As we move into the New Year, I would like to take this opportunity to look back at the 15th General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention and the 33rd General Conference of UNESCO, held at Paris Headquarters last October.

First of all, I wish to welcome the twelve new members of the World Heritage Committee, elected at the 15th General Assembly: Canada, Cuba, Israel, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, Peru, Republic of Korea, Spain, Tunisia and the United States of America.

This General Assembly will be remembered for the decision taken by all candidates to the World Heritage Committee to restrict their term to four years. At this session a new voting system for the election of Committee members was introduced for the first time. The system proved to be effective, as it allowed the debate to continue while the voting process was being conducted. Some delegations have requested further improvements along the lines of methods used by the Executive Board.

The General Assembly discussed the proposal for the creation of the African World Heritage Fund, which was presented and welcomed by the Committee in Durban in 2005. The African Union summit in January 2006 is to examine the plan which will be launched this year.

Furthermore, the General Assembly discussed the continued lack of balance within the List, while it was pointed out that improvements to the List have been made with the increase in new categories of sites inscribed. Concerning the need to reinforce links between the World Heritage Convention and other international biodiversity conventions, attention was drawn to the establishment of the Biodiversity Liaison Group (see page 4).

Following the earthquake in Pakistan, questions were raised concerning the Risk Preparedness Strategy. This strategy is under preparation by the Advisory Bodies and will be presented this year for review by the Committee.

The 15th General Assembly also adopted an important Declaration on the Conservation of Historic Urban Landscapes, which clearly puts conservation at the point of departure in the city planning and management policy of living historic cities. The Declaration is based on the Vienna Memorandum, approved by the Conference convened by UNESCO and the City of Vienna in May 2005. The Vienna Memorandum was discussed and welcomed by the World Heritage Committee at its 29th session in Durban in July.

Francesco Bandarin, Director, World Heritage Centre
**Periodic Reporting Meetings**

An international meeting: “European Periodic Reporting: Towards an Action Plan,” organized jointly by the German authorities and the World Heritage Centre in co-operation with the national commissions for UNESCO of Austria, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland, and with support from the World Heritage Fund for the participation of Eastern European countries, was held in Berlin on 8 and 9 November. This was followed by a meeting on the preparation of the “World Heritage Periodic Reporting Reflection Year in 2007”, held on 10 and 11 November.

Ninety-eight countries and sixty-seven participants attended the “European Periodic Reporting: Towards an Action Plan” meeting, which resulted in the Berlin Appeal and elements for the Action Plan for Europe. This Action Plan acknowledged that Periodic Reporting has stimulated awareness and co-operation within countries and that this interest must be maintained. The Plan encourages the creation of national as well as thematic networks of site managers and co-operation between countries in the harmonisation of Tentative Lists. The Plan further calls for building on the momentum of Periodic Reporting in order to enhance contacts among States Parties and establish a network of World Heritage focal points in Europe.

It points out that heritage legislation in individual countries often needs to be updated to reflect current approaches to preservation and protection, and that there is a need to integrate World Heritage management into the wider regional, social and policy context at all levels. It also recognizes the importance of the sustainable use of World Heritage for the economic and social benefit of local and national communities.

The meeting on the preparation of the Reflection Year in 2007 reviewed the outcome of the Periodic Reporting exercise in the different regions. It analyzed follow-up actions and the workload for the Secretariat, Advisory Bodies and the Committee, highlighting priorities resulting from Periodic Reports. This meeting also considered indicators for state of conservation to ensure better follow-up and scientific assessment over time.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies and the States Parties concerned, is to report to the 30th session of the Committee in Vilnius, Lithuania in 2006 on the proposed structure, time-schedule and resources needed for the implementation of measures to be discussed in the Reflection Year.

**Technical Agreement Reached for Aksum Stela**

A UNESCO team went to Ethiopia in October 2005 to discuss the development of the Aksum Obelisk (Stela 2) re-erection project with Ethiopian authorities. The team, headed by Francesco Bandarin, World Heritage Centre Director, met with the Ethiopian Minister of Culture, Mahmoud Dirir, Teshome Toga, Speaker of the House and Sahle-Work Zewde, the Minister of Culture, Mahmud Dirir, Teshome Toga, Speaker of the House and Sahle-Work Zewde, the Ambassador of Ethiopia to UNESCO, as well as with Guido La Tella, the Italian Ambassador to Ethiopia.

The main task of this mission, carried out thanks to the support of the Italian government, was to sign an agreement among all parties concerned on the technical orientations for the re-erection of the Aksum Obelisk, often referred to as Stela No. 2, because it is the second largest stela of Aksum (160 tonnes and 24m high).

It was agreed that the re-erection of the obelisk will have no impact on the existing archaeological structures. The re-positioning of Stela 2 will require the construction of a new foundation which will not interfere with the archaeology on the site. Special care is to be taken in order to protect these underground structures.

A survey of the area surrounding the foundations of Stela 2 and the area where heavy machinery will be used in the re-reerection is to be conducted in order to complement the geo-technical analysis carried out in April 2005.

Agreement was also reached on the final structure of the Stela 2 foundation design. Since only the front stone slab of the base plate of Stela 2 has been conserved, a design for the completion of its pedestal will be prepared.

The World Bank is currently carrying out a landscaping design project of the entire area, including some archaeological excavations, an overall archaeological inventory and the construction of a new site museum. The re-positioning of Stela 2 will be coordinated with this project.

**Jet Tours Operating for World Heritage**

Following an agreement signed by UNESCO and the French-based travel agency Jet Tours in September, Jet Tours has developed a series of special Jet Tours – UNESCO World Heritage tours which, with the help of UNESCO, will promote sustainable and responsible tourism in and around UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

This agreement, which in its initial stage covers a three-year period, is a historic first. Jet Tours, in association with UNESCO, has undertaken to develop a series of thematic tours centered on sustainable tourism and to contribute to the World Heritage Fund.

Jet Tours is offering a large choice of heritage tours, complete with a heritage kit, developed by the World Heritage Centre and Jet Tours. Thematic tours of World Heritage sites in several countries (“Cradle of Civilization” – Jordan, Lebanon and Syria) will be offered, as well as trips to one country or one site (Serengeti Safari; Egyptian Dynasties, Oasis, Mosques and Temples).

On 29 September and 27 October at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, the World Heritage Centre held two joint Jet Tours-UNESCO World Heritage workshops, “Mobilizing World Heritage Guides.” In order to sensitize Jet Tours guides and tourism professionals to the World Heritage Convention. The one-day sessions offered a programme on the conservation process, as well as site-specific information on a selection of sites that are part of the Jet Tours-World Heritage packages. Jet Tours guides received up-to-date information on the state of conservation of sites and ongoing projects at the sites. Jet Tours is also assisting the Centre through local training activities. During a recent World Heritage workshop in Bamako (Mali), the Jet Tours guides received the visit of the Minister of Tourism. In this framework, Jet Tours is now studying with the World Heritage Centre ways in which it may also contribute directly to conservation projects at World Heritage sites.
 Restructuring at the World Heritage Centre

The World Heritage Centre has undergone a re-organization of staff and several new appointments. Changes at the World Heritage Centre have involved a re-organization of staff and several new appointments.

As the regional section has been divided into two sub-regional units: Central and South Asia, and East Asia and the Pacific. In addition to his role as World Heritage Centre Deputy-Director, Kristope Kao will take up duties as Chief of the Asia-Pacific Section.

25 and 30 Years of Service

Director-General Kōichirō Matsuura awarded diplomas and medals to colleagues who had completed 25 and 30 years of service to UNESCO at a ceremony last June.

Among those honoured were four World Heritage Centre staff: Marielle Richon and Silvia Simmonds for 27 and 30 years of service, and Margarita González Lombardo and Elizabeth Wangari for 25 years.

Margarita González Lombardo works in the World Heritage Centre Latin America and Caribbean Section since 1999. Before that she worked in the Education Policy and Planning Division of the Education Sector. She also worked in the Higher Education Division where she helped establish the UNITWIN/UNESCO chairs programme.

Since 2001, Marielle Richon has been Focal Point for UNESCO at the World Heritage Centre. She joined the Division of Cultural Heritage in the Culture Sector in 1998, having worked for two years on the publication of the first World Culture Report. Earlier in her career she worked for the ‘Encounter between the Two Worlds’ Programme (consumer markets) and served as UNESCO’s Programme Specialist in Ecological Sciences with the Ecological Division of the Science Sector.

and the International Decade of the World’s Indigenous Peoples (1995-2004). She was recruited into UNESCO upon the creation of the Protocol Service in 1997.

Before joining the World Heritage Centre in 2001, Silvia Simmonds worked with the Office of the Director-General, the Social Sciences Sector and the Conferences Division. When she first started in 1975 she worked for the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

Dr Elizabeth Wangari is Chief of the World Heritage Centre Africa Section, working both on cultural and natural heritage. She joined the World Heritage Centre in 1980 as Senior Programme Specialist in charge of natural heritage activities for Africa and the Arab region. Before that she was Head of the Science Unit in the UNESCO Dakar Office, co-ordinating all the scientific activities of UNESCO in west and central Africa. She started at the World Heritage Centre in 1980, and then worked with UNESCO’s Scientific and Technical Cooperation Department, which became the International Year of the World’s Indigenous Peoples (1993) Comprehensive International Year of the World’s Indigenous Peoples (1993-2003). She has been part of the UNESCO team which has been at the forefront of the international community’s efforts to protect World Heritage sites.

The theme of the workshop was to sensitise various players to the cultural values of many potential World Heritage sites in the region. The workshop provided the occasion for the first ever systematic look at cultural heritage in a region that is underepresented on the World Heritage List. While most States Parties in the Pacific Region have ratified the World Heritage Convention, many of them have not prepared Tentative Lists, an essential step to nominating sites. The seminar therefore served as an instrument in sensitizing various players to the cultural values of many potential World Heritage sites in the region.

Participants in the Workshop drew up a list of priority cultural sites from each State Party, representing properties that each State intends to nominate over the next few years.

Restructuring at the World Heritage Centre

The World Heritage Centre has undergone a re-organization of its functions and structure. Natural heritage has been reinforced in the regional units. Staff from the Tangible Heritage Section of the Culture Sector (CLT/THS) has now joined World Heritage Centre staff. Changes at the World Heritage Centre have involved a re-organization of staff and several new appointments. The Asia/Pacific Section has been divided into two sub-regional units: Central and South Asia, and East Asia and the Pacific. In addition to his role as World Heritage Centre Deputy-Director, Kristope Kao will take up duties as Chief of the Asia-Pacific Section.

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**1 January to 31 March**

- Auguste Hirsch, 2005 International Journalistic Award international press competition, organized by the European Commission, Rome, Italy.

Information: award@euroheritagenetguide.org

**15 to 20 January**

- "Seeing with Young Eyes", Third Sub-regional Meeting of Young People Working with UNESCO on using art to teach about World Heritage, organized by UNESCO Beijing Office, Penang, Malaysia.

Information: bambi@unesco.org

**26 to 27 January**

- UNESCO WHC and Advisory Bodies Meeting.

ICCOM, Rome, Italy.

Information: a.battistelli@whc.unesco.org

**31 January to 1 February**

- Meeting on Implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Protection Areas: Conservation NGOs and WH Sites. Paris, France. Information: m.patty@unesco.org

**February to 3 March**

- Regional Training Workshop for the Caribbean on Marine World Heritage. Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. Information: m.kokkonen@unesco.org

**13 to 14 March**

- New Heritage Conference: Cultural Heritage and New Media, co-hosted by the University of Hong Kong and the Center for New Media, University of Hong Kong. Information: Janice Affleck, University of Hong Kong, Conference Secretariat.

http://newheritageforum.org

**16 to 17 March**

- World Heritage and Climate Change. New Heritage Conference: Cultural Heritage and Social Development. UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France. Information: m.nos@unesco.org or c.hance@unesco.org

**17 to 20 April**

- "Heritage at Risk, Preservation of the 20th-Century Architecture and the World Heritage", Moscow, Russian Federation. Information: award@euromedheritage.net

**19 to 22 April**

- 9th IUCN/COMOS International Symposium.

Symposium@comos.org

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**15 November - December 2005 / January 2006**

**The World Heritage Centre has recently published two new brochures:**

- World Heritage Marine Programme (English only) and
- World Today and Tomorrow with Young People (English, French and Spanish). The first gives an overview of the World Heritage programmes defined for the safeguarding of World Heritage sites around the world, and the second sensitizes young people to the importance of heritage protection, explaining ways they can be involved in preserving our heritage.

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**What Are They Doing?**

- Francesco Bandarin, WHC Director, Véronique Dufour, Director, and Michele Maglioli, Consultant, are well on their way to the Old City of Jerusalem (10-17 September) in view of the election of a new Plan for the Conservation of the Old City promised within the Initiative of the Director-General.
- Madeleine Rösler, Chief Europe & North America Section, attended a EuroMediterranean Workshop in Barcelona, Spain; and participated in the Centre at the IUCN-WCPA World Heritage Workshop ‘Enhancing RICH Evaluation Process: A Contribution to Achieving a Credible and Balanced World Heritage List’; outcomes are expected to cover all World Heritage sites as well as all Intangible Heritage. The workshop was edited and adapted by UNESCO especially for access via the web: http://whc.unesco.org/nlist/videos/
- Guy Debonnet, Assistant Programme Specialist, joined the Latin America & Caribbean Section February 2005, on secondment from the Greek Ministry of Culture to work within the framework of the Action Plan ‘Towards its implementation’ in Maun, Botswana (24-28 October).
- Birgitte Mougel, Consultant, joined the Africa & Caribbean Section, to participate in the ‘Training of Managers on the Natural Heritage Projects’ programme on protected areas.
- Grazia Piras, Associate Expert, Latin America & Caribbean Section, participated in the sub-regional training seminar on the Conservation of Limestone in Mayan Archaeological Sites in Tikal, Guatemala (23-25 November).
- Umiko Iizuka has been transferred from the World Heritage Centre to the UNESCO Addis Ababa Office as Programme Specialist for Culture.
- Anastasia Trigunikova, Consultant, joined the Europe & North America Section February 2005, on recruitment from the Greek Ministry of Culture to work on Mediterranean countries and post-conflict regions.
- Alcira Sambo, South America Specialist, joined the Latin America & Caribbean Section January 2006.
- Cédric Hance, Assistant Programme Specialist, joined the WHC and Advisory Bodies Meeting.

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**The World Heritage**

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**In order to enhance coherence and co-operation in implementation, the World Heritage Centre (WHC) has decided to define a series of tasks to be performed by the WHC in February 2004. The WHC comprises the heads of the secretariats of the five biodiversity-related conventions (Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and World Heritage Convention). The WHC meets regularly to discuss opportunities for synergistic activities and to exchange information.**

Within the context of an agreement between the online tour operator, Expedia Inc., and UNESCO’s longstanding partner, the United Nations Foundation (UNF), a web-based service has been launched in November 2005. The website, which complements the World Heritage website, is intended to raise awareness about World Heritage and to raise funds for World Heritage projects, both directly and by booking a World Heritage Trip through Expedia. All the profits from such trips will be directed to a Friends of World Heritage Fund, held at UNF. Such donations will be matched, up to a limit of US$50,000 per year, by both Expedia and UNF. The monies donated to this fund will be used exclusively to support community development and conservation projects around World Heritage sites in the developing countries. The World Heritage Centre is involved in developing the criteria and deciding on the projects to be supported. (http://www.friendsofworldheritage.org).

World Heritage films are now available online thanks to the Nippon Rosso Kyoiku (NRK) Japan’s public broad- November.


- Anna Sidorenko-Dulom, Assistant Programme Specialist, now part of the Europe & North America Section, carried out a mission to Baku, Azerbaijan (3-9 September) jointly with the University of Minnesota.


- Cédric Hance, Consultant, joined the Africa & Caribbean Section, to participate in the ‘Training of Managers on the Natural Heritage Projects’ programme on protected areas.

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**World Heritage of October 2005, No. 41, dedicates its feature article to the 34 new sites inscribed on the World Heritage List. In this issue you will also discover: the City of Bath, in the United Kingdom, originally founded by the Romans as a thermal spa and evolving into an elegant neoclassical city in the 18th century; the temples situated in the spectacular setting of the Kii Mountains in Japan; the archaeological site of Lepcis Magna in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, one of the most beautiful cities of the Roman Empire; and the cone-shaped karst formations of the Bungle Bungle range in Purnululu National Park in Australia.**

Beginning in 2006, the World Heritage Newsletter and the World Heritage review will be combined in a single publication. We shall pursue our journey of discovery of World Heritage sites everywhere in the world, issue offering news items and in-depth articles illustrated with high-quality photographs. For more information, contact: whr@unesco.org

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