

Towards Innovative Partnerships for World Heritage

A Discussion Paper

prepared for the November 11-12, 2002 UNESCO Venice Workshop "Towards Innovative Partnerships for World Heritage"

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I. Background

Introduction

Since its inception 30 years ago, the *Convention concerning the protection of the World cultural and natural heritage* (attached) has become the major international legal instrument for designating cultural and natural sites of outstanding universal value.

World Heritage sites need long-term, continuous support. The greatest challenge in their management and protection is to provide both technical and financial assistance for their long-term preservation and for emergency interventions.

The World Heritage Partnerships Initiative

Reliable protection and maintenance of World Heritage sites present a challenge to national and local authorities and citizens. Over the years, a number of innovative and creative ways have been found to strengthen further the effectiveness and resilience of the *Convention*.

In June 2002, the World Heritage Committee – the governing body of countries that have ratified the *Convention*–welcomed the development of a *World Heritage Partnerships Initiative* (attached), "*as a means to achieve, on an experimental basis, a new systematic approach to partnerships*".

The Venice Workshop

As background for the November 11-12, 2002 Venice workshop “Towards Innovative Partnerships for World Heritage”, this paper seeks to identify discussion elements for the further development and implementation of the *World Heritage Partnerships Initiative*.

The objective for the Venice Workshop is to identify elements for a strategic framework for long-term, sustainable support for World Heritage as envisaged by the *World Heritage Partnerships Initiative*. In this context, it will review and adapt existing partnership schemes and, also seek to identify innovative proposals.

The Workshop will precede the International Congress *World Heritage 2002: Shared Legacy, Common Responsibility*, which will take place in Venice on 14-16 November, 2002, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the *World Heritage Convention*.

This discussion paper will be edited in line with inputs made by workshop participants. It will be finalized as part of the overall proceedings of UNESCO’s November 2002 International Congress in Venice.

The UNESCO Framework

The *World Heritage Convention*, adopted in 1972, mandates UNESCO to identify, protect, and preserve natural and cultural heritage sites of outstanding universal value. With 175 States Parties and 730 sites inscribed on the World Heritage List as of 31 October 2002 (attached), the *World Heritage Convention* is widely recognised as the pre-eminent international legal tool for preservation.

The World Heritage Fund. The *World Heritage Convention* established a World Heritage Fund, currently totalling about US\$ 4 million per year. It is mostly used to assist States Parties in preserving World Heritage sites on their territory.

Technical and Financial Support. For the implementation of its programmes and projects and the safeguarding and maintenance of World Heritage Sites, UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee call upon the Advisory bodies to the Committee, IUCN, ICOMOS and ICCROM in their respective areas of competence and capability. Other actors offer technical and financial support.

Partnerships. The *World Heritage Convention* recognizes the need to work with a range of partners (Art.7). The importance of partnerships was further acknowledged by the United Nations at the 56th session of the General Assembly in 2001, stressing that “partnerships should be recognized as an increasingly important instrument to achieve the objectives of the United Nations bodies, agencies, and programmes”. (A/RES/56/76, August 28, 2001, “Cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector”). These initiatives must take into account the inter-governmental nature of the United Nations, and they must not compromise its independence and neutrality.

Public-Private Partnerships

The 1990s saw the emergence of partnerships between public institutions on the one hand, and civil society and private sector organizations on the other. Corporations and individual citizens are increasingly taking on - directly or by way of specialized foundations - responsibility for a range of social and environmental causes, including World Heritage preservation. This trend is also reflected in the emergence of new institutions associated with the United Nations system, most prominently the United Nations Global Compact.

In line with this, a first set of partnerships has evolved over recent years in support of World Heritage. With the *World Heritage Partnerships Initiative* UNESCO is now moving towards a new partnership platform through which civil society and private sector organizations might be engaged over the longer term.

II. The Need for Support

Long-term Needs

Ensuring that World Heritage sites sustain the outstanding universal value for which they have been designated is an increasingly complex challenge. 30 of the 730 World Heritage sites have been formally declared as World Heritage in Danger; many others face ascertained and potential threats to their long-term integrity and survival. These sites are vulnerable to the effects of urban development, exponential increases in tourism, deterioration, negative impact of infrastructure construction, improper use, pollution and the long-term effects of climate change and, occasionally, wanton destruction.

It is therefore vital to mobilize resources to consolidate and expand existing levels of technical and administrative expertise and financial assistance to safeguard the proper management of these outstanding cultural and natural heritage sites.

Sustainable partnerships could make a tangible difference. Because World Heritage preservation is a task for all future public-private partnership programmes should, wherever possible, be structured with a view to the long term. Engagements are desirable in support of individual sites, specific action programmes, or World Heritage at large.

Emergency situations

Sudden calamities and emergencies, including wars, earthquakes or floods, can critically affect World Heritage sites, and threaten what the world community cherishes most. Attending to sudden special needs requires quick response and intervention capabilities.

As we have seen most recently in the disastrous Eastern European floods of 2002, weather related damage can suddenly require vast amounts of extra resources for salvage and repair. Damages at affected World Heritage sites can quickly escalate beyond the normal stand-by capacity of local authorities and of the World Heritage Fund.

In times of such sudden peak demands there will also be a need for a stronger technical stand-by assistance, to facilitate fast mobilization of the very best expertise.

III. 12 Areas for Discussion

The *World Heritage Partnerships Initiative* offers opportunities for broadening civil society support and corporate collaboration. In addition to contributions towards the World Heritage Fund, a major objective could be to link civil society initiatives, corporate endeavours, philanthropists and donors to particular World Heritage sites, or specific programmes.

The *World Heritage Partnerships Initiative* can build on many promising examples of civil society and private sector engagement. There is a track record of initiatives that have succeeded in raising awareness, technical cooperation, and resource mobilisation. How might these be brought to serve the causes of continuous, steady support for World Heritage conservation, and how might they be scaled up? These are key questions for the Workshop.

Figures show that citizens are willing to engage for common causes: for example, in 2001, voluntary philanthropic giving in the United States alone amounted to US\$ 212 billion – the equivalent of about four times the entire annual international development aid budget worldwide in the same year.

In welcoming the *World Heritage Partnerships Initiative* in June 2002, the World Heritage Committee encouraged the development of performance indicators for evaluating the Initiative which will be considered by the Committee in 2003. It further requested periodic progress reports, and an evaluation in 2006 of the Initiative up to end of 2005.

The strategic framework for implementing the *World Heritage Partnerships Initiative* is the initial and necessary step towards the development of the founding principles, the setting of benchmarks and targets, the promotion of pilot approaches, and the making of adjustments in response to lessons learned.

We propose 12 areas for discussion at the Venice Workshop. These fall into three categories:

- Communication and general engagement of the public
- Additional financial flows, and
- Public-private complementarities

We hope that at the workshop new suggestions will be added, and that some of the elements set out below will be picked up and elaborated in more detail by participants.

Communication and general engagement of the public

1: Platforms of engagement

Does World Heritage need champions? If the public embraces World Heritage more strongly, this will open the doors for many different types of collaboration and financial support.

There is a need to engage stronger support among the citizens of the world for the 730 most treasured and vetted sites on earth. There is every reason to pursue this cause aggressively. It is hard to imagine a better, more remarkable portfolio – which has the potential to resonate with such a broad range of potential private, corporate and public partners.

Against this background, the *World Heritage Partnerships Initiative* could foster a variety of special, supportive platforms – people and personalities willing to champion World Heritage at local, regional and/or global levels, who agree to become ambassadors or patrons for World Heritage.

2: World Heritage Associations – Membership Organizations

What is the scope for a World Heritage public membership programme? How could UNESCO World Heritage be supported by a network of associations, who would regularly receive and disseminate information, and who would support World Heritage in their respective geographical and social spheres?

The Workshop will study a variety of models of membership programmes such as ones developed by National Geographic, the Smithsonian Institution, or Save Venice.

3: Youth and Universities

How can young people be mobilised for future actions in favour of World Heritage? The success of the World Heritage in Young Hands project demonstrates that the engagement of young people and school children may be one of the best long-term routes to sustained public and private support.

In parallel there are increasing numbers of University Programmes focusing exclusively on World Heritage –for example the World Heritage Programme of the University of Cottbus, Germany.

These issues will be discussed in two parallel workshops, to be held in Treviso and Feltre respectively.

4: Emergency situations

In view of the mounting toll taken by natural disasters, is there a need for an emergency stand-by facility to safeguard World Heritage in sudden danger?

Could regional and global technical emergency assistance networks be based on partner organizations making their expertise available when necessary? How would such a network relate to existing ones (i.e. the Blue Shield) ?

5: Mediation and Brokerage

How can the *World Heritage Partnership Initiative* involve the growing number of foundations and non-profit institutes who specialize in bringing investors, philanthropists and applicants together (e.g. Synergos Institute, DevelopmentSpace, GEXI,)?

Additional Financial Flows

6: Valuing the World Heritage “brand”

The World Heritage portfolio is of timeless and immense social value. So much so that some organizations or corporations will like to connect their image with a specific site or a specific thematic category or cause. How can the integrity of the World Heritage image be preserved?

World Heritage sites have been selected from a much larger pool of applicants; they are internationally acclaimed, and officially certified. As such, they can present a highly attractive “product” corporations or foundations may want to be associated with. For any donor, sponsor, or circle of friends, World Heritage is a most reputable and reliable investment to be associated with.

7: Private Philanthropy

How could the *World Heritage Partnerships Initiative* also encourage the establishment of trust funds and similar financial pillars by private philanthropists? Which models of engagement and which type of activities could best attract the interest of private donors?

8: Fundraising

Could World Heritage sites located in higher income countries be used as a tool for raising funds for World Heritage?

Fundraising events staged at World Heritage sites can serve as platforms for communication. With their beautiful surroundings, they can serve to promote the arts, music, culture, environment, and the general cause of World Heritage among a wider public.

A recent example is offered by a Benefit Dinner and Concert sponsored in Germany in October 2002 by the Sanssouci Potsdam Palace World Heritage Site – to the benefit of the Garden Kingdom of Wörlitz, a close-by, flood-affected World Heritage site.

9: Cross-financing

How can cross-financing be used to generate extra resources for World Heritage?

Electronic billing as a “conduit”. Electronic billing provides a huge potential that is only starting to be tapped. Taking advantage of this opportunity, customers and companies could co-operate financially with the *World Heritage Partnerships Initiative*.

Large numbers of small contributions can be mobilized and processed by offering customers the option of *voluntary* contributions as part of regular billing and collection systems. Billions of tiny contributions can be raised at minimum administrative cost, and aggregated into sizable additional funding sources. The larger the number of contributors, the smaller the sacrifice any single contributor needs to make – and the greater the viability of “painless giving”.

Private enterprises – industries, banks, utilities, marketing chains, insurance, pension fund schemes, etc. – and also some Civil Society organizations could serve as conduits for “the extra penny”- type, voluntary contributions and other fundraising to the benefit of World Heritage. For instance, their members and clients could be given the option to contribute tiny amounts through different kinds of payment plans, e.g. routine rounding up of telephone, electricity bills etc., adding miniscule percentages on credit card bills, “green” airline tickets, etc.

The attraction of these kinds of schemes is that they are virtually painless for those who contribute, and for the firms who help channel their customers’ contributions. None of them needs to pay much, and yet substantial flows of money can be created.

The Product-Line Route. Corporations can make donations in the form of a long-term commitment to add a very small percentage to the price of some of their high volume products. Money collected in this way could be used especially to match a preservation cause that requires continuous funding with a foreseeable revenue line (e.g. 1 cent extra on each pencil, toothbrush, or can of soda sold). Such product-gearred fundraising can be twinned with site or topic specific commitments or “adoption schemes”.

Public-Private Complementarities

10: Links to development aid

Can World Heritage also be a significant income earner and create special opportunities for regional development?

For example, a World Heritage site can be a central tourism attraction for an entire region. To assure sustainable patterns of tourism, and to provide local people economic and employment opportunities, collaboration with aid programmes for capacity building or for infrastructure improvements can make a difference.

11: Increase Public-Private Synergies

Legislation concerning non-profit foundations, charitable giving, and tax deduction schemes can set important signals regarding the support for World Heritage (for example Brazil has legislation which favours charitable contributions for historical heritage). What type of legislation can help charitable giving and support of World Heritage in particular?

12: Feedback, accountability and communication

The *World Heritage Partnerships Initiative* must be accountable to its stakeholders. It will present periodic progress reports to the World Heritage Committee up to 2006, at which time an in-depth performance evaluation and decision on continuation will be made.

Such feedback will be essential in keeping partnerships and the good will of contributors alive. A public that engages, and corporations who associate themselves with the cause of World Heritage will want to receive feedback on outcomes, and transparency in terms of the ways money is spent and accounted for. Transactions – from project selection to implementation, evaluation and accounting – must be governed by correct rules and highly transparent procedures.

Beyond proper conduct, results should be well disseminated, and successes should be celebrated. Where warranted, positive feedback and public recognition needs to be given to those who have generously supported a cause.

Conclusion

A 2-3 page summary of this Workshop will be presented at the Congress on 14-16 November.

Attachments

1. The Convention concerning the protection of the World cultural and natural heritage
2. World Heritage Partnerships Initiative
3. List World Heritage Sites and brief descriptions