully building bridges of capacity between the two continents. The France-UNESCO cooperation agreement was instrumental in the execution of the project, through preliminary studies and expertise provided in various fields (heritage management, water assessment, territorial planning). Additional support was provided by the French company Croisi Europe through a grant to support the restoration of Mopti port.

Some of the project’s achievements and benefits to local people:
/ An inventory of tangible and intangible cultural heritage linked to the river.
/ Restoration of historical works of the fishing port of Mopti.
/ Construction of a waste treatment facility for dye-makers that limits the flow of pollutants into the river.
/ Creation of two higher education programmes with specializations in ‘Heritage’ and ‘Environment’ in the framework of a Master of Advanced Studies on ‘Decentralization and Engineering of Local Development’ at Bamako University.
/ Support for the Old Towns of Djenné, a World Heritage site, to improve waste management.

HERITAGE AND REPATRIATION
AKSUM OBELISK

Since ancient times, many cultural objects and works of art have been seized and displaced as war trophies. This practice unfortunately continues today and invariably leads to contentious ownership debates during peace-time. But happy endings do occur.

In 1937 Mussolini’s troops removed the 1,700-year-old obelisk from its original site in Aksum (Ethiopia) and transported it to Rome. In April 2005, the Italian Government returned the obelisk and its three massive blocks of carved granite to Aksum following its sixty-eight-year exile. The operation was funded by the Government of Italy through a special Funds-in-Trust set up at UNESCO. The Italian and Ethiopian governments approached UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre to lead the difficult task of reinstalling the 152 ton and 23.4 m high obelisk in its rightful place. Mounting the obelisk was an unsurpassed engineering feat that could only be accomplished by employing state-of-the-art technology and the world’s finest expertise. Today, the Aksum Obelisk is successfully restored to its original location. In addition to the reinstallation, local people received training in restoration techniques, site management and tourism, which has increased as a result of the obelisk’s reinstallation. To commemorate the event, UNESCO helped to organize an itinerant exhibition and several publications communicating the importance of this symbol of international reconciliation.

… the Aksum Obelisk Reinstallation Project should obviously benefit society thanks to the development activities now being undertaken and expected to increase as a result of the reinstallation.

H.E. Girma Wolde giorgis, president of Ethiopia
How strange to call this planet Earth, when clearly it is Ocean.

Arthur C. Clarke

With the international agenda becoming ‘greener’ every year, we tend to forget that without ‘blue’ there would be no green. A glance at a world map shows how strikingly blue our planet really is. Although we need to take care of the ocean as a whole, some places are more important than others. Some ocean areas are much richer in biodiversity, have higher rates of productivity, are key breeding areas or serve as migration corridors or stop-over points. The ‘very best of the best’ of these special ocean places are protected through the World Heritage Convention.

Many marine World Heritage sites suffer pressures from illegal and unreported fishing, oil and gas exploitation, maritime transport, climate change, among other challenges, posing serious threats to the reasons for which these extraordinary places were initially inscribed. Being recognized as the most outstanding and valuable places in the marine environment, these sites should be managed according to the highest standards. Often, the lack of resources, skills and capacity at site level presents a very different reality.

The World Heritage Marine Programme was created to strengthen the representation of marine sites on the World Heritage List and enhance conservation of sites already inscribed. The three-year ‘Tides of Time’ partnership signed in 2008 has been instrumental in renewing the programme’s work and offers possibilities it has never had before. With support from the Swiss luxury watch manufacturer Jaeger-LeCoultre and the International Herald Tribune, the World Heritage Centre is able to provide solid leadership in marine protected area management and also encourage a broader public to protect and respect our marine heritage, not just for the present generation but for all future generations.

As part of the ‘Tides of Time’ partnership, ten marine World Heritage sites are featured each year in the print and online versions of the International Herald Tribune. In addition to general support for the Marine Programme, the World Heritage site Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park (Philippines) benefited from £13,540 collected through an auction of a unique Jaeger-LeCoultre diving watch.
LETTING NATURE TAKE ITS COURSE

MERCEDES-BENZ SUPPORTS HERITAGE IN CHINA

With 5,000 years of continuous civilization and a vast and diverse landscape, it may come as no surprise that China has one of the highest numbers of World Heritage sites. Such emblematic sites as the Sichuan Giant Panda Sanctuaries, home to the charismatic giant panda—the universal emblem for wildlife conservation; the Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor; with its thousands of terracotta soldiers and their horses; and of course the Great Wall and its astonishing length of nearly 5,000 km, are just a few of the remarkable sites on the Chinese mainland.

China is on a path of rapid industrial development and expansion. It is vital that its cultural and natural heritage remains adequately protected and conserved. Over the last twenty-five years, UNESCO has been working closely with the Chinese authorities in order to protect and raise awareness about World Heritage, a challenging and highly costly task.

In August 2007 a new partnership was signed between the UNESCO Beijing Office and Mercedes-Benz (China) Ltd in an agreement worth RMB3 million (US$450,000) over three years, confirming the company’s long-term commitment to the programme through a new corporate social responsibility initiative—the Green Legacy Program. Each year, a different World Heritage site is selected as the main beneficiary of the project. In 2008 the South China Karst site ran a ‘Let Nature Take Its Course’ nature protection programme and in 2009 Lushan National Park cultural landscape received special conservation and management assistance. One-third of the overall amount went to the Sichuan Giant Panda Sanctuaries following the 8.0 magnitude earthquake in Sichuan Province in south-west China, where damage to the panda’s habitat was extremely severe.

We have been delighted with the generous support provided by Mercedes-Benz. It is our hope that this project will set a precedent for other organizations to support the important cultural and natural heritage conservation work we are undertaking here in China.

BEATRICE KAIDUN, PROGRAMME SPECIALIST FOR CULTURE, UNESCO OFFICE BEIJING

PRESERVATION AND TOURISM IN BALANCE

MULTI-DONOR INITIATIVES AT THE SAINT SEBASTIAN FORTRESS

Decades of wars and economic stagnation allowed the former historic capital of Mozambique, on the Island of Mozambique, to lapse into decay. Yet in its heyday it was the most important trading post in Portuguese East Africa. The Saint Sebastian Fortress (Fortaleza São Sebastião in Portuguese) was one of the island’s most impressive monuments. Not only is this fortress a testament to the island’s importance under Portuguese rule, it also reveals a clue to the population’s survival. The fort’s intricate system of rainwater collection was, until recently, the islanders’ only source of fresh water.

In 2003, UNESCO and the Government of Mozambique signed an agreement to rehabilitate the Saint Sebastian Fortress. Over 100 local and Mozambican professionals and students were trained in traditional building techniques, using local building materials (stone or macuti) and decorative principles to restore the fortress and install a new public water cistern outside the fortress.

As the project has grown, so too has the number of financial donors. Japan, UCCLA (Union of Portuguese-speaking Capital Cities), Portugal, Flanders (Belgium) and the Netherlands have joined forces in a multi-donor initiative. The new role of the fortress as a major tourist attraction will help to generate sustainable revenue for the local population and thus drive the local economy. As the project has grown, so too has the number of financial donors.

A local master mason, Abdala Cássimo, expressed his thoughts on participating in the restoration process: ‘We take great pride in Ilha – and we therefore should not allow it to be in ruins like that. Professionally, it was a very fruitful and enriching experience for me. Rehabilitation works may create jobs, and consequently improve our lives and attract more tourists.’

URBAN LANDSCAPES AND LOCAL IDENTITY

PLANTING PALMS IN PARAMARIBO

Paramaribo, the capital city of Suriname, boasts a most wonderful fusion of European architecture and construction techniques with indigenous South America materials and crafts, resulting in a new architectural tradition. The city is a unique manifestation of the contact between the European culture of the Netherlands and the indigenous cultures and environment of South America in the years of intensive colonization of this region in the 16th and 17th centuries. Located at the very heart of the city, the majestic 4 ha palm garden has long provided a dramatic visual and environmental contrast to the orderly urban fabric. The garden has hosted civic events and served as an urban park for over a century.

The palms, most of which were planted in the late 18th century, have lived their normal lifespans and are beginning to die, and the poorly maintained gardens were beginning to lose their natural appeal and social function. With support from the Flemish Government in Belgium, the World Heritage Centre has provided the necessary technical and landscape design expertise to assure the replanting of over 500 palms and to carry out needed drainage works. Now restored to their original grandeur, the gardens will continue to be the focus of civic pride in the core of this unique World Heritage city for many years to come.
URGENT AID FOR NATURAL HERITAGE
RAPID RESPONSE FACILITY

The inability to respond to emergencies or catastrophic events as soon as they arise can lead to devastating results for biodiversity and ecosystems. Runaway fires, establishment of poaching networks, oil spills, all have accelerating destructive impacts on nature if not nipped in the bud. The Rapid Response Facility (RRF) allows relevant stakeholders to address such emergencies within just days or weeks, thus minimizing the scale of the emergency and the long-term recovery costs. No other such mechanism exists within UN organizations.

To ensure effective responses to conservation emergencies, the RRF:
/ Makes funding decisions within an average eight working days from receipt of applications;
/ Delivers funds quickly to respond to emergency situations in natural World Heritage sites;
/ Provides bridging funds for sites where longer-term funding is being sought – thus helping to ensure sustainability of RRF interventions; and
/ Catalyses innovative financing initiatives as part of long-term support for sites.

Thanks to a global network of dedicated volunteers, all applications are reviewed within days, and sometimes hours, guaranteeing that technical rigour and transparency in the decision-making process are not compromised in the pursuit of rapid action. The RRF is managed by a secretariat hosted by Fauna & Flora International in the United Kingdom and financed from support by the Arcadia Fund, the United Nations Foundation (UNF) and Thomas Cook travel company and UNF/UNFIP (United Nations Fund for International Partnerships). The World Heritage Centre helps to raise funds and sits on the decision-making body, lending international conservation expertise in evaluating proposals and encouraging the multi-stakeholder effort.

The Central African humid forests contain a large proportion of world biodiversity. They are home to over 30 million forest-dwelling people who depend on the innumerable environmental products and services that the forests provide. The vast majority of the Central African forests have remained, until quite recently, relatively untouched by large-scale human activities such as mechanized logging and mining, largely because of the difficulties of access. However the situation is changing as more and more logging concessions are awarded and an increasingly dense network of new roads spreads out through the forests, threatening both plant and animal life.

The Central Africa World Heritage Forest Initiative (CAWHFI) project focuses on building up a coalition among private sector and local stakeholders to promote and monitor the sustainable use of natural resources. WWF provides operational, logistical and labour support to government officers in charge of anti-poaching. Among the wide range of awareness-building activities, in the Gamba complex in Gabon, a local NGO, Ibonga, is closely involved in school educational visits, park visits for schoolchildren, a dance roadshow (Caravane de Conservation), and local ecotourism initiatives. In partnership with the European Commission and UNF/UNFIP, CAWHFI is supporting activities that have considerable potential for giving added value to the sites and bringing tangible benefits to local stakeholders.
With some 900 sites on the World Heritage List, external partners are the keystone to global conservation efforts. The development of responsible long-term partnerships, based on ethical work standards and practices, provides an essential support system for World Heritage, strengthening and diversifying various levels of action. These partnerships are as varied as the sites themselves in their endeavours: mobilizing resources, sharing skills, providing visibility, reinforcing administrative and technical experience and expertise. Strategic alliances bring benefits to all parties in terms of shared areas of compatibility, protection against risk, increased visibility and cost-effectiveness, synergy with priorities and needs and value-creation for each stakeholder, all with the overarching goal of building greater capacity to execute international conservation and UN goals. Many choose to work with us because it is a unique opportunity to join an international effort to preserve our common identity and our planet for present and future generations.

Many partners choose to support a specific conservation project. The World Heritage Centre receives numerous requests annually, especially from developing countries, to help sites meet urgent needs and improve their overall capacity to deal with conservation issues such as tourism management, species monitoring, consultative planning and public education. The World Heritage Centre can connect a partner’s interests with a site in need and vice versa.

The Partnerships for Conservation Initiative (PACT) was launched by the World Heritage Committee in 2002 to mobilize intellectual and technical resources and to build networks of exchange and technical assistance for World Heritage conservation and awareness-raising activities. PACT also raises funds in support of these activities with a specific focus on non-governmental organizations, civil society and the business community.

The World Heritage Centre also maintains relationships with certain sectors of industry that have important potential to influence their client base on behalf of heritage conservation. For example, leading members of the tourism, finance, technology and luxury sectors have been able to leverage UNESCO’s international and ethical brand to convey their company’s industry leadership and corporate responsibility commitment. Harnessing top industry talent has been crucial in assisting others to understand the importance of our mission. We welcome deep engagement from partners in helping to forge new ways of making this mission come alive.

Through a network of close contacts within the NGO sector that includes both global and grass-roots organizations, UNESCO is able to extend its scientific expertise and local skills to execute critical conservation interventions. In addition, the World Heritage Centre also maintains relationships with NGOs that educate individuals and groups through volunteerism, such as Earthwatch, which hosts a programme of management professionals who transfer skills to site managers in developing countries, and the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service, which runs a successful programme of youth educational work camps every summer. Working with the World Heritage Centre opens up a gateway to employee involvement, incentive travel, and cultural and environmental learning.

Partnerships for Conservation Initiative (PACT)
The Partnerships for Conservation Initiative (PACT) was launched by the World Heritage Committee in 2002 to mobilize intellectual and technical resources and to build networks of exchange and technical assistance for World Heritage conservation and awareness-raising activities. PACT also raises funds in support of these activities with a specific focus on non-governmental organizations, civil society and the business community.
UNESCO develops its main strategic thrusts and objectives over a six-year period, divided into three biennia. Every two years, all UNESCO’s 193 Member States meet in General Conference to review and vote on the programme and budget for the upcoming biennium. All Member States support UNESCO based on an equal percentage determined by their financial capacity, and each state maintains one vote in session. National representatives have a full agenda during these meetings, but the World Heritage programme, as one of the flagship programmes of UNESCO, draws significant interest. This is because the World Heritage Convention enjoys near universal ratification among Member States. At the end of the 2008–2009 biennium, 186 of 193 members of UNESCO had signed the Convention.

Nations support their commitment to World Heritage in two basic ways. First, regular funds are appropriated for World Heritage activities by the UNESCO General Conference. These funds allow the Secretariat to the World Heritage Convention to carry out its basic statutory duties. Second, by signing the World Heritage Convention, the States Parties commit to pay contributions, the amount of which is determined by the General Assembly of States Parties. In 2007, the General Assembly decided to set the amount of their contributions to World Heritage at 1 per cent of the contribution to the regular budget of UNESCO for the financial period 2008–2009. These funds are used for international assistance to States Parties with pressing conservation needs and other purposes defined by the World Heritage Committee. These two funding sources allowed a budget of US$21,015,841 in the 2008–2009 biennium.\(^1\)

In addition, and as a third funding source for World Heritage activities, donations to the World Heritage Centre widely support projects at specific World Heritage sites or special conservation initiatives. Governments, public and private institutions, associations, other UN agencies and private individuals helped the World Heritage Centre to meet its projection, totalling US$20,505,549 expenses in 2008–2009.\(^2\) These donations accounted for almost 50 per cent of the Centre’s total funds and demonstrate the strength of global collaboration in heritage conservation.

UNESCO’s financial resources are made up of the assessed contributions of Member States for its biennial work plan and budget, known as the ‘regular programme’, together with additional contributions from donors and partners known as ‘extrabudgetary funding’. Extrabudgetary funding can be mobilized for specific themes, programmes or institutional support, but its use must be coherent with the regular programme approved by all Member States. Cooperation with bilateral government donors remains the bedrock of extrabudgetary support for programme activities. In addition, UNESCO enjoys support from multilateral organizations such as the European Commission and multilateral development banks. Resources are also mobilized at country level through joint UN programming. UNESCO is also intensifying the exploration of opportunities for cooperation with the private sector, globally and at country level. This report focuses on extrabudgetary funds raised from donors and partners with whom UNESCO has concluded specific agreements.

Supporters of UNESCO’s work can also transfer resources directly to UNESCO’s regular programme to reinforce a specific activity or result foreseen therein. These resources are not covered by this report.

\(^1\) Regular programme allocation as reported in Approved 34C/5, and World Heritage Fund approved budget as reported in WHC.10/34.COM/16.
\(^2\) Revenue as reported by WHC.10/34.COM/16 for earmarked and promotional activities and FABS extracts for extrabudgetary projects.
Sources are divided into the following categories: Public Sector (PUB); Private Sector (PRV); United Nations Foundation (UNF); European Commission (EC); and International Campaigns (INTL).

At any given moment, the World Heritage Centre has many active projects financed by extrabudgetary sources. Some may be multi-million dollar and multi-year efforts, while others are focused interventions. The following graphic information is based on expenses made in specific projects during the 2008–2009 biennium. A total of US$177,653,580 in extrabudgetary funds was disbursed in World Heritage related projects by the World Heritage Centre. During this time, some smaller projects may have been initiated and brought to completion, whereas others may have simply implemented one part of a larger multi-year effort. These funds were provided by a variety of donors and for a total of eighty distinct projects. Charts 1–4 illustrate the relative importance of funding by source category, the geographical distribution of projects funded by extrabudgetary sources, and the general nature of the projects being financed by these sources. For the purpose of this report, only the part spent during the 2008–2009 biennium is considered.

Chart 1 illustrates how almost a third of expenditure was recorded against projects financed by the European Commission for three distinct projects: the Niger River project in Mali, the Central Africa World Heritage Forest Initiative (CAWFI), and development of an architectural heritage preservation institute in Jerusalem. Although large amounts of funding have traditionally been made available through UNESCO’s international safeguarding campaigns, the 2008–2009 biennium saw small average expenditures on these types of activity, totalling less than US$25,000 per project.
DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING BY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Work carried out by the World Heritage Centre under the World Heritage Convention is guided by four Strategic Objectives, known as the ‘4 Cs,’ which are: Capacity-building, Communication, Conservation, and Credibility. Capacity-building refers to projects that strengthen the skills and knowledge of World Heritage site managers. Conservation projects are those that raise awareness or educate the general public about the World Heritage Convention. Communication projects support on-the-ground technical interventions. Since the official World Heritage List must be representative of all regions of the world and maintain high standards for inscription, projects that foster Credibility of the Convention are those that help States Parties to prepare nominations and participate in the listing process, even if they have never done so before.

When undertaking a project, the officers responsible are asked to report which of the Strategic Objectives a particular project supports. Frequently a project may support two or more of them, in order of importance. The charts below are based on the main objective targeted by specific projects. Clearly the majority of extra-budgetary funds support Conservation, with a strong second showing on Credibility.

A fifth C was added (Community) at the World Heritage Committee meeting in 2011. At the time of reporting on the 2010-2011 biennium, the fifth C had not been fully incorporated into reporting formats and is thus absent from this discussion.

PROJECTS WITH THE HIGHEST EXPENDITURE 2008-2009

| Project                                                                                | US$  
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------
| UNESCO-Vocations Patrimoine Fellowships for World Heritage Site Managers Programme   | 430,386 |
| Central Africa World Heritage Forest Initiative (CAWIFI), EC component                | 552,460 |
| Biodiversity conservation in regions of armed conflict – protecting World Heritage sites in DR Congo – Phase II | 631,677 |
| Safeguarding the cultural landscape and archaeological remains of the Bamyan Valley, Phase III | 676,544 |
| Central Africa World Heritage Forest Initiative (CAWIFI), UNF component               | 797,096 |
| Marine Conservation through World Heritage:                                           | 1,143,259 |
| Niger River, Mali: Improvement in water management by networking of riparian communities and engagement of cultural resources: | 1,280,225 |
| Conservation and sustainable management of wildlife in the periphery of the national parks of the Congo Basin: | 1,519,002 |
| UNESCO-Spain Funds-in-Trust in favour of World Heritage conservation:                 | 1,531,863 |
| Aksum World Heritage site improvement: Preparatory studies for the re-erection of the obelisk and capacity-building for archaeological conservation: | 3,611,587 |

DONORS 2008-2009

European Commission
Public Sector
Australia
Belgium
Flanders, Belgium
France
Italy
Japan
Libya
Netherlands
Norway
Portugal
Republic of Korea
Spain
Switzerland

Private Sector
A.G. Leventis Foundation
Association Vocations Patrimoine
Aventis
Jaeger Le-Coultre
United Nations Foundation