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Natural Heritage Bulletin

Information and Updates from World Natural Heritage Sites in Asia and the Pacific Region

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



The World Heritage Convention, widely acknowledged as one of UNESCO's most successful programmes, celebrated its 45th anniversary in November 2017, underlining its universal acceptance and global legitimacy. In 2017, the World Heritage Committee also officially launched the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting which is a core monitoring process of the World Heritage Convention that provides an assessment of the application of the Convention by State Parties and the state of conservation and protection of heritage properties. Heritage protection is now also recognized as a key element for peaceful humanitarian coexistence with increasing collaboration between UNESCO, the International Criminal Court, the UN Security Council and the State Parties. The linkages between human culture and nature are being further emphasized with growing evidence that natural and cultural heritage are closely interconnected in most landscapes and seascapes.

Furthering its goal of supporting the implementation of the Convention through capacity building and related programmes, the UNESCO C2C at Wildlife Institute of India co-organised the thematic session on "Culture-Nature Journey" at the 19th International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) General Assembly. The Centre also conducted an International Training Workshop on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) including Coastal and Marine World Heritage Sites of India, and hosted the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage INTACH-ICH National Conference on Himalayan Heritage, as well as facilitated guest lectures by eminent persons. As the Centre continues on its sojourn of nearly three years, the forthcoming year awaits exciting developments including possession of its exclusive building within the campus of Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.

**UNESCO Category 2 Centre for World Natural Heritage
Management and Training for Asia and the Pacific Region,
Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, India**

The Natural Heritage Bulletin is a compilation of information on World Natural Heritage Sites in the Asia-Pacific Region which is obtained from free and publicly available sources such as the internet, newspapers and other publications. The publisher of this bulletin does not make any claim on the authenticity of the contents of the secondary sources of information. The information does not necessarily represent any official views of the publishing institution.

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE NEWS

Convergence between Ramsar and World Heritage

A new report, “Ramsar and World Heritage Conventions converging towards success” suggests conservation of cultural and natural values can highly benefit from dual designations under the Ramsar and World Heritage conventions. It illustrates through six case studies the benefits and challenges of managing wetland ecosystems and gives examples on how community participation contributes to positive conservation of both natural and cultural heritage. In 2016, more than 97 areas were listed across the globe under both the conventions.

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1709>



Fishermen crossing Loktak lake, known for its inhabited floating islands called ‘Phumdis’, Keibul Lamjao National Park, Manipur, India

Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting Launched

The World Heritage Committee officially launched the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting based on decision taken during its 41st Session in Krakow, Poland in July 2017. The decision taken by the Committee sets out the timetable for reporting in each region, which will begin with the Arab States in 2018 (report to the Committee 2020), followed by Africa in 2019 (report to the Committee 2021), Asia and the Pacific in 2020 (report to the Committee 2022), Latin America and the Caribbean in 2021 (report to the Committee 2023) and finally Europe and North America, who will report in one year, 2022 (report to the Committee 2024). Periodic Reporting is a core monitoring process of the World Heritage Convention with four key objectives assessing the application of the World Heritage Convention by States Parties, assessing whether values of the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List are being maintained over time, gathering updated information about the properties, and serving as a mechanism for regional co-operation and exchange of information and experiences between States Parties with regards to World Heritage.

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1735>



Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting across all regions

UNESCO collaborates with Partners for Cultural Protection

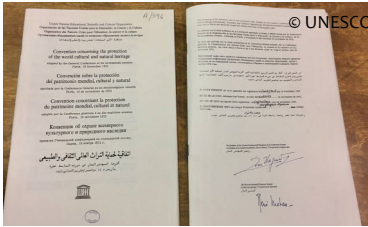
On the occasion of UNESCO’s General Conference, an international high-level panel on 6 November 2017, brought together Ministers from Iraq and Mali, the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and international experts to strengthen cooperation in response to cultural cleansing and violent extremism. UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova, highlighted the key role of heritage protection in forging new strategies for peace and social cohesion in situations of conflict. Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, and Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), also signed a Letter of Intent formalizing and further enhancing their collaboration recognizing the importance of protecting cultural heritage from attack in times of conflict.

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1744>



High-level panel of UNESCO, ICC and international experts

45th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention



The original copy of the Convention signed by the then President of General Conference Mr Toru Hagiwara and the Director-General Mr. Rene Maheu, copy saved in UNESCO Archives.

Message from the Director of the World Heritage Centre: “On 16 November 2017, we celebrate the 45th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, one of the most powerful international tools for heritage preservation and one of UNESCO's most successful programmes. World Heritage embodies the great humanist idea that people of all cultures and faiths can unite around the conservation of places of Outstanding Universal Value”. For text of full message, refer source below.

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1747>

Singapore looking to Ratify UNESCO Cultural Heritage Convention

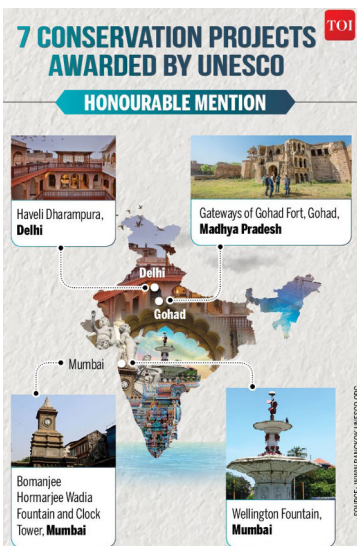


Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Grace Fu, delivering Singapore's National Statement at the 39th Session of the UNESCO General Conference in Paris on Nov 1, 2017.

To protect its unique cultural heritage, Singapore is looking into ratifying a 2003 convention by UNESCO which aims to safeguard aspects of such intangible heritage including the performing arts, cultural rituals and traditional crafts. Ms Fu, Chairman of the Singapore National Commission for UNESCO, pointed to milestones such as the recognition of the Botanic Gardens as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2015 and the National Parks Board receiving the UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Prize in 2017 for its contributions to environmental preservation. She said the Republic was drawing up a "comprehensive national blueprint" for Singapore's heritage sector which would include a repository for its intangible cultural heritage in partnership with local communities, academics and experts.

Source: <http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/singapore-looking-to-ratify-unesco-cultural-heritage-convention-grace-fu>

UNESCO Award for Indian Conservation Efforts



Seven projects from India were recognized by the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation programme for their efforts - three received the Award of Merit (Christ Church, Mumbai; Royal Bombay Opera House, Mumbai; Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, Srirangam, Tamil Nadu) and four got an honorable mention (Haveli Dharampura, Delhi; Gateways of Gohad Fort, Gohad, Madhya Pradesh; Bomanjee Hormarjee Wadia Fountain and Clock Tower, Mumbai; Wellington Fountain, Mumbai). In all, sixteen projects from six countries - Australia, China, India, Iran, New Zealand, and Singapore - were recognized in this year's Heritage awards. The awards aim to encourage other property owners to undertake conservation projects within their communities, either independently or by seeking public-private partnerships.

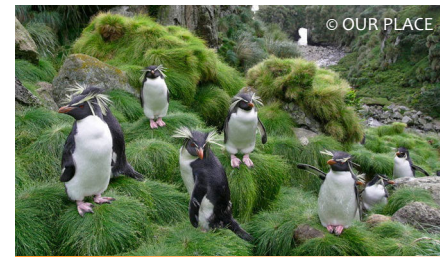
Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/unesco-recognition-for-7-indian-conservation-efforts/articleshow/61457779.cms>



World Heritage State of Conservation Information System

The World Heritage State of Conservation Information System successfully completed 5 years which has developed a database that offers a trove of reliable information on the state of conservation of natural and cultural World Heritage properties since 1979 and the threats they have faced in the past, or are currently facing. In addition to its primary purpose of monitoring the state of conservation of properties, the Information System also contributes to the institutional memory of the World Heritage Convention and to the transparency of the Reactive Monitoring process, and moreover, provides a reliable and effective tool for well-informed and consistent decision-making.

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1756>

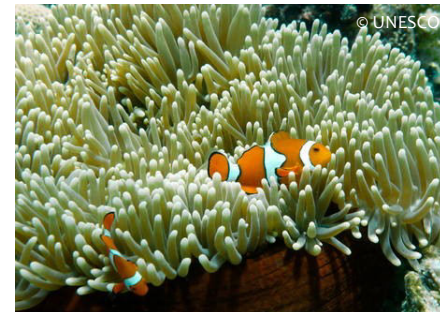


Gough and Inaccessible Islands (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Climate Change Threat to Natural World Heritage Sites

The number of natural heritage sites imperilled by climate change has nearly doubled in three years, according to a new report released at the United Nations climate talks in Bonn, Germany in November 2017. The report by IUCN says the number of imperilled UNESCO sites that include coral reefs, glaciers and wetlands has risen from 35 to 62 of the 241 listed sites since 2014. This means one in four UNESCO natural sites are at risk, up from one in seven. Coral reefs, including the Great Barrier Reef off Australia, and glaciers top the list of ecosystems most threatened by global warming, the report notes.

Source: <https://weather.com/science/environment/news/2017-11-17-unesco-natural-heritage-sites-imperiled-report>

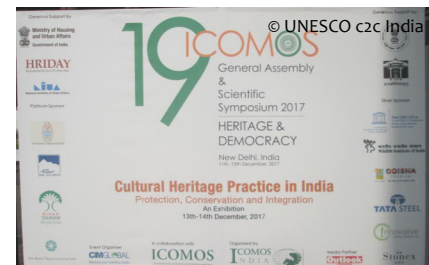


Great Barrier Reef, Australia

World Heritage Centre at ICOMOS General Assembly in Delhi

The 19th General Assembly of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), took place in New Delhi, India from 11-15 December 2017. UNESCO representative Dr. Mechthild Rössler, Director of the Heritage Division and the World Heritage Centre, together with other staff participated in the Assembly and its various working groups and knowledge cafes, providing input on synergies between culture and nature, among the different UNESCO Conventions and Programmes, and on culture and sustainable development. The 'Delhi Declaration on Heritage and Democracy', adopted at the closing session of the Assembly emphasized the understanding that people's perspective is central to heritage, and the General Assembly declared that ethical principles have to be developed for heritage.

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1767>



ICOMOS General Assembly 2017, New Delhi, India

University hosts World Heritage Site Exhibition from China

The University of New Hampshire hosted an exhibition of the caves at Mogao, a top United Nations World Heritage Site located in Dunhuang, China, November, 13-17 in Huddleston Hall, Durham. The site is famous for its caves featuring statues and wall paintings spanning 1,000 years of Buddhist art. Dunhuang was at the crossroads of trade, cultures, ethnicities and religions along the ancient Silk Road from 300 BCE to about 1400 CE. The caves offer a rare glimpse into the lives of the diverse people who travelled along the ancient Silk Road.

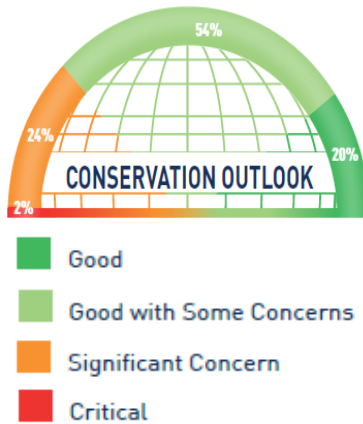
Source: <http://www.fosters.com/news/20171103/unh-hosts-world-heritage-site-exhibition-from-china>



Mural Cave, Mei Dynasty

WORLD HERITAGE OUTLOOK 2

Conservation Outlook 2017 for natural World Heritage in Asia



Source: Osipova et al. 2017 *

The 2014 IUCN World Heritage Outlook provided the first global assessment of all natural World Heritage sites. IUCN World Heritage Outlook 2 released in 2017, marks the first update of this assessment which summarises the key trends in the state of conservation of natural World Heritage sites, the threats and pressures they are facing, and the effectiveness of their protection and management. The global World Heritage Outlook in 2017 remains similar to 2014 with a positive conservation outlook (“good” or “good with some concerns”) for 64% of sites, an outlook of “significant concern” for 29% and a “critical” status for 7%. World Heritage sites in Asia have achieved better rankings than the global average, for 74% the conservation outlook is either “good” or “good with some concerns”, for 24% it is of “significant concern” and for 2% the outlook is “critical”.

The conservation outlook of 26 sites of all regions changed between 2014 and 2017: 14 improving and 12 deteriorating. One encouraging finding is that only positive changes were recorded in Asia, with four sites improving in 2017.

Country	Site	Conservation Outlook 2014	Conservation Outlook 2017
India	Kaziranga National Park	Significant concern	Good with some concerns
India	Sundarbans National Park	Significant concern	Good with some concerns
Indonesia	Ujung Kulon National Park	Significant concern	Good with some concerns
Thailand	Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex	Critical	Significant concern

Source: Osipova et al. 2017 *

Impacts from tourism and tourism infrastructure, hunting, roads and dams are the most widespread significant current threats to natural World Heritage sites in Asia, followed by water pollution, invasive species and climate change.

* Source: Osipova, E., Shadie, P., Zwahlen, C., Osti, M., Shi, Y., Kormos, C., Bertzky, B., Murai, M., Van Merm, R., Badman, T. (2017). IUCN World Heritage Outlook 2: A conservation assessment of all natural World Heritage sites. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 92pp.

UNESCO C2C INDIA: CURRENT ACTIVITIES

International Training Workshop on “Pilot Testing of Management Effective Evaluation (MEE) Framework for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) including Coastal and Marine World Heritage Sites of India

Marine protected areas (MPAs) are considered as a tool used to meet management objectives for the coastal and marine environment. In India, Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) is conducted in Tiger Reserves and National Parks. However, this assessment has not focused on coastal and marine protected areas, which operate in a different context and management framework. UNESCO C2C organized an International Training Workshop on “Pilot Testing of Management Effective Evaluation (MEE) Framework for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) including Coastal and Marine World Heritage Sites of India” from 15th -17th November, 2017 at Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu, India. A total 17 participants and 08 resource persons attended the workshop representing site managers of coastal and marine sites in India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Maldives. The objective of the workshop was to standardize the protocol for the Assessment of Management Effectiveness Evaluation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) including Coastal & Marine World Heritage Sites of India.





INTACH-ICH National Conference on Himalayan Heritage: Community-led Economic Regeneration

The Intangible Cultural Heritage Division, INTACH, in collaboration with the INTACH Uttarakhand Chapter and the UNESCO C2C at the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, organized a National Conference on the Intangible Culture of the Himalayan Region during 29-30, November 2017, with the aim to deliberate with community members, professionals, scholars, researchers and other cultural specialists on the idea of social and cultural identity, related oral traditions and to explore how this meets the challenges of an ever-changing contextual environment. The purpose of the conference was to understand how communities view or value their heritage, draw attention to the diverse oral and community-centred cultural traditions of the region, and how their practice is retained in the present world. Participation by 45 representatives at the conference helped to establish links between scholars, communities, and government/non-government bodies, to further the efforts of safeguarding intangible and 'lived' heritage, and explore its connects with economic regeneration.



Students Visit from Griffith University, Australia

A group of students and faculty from the Department of Tourism, Griffith University, Australia visited WII, Dehradun during 23 - 27 Nov and 07 - 11 Dec, 2017. The visit was part of a three-year (2017-2019) scheme funded through Australia's Federal Government's Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, with the aim of increasing Australian students' knowledge of the Indo-Pacific region. The students undertook classroom lectures and field visit to study issues of ecotourism. UNESCO C2C also facilitated talks on India's natural heritage and culture for the visiting group.



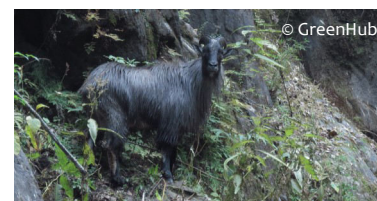
Students Visit from Centre for Heritage Management, Ahmedabad

Dr. Neel Kamal Chapagain, Director, Centre for Heritage Management, Ahmedabad accompanied by Faculty and Master's Students visited UNESCO C2C WII in December, 2017 with the purpose of orientation and introducing them to the aspects of Natural Heritage conservation and management. An overview on WII and C2C was provided to the visiting group followed by interaction on varied issues of natural heritage. The students had occasion to walk the nature trail at WII campus.



GreenHub Assam Internship Programme

UNESCO C2C at WII is supporting the internship programme of a community-based organization, GreenHub Assam, which provides training on nature documentation to youths. During the first phase, two interns successfully completed photo and video documentation of the Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (GHNPCA), Himachal Pradesh, a World Heritage Site.



UNESCO C2C WII at the ICOMOS General Assembly, New Delhi



UNESCO C2C WII was invited by ICOMOS India as a partner for the 19th ICOMOS General Assembly held in Delhi, India during December, 2017. As part of the primary theme of 'Heritage and Democracy' under the ICOMOS GA Scientific Symposium, UNESCO C2C WII co-organised the thematic session 4 titled **“Culture-Nature Journey; Exploring the complexities of human relationships with natural and cultural places”** in Delhi on 13th-14th December, 2017. The session witnessed large participation by national and international delegates over the two days. The Centre also hosted a stall in the **ICOMOS GA Exposition** which was used for display and distribution of its promotional materials.



A special **‘Plenary session of the Culture-Nature Journey’** was organised by UNESCO C2C WII during the event on 13th December, 2017, titled **“Connecting Countries: supporting transnational heritage conservation through linking culture and nature”**. The focus of the session was on the means by which uniting approaches to culture and nature can support international conservation partnerships. The plenary was adorned by an international group of panellists representing the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, IUCN, ICOMOS, ICCROM, Archaeological Survey of India, former Indian Permanent Representative to UNESCO, Director Wildlife Institute of India and a keynote speech by Mr. Sanjeev Sanyal, economist, writer, environmentalist, urban theorist and currently Principal Economic Adviser in the Ministry of Finance, Government of India.



A joint publication of UNESCO C2C WII, UNESCO New Delhi and DRONAH titled **‘Cultural Landscapes of Asia’** was also released during the event. This followed a **‘Consultation Meeting on Cultural Landscapes’** organised by UNESCO C2C as a side event in Delhi earlier on 9th December, 2017 with the aim of reviewing the requirements, scope, methodology and content for capacity building programmes for cultural landscapes with a focus on Asia.

GUEST TALK



Dr. John Merson

Dr. John Merson, Executive Director, Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute, Australia delivered a Guest Lecture on “The value of adaptive management training for protected area managers, rangers and technical staff facing the impacts of climatic change, and particularly more frequent and intense wildfires” at WII on 13 October, 2017.



Dr. Lokesh Ohri

Dr. Lokesh Ohri, Founder, Rural Entrepreneurship for Art & Cultural Heritage (REACH) and Co-Convenor, INTACH, Uttarakhand Chapter delivered a talk on "Uttarakhand: The Nature-Culture Connect" on 25 November, 2017 to the visiting students from Griffith University, Australia at WII on 25 November, 2017.

COLLABORATIONS

- ICOMOS: UNESCO C2C WII collaborated with ICOMOS India to organise the thematic session on “Culture-Nature Journey; Exploring the complexities of human relationships with natural and cultural places” during the 19th ICOMOS General Assembly in Delhi on 13-14 December, 2017.
- INTACH: UNESCO C2C WII in collaboration with INTACH hosted the INTACH-ICH National Conference on Himalayan Heritage: Community-led Economic Regeneration in Dehradun on 29-30, November 2017.



Release of Natural Heritage Bulletin published by UNESCO Category 2 Centre-WII

ANNOUNCEMENT

A series of “Training Programmes on Monitoring of Outstanding Universal Values of Natural World Heritage Sites in India” is being organised by UNESCO C2C - WII, Dehradun during January and February 2018 in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Assam, India. The objective of the workshops is to enhance the awareness and management of natural World Heritage Sites of India and assess the current status of OUVs of the sites. The target group is frontline forest staff and stakeholders of these sites in India.

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