

# WHITRAP NEWSLETTER

World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO



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The World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (WHITRAP) is a Category II institute under the auspices of UNESCO. It was the first international organization in the field of world heritage to be established in a developing country. Mandated by the States Parties of the World Heritage Convention and other States Parties of UNESCO, the institute was founded to promote the conservation and development of World Heritage in Asia and Pacific Region. WHITRAP has three branches in Beijing, Shanghai, and Suzhou.

The Shanghai Centre at Tongji University focuses on the conservation of cultural heritage, such as the sustainable development of ancient towns and villages, architectural sites, architectural complexes, and cultural landscapes.

The Beijing Centre at Peking University is in charge of natural heritage conservation, archaeological excavation, and management of the sites' cultural landscape.

The Suzhou Centre, hosted by Suzhou Municipal Government, is in charge of traditional architectural craftsmanship and restoration, conservation materials analysis, and historic garden restoration and maintenance.

The rotating secretariat is now located in Shanghai and is mainly responsible for coordinating and guiding the work of WHITRAP according to the plans and instructions determined by the Governing Board.

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## OBSERVATION OF THE 46TH SESSION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE



### 1 GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE 46TH SESSION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE, NEW DELHI, 2024

Marie-Noël Tournoux  
 WHITRAP Shanghai

#### Introduction

Following the 45th Extraordinary Session of the World Heritage Committee, which was held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the 46th session of the Committee took place for the first time in India, in New Delhi, Republic of India from 21 July to 31 July, at the Bharat Mandapam International Exhibition and Convention Centre. It was hosted by the Ministry of Culture Government of India and the Archaeological Survey of India, the main body in charge of ancient monuments and archaeological sites of national importance and is responsible for their protection, preservation and conservation.

The World Heritage Committee is one of the two bodies governing the World Heritage Convention. It is composed of the representatives of 21 States, elected from the 195 States parties to the Convention. It is responsible for implementing the Convention, examining new proposals for inscription on the World Heritage List, and assessing the state of conservation of sites already inscribed, based on analyses produced by UNESCO's advisory bodies and its Secretariat, the

### WORLD HERITAGE IN INDIA AND NEW DELHI

India ratified the World Heritage Convention (1972) in November 1977 and has on date 43 properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, 35 Cultural, 7 Natural and 1 Mixed. India has already served three terms as a Committee member in 1985-1989, 2001-2007, and 2011-2015, and is now serving its fourth one from 2021 to 2025.

India has taken an active role in the life of the World Heritage List, with the Agra Fort, the Ajanta Caves, Ellora Caves, and the Taj Mahal, inscribed in 1983, being amongst the oldest inscriptions on the List and enriching the List with innovative and complex types of heritage such as the Himalayan Indian Railways inscribed in 1999 which was then one of the earliest large-scale industrial heritage sites. It was later extended in 2005 and 2008 to become a serial site renamed Mountain Railways of India.

The city of New Delhi, the capital city of India has a history going back many centuries, it is home to three World Heritage sites Qutb Minar and its Monuments, Humayun's Tomb and the Red Fort Complex.

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World Heritage Centre. It manages the World Heritage Fund, defines key trends and thematic strategic objectives, and develops the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. It meets once a year in an ordinary session.

### The 46th session

For its 46th session, the Chairperson was M. Vishal V. Sharma, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of India to UNESCO and the Rapporteur was M. Martin Ouaklani (Belgium) who took over from Ms Shikha Jain (India), the Rapporteur of the 45th session. The 5 Vice-Chairpersons were representatives of Bulgaria, Greece, Qatar, Kenya and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the 21 Committee members were Argentina, Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Zambia with Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Türkiye, Ukraine, Viet Nam as new Committee members elected in November 2023 at the 24th General Assembly of UNESCO. All working documents of the World Heritage Committee meeting including video recordings are available here:

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/46COM/documents/>

### Opening Ceremony

The 46th session of the Committee was opened by M. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, who reiterated India's dedication to multilateralism and safeguarding heritage and announced a \$1 million contribution to the World Heritage Centre to support capacity-building efforts in Africa and Small Island in Developing States in Asia. In her opening address, UNESCO Director General, Ms Audrey Azoulay, recalled UNESCO's concern to promote peace and advocate the prominent role of Culture as a main catalyst in a fragmented world. Azoulay showcased throughout her address UNESCO's involvement in the global policy dialogue on Culture and the full relevance of the World Heritage Convention as an essential instrument. Regarding World Heritage, she highlighted the challenges heritage was facing such as the impacts of Climate Change on sites or the effects of over tourism. She underlined the important efforts undertaken to develop capacity-building initiatives around the world. She furthermore insisted on how the Danger List should not be considered negatively but as means to achieve desired conservation goals. Azoulay also mentioned strengthening the links between all types

of heritage, particularly the nature-culture linkage, synergies between tangible and intangible heritage and acknowledging all types of stakeholders, the importance of which the World Heritage Committee has consistently advocated for the past years.

### Key items

In 2024, from 23 to 25 July, the Committee examined the state of conservation of 124 sites already inscribed on the World Heritage List, including 57 on the List of World Heritage in Danger, of which one was removed, Niokolo-Koba National Park in Senegal thanks to the joint efforts to reduce threats to the site, made by the Senegalese authorities in collaboration with local communities, and with the support of UNESCO.

From 26 to 29 July, it also examined 28 nomination proposals for inscription on the World Heritage List but inscribed only 26, including 2 major extensions to properties which are considered as new inscriptions. The new inscriptions include 20 cultural properties, 5 natural properties and 1 mixed site, bringing the total number of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List to 1223 in 168 countries. One site 'Saint Hilarion Monastery/ Tell Umm Amer' in Palestine, was both inscribed on the List and on the List in Danger to recognize both the value of the site and its dire need for protection.

It also examined reports on the work of the World Heritage Centre, the UNESCO Category 2 Centres such as WHITRAP, and statutory processes such as the Preliminary Assessment two-phase nomination process. It examined and discussed the management and implementation of the World Heritage Fund -- which is a specificity of the World Heritage Convention compared to other Convention -- and the sustainability of the Convention, with State Parties underlining the paradox of an ever more successful Convention and the limited human and financial resources of UNESCO's World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies as a crucial ongoing challenge. Several States Parties to the Convention were allocated additional funds to finance new conservation work on properties on their territory.

### Key trends

In the continuation of the previous Committee sessions, the key trends were the focus on thematic areas such as synergies between Conventions and programmes related to Biodiversity or tangible and intangible heritage as well as impacts and measures

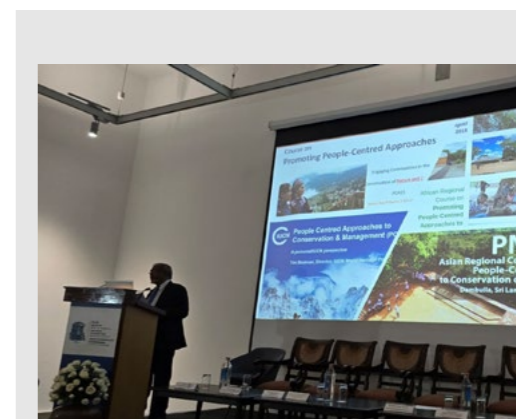
to mitigate Climate Change and promote Climate Actions. The Committee further highlighted the crucial need for the Protection of heritage at risk and the duty to collaborate with local communities in times of conflict. The importance of communities, people-centred approaches, acknowledging Indigenous people and the role of civil society was one more promoted, as a priority area but also by continuing its policy to give the floor to observers. Furthermore, the Committee continued to promote *Priority Africa: a strategy for World Heritage*, even beyond World Heritage as part of the implementation plan of the *Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029*. Africa is one of the key UNESCO priorities of its overall programme. The Strategy for Africa aims to: a) to assist 12 African States Parties not yet represented on the World Heritage List in developing a nomination (see footnote 9 of the Strategy), b) to provide support to properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger in establishing a Desired state of conservation for their removal from this list (DSOCR), c) to increase the number of African heritage experts working in the World Heritage system and enhance the role of African universities to be involved in World Heritage processes, d) to operationalize the pan-African network of site managers, e) to develop projects on entrepreneurship and the use of new and innovative technologies.

### Site Managers Forum and the Young Professionals Forum

As in the previous years, the World Heritage Site Managers Forum and the Young Professionals Forum preceded the Committee session and their respective outcomes were presented at the Committee. The 2024 edition of the Youth Forum focused on World Heritage in the 21st Century: Building Capacities and Exploring Opportunities for Youth from 14 to 23 July 2024. The Site Managers Forum, confirmed its successful enterprise of fostering site-to-site cooperation, sharing hands-on experiences and furthering theoretical discussions.

### Side events

The Committee session was an opportunity for the World Heritage community at large to share experiences and foster dialogues through 40 side events from 22 to 29 July organized by State Parties, international and national agencies, ICOMOS, IUCN and ICCROM the advisory bodies, local governments, NGOs, Academia and C2Cs. Topics ranged from highlights on individual site management to dialogues on thematic issues such as in particular, Education,



Dr Gamini Wijesuriya, Special Advisor of WHITRAP, attended the 6th World Heritage Site Managers' Forum held at Humayun's Tomb World Heritage Site and Bharat Mandapam International Exhibition and Convention Centre, New Delhi, India from 18 – 25 July 2024. There were 80 participants at the Forum, 40 foreigners and 40 Indians. He delivered the Keynote on Heritage and Communities. In his speech, he stressed that people should be at the heart of the heritage discourse, which we call the people-centred approach promoted by the World Heritage Centre. Engaging communities is about working collectively in a more innovative manner and it is important to improve the quality of life of the communities. By looking ahead, we must envision a future where heritage management is deeply integrated with sustainability, innovation, and community participation.

Climate Change, Urban Heritage, Synergies between the Tangible and Intangible Heritage or Strengthening the Voice of Communities and Indigenous People, Marine Heritage or the Latest Toolkits for World Heritage Management.

WHITRAP organized a side event on 23 July, local time in India, the "Science, Creativity, Empowerment – World Heritage Education Towards the Future" which allowed to showcase its activities and International Networks developed in the area of Education.

The WHITRAP team attended and participated in a series of side events, such as "Climate Action Toolkit for World Heritage" organized by ICCROM, the Australian Government, IUCN, ICOMOS and UNESCO, on 23 July, or "Managing Historic Cities in India", organized by the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Boards

and National Institute of Urban Affairs on 24 July, or the "Heritage in Hands: conserving the creativity of Craft Making Sites", organized by ICOMOS and the Chinese National Administration of Cultural Heritage on 25 July to name a few, which were an opportunity to share expertise, promote WHITRAP's activities and create new ties.

**Focus on C2C**

WHITRAP Shanghai actively participated in the side event on "World Heritage related C2C under the auspices of UNESCO: prospects and Opportunities" organized by the host country, by the Centre on World Natural Heritage Management and Training for Asia and the Pacific Region, India (WII-C2C). Opened by Lazare Eloundou, Director of the World Heritage Centre, which is particularly attentive to highlighting the important role of C2C in the implementation of the Convention, allowed to convene the other C2Cs, the Regional Heritage Management Training Centre "Lucio Costa" (IPHAN), Brazil, the Regional World Heritage Institute in Zacatecas (RWHIZ), Mexico, the International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites (WHIPIC), Republic of Korea, the International Centre for Rock Art and the World Heritage Convention (ICRAWHC), Spain, the International Centre on Space Technologies for Natural and Cultural Heritage (HIST), China, the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF), South Africa, and the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH), Bahrain, to deliberate on World Heritage Capacity building.

In recent years, the role of C2C has become stronger, with more and more solicitation by the World Heritage Committee and the Centre to play a key role in



implementing the World Heritage Committee's key priorities, strategic initiatives and statutory process, in particular in the area of Capacity Building or Periodic Reporting. In the past years, the World Heritage C2C have strengthened their cooperation through joint activities or strategic partnerships.

For example, for the first time in the World Heritage Committee's agenda, Category 2 Centres were invited in Item 6B to take the floor to share their Progress report on the activities concerning the implementation of the Convention.

Meetings of C2C at the World Heritage Committee or the annual event, hosted in turn by each Centre, informal gathering or side event, are particularly important to create synergies, share efforts, and promote interregional cooperation projects to streamline priority initiatives.

**Conclusion**

With around 1000 participants, the World Heritage Committee once again showed how important it was not only in the management of the World Heritage Convention from the statutory perspective but also as a forum allowing multiple stakeholders to gather, exchange and raise voices to protect heritage and those communities which need to be empowered.

For WHITRAP, it was an opportunity to strengthen existing ties with the World Heritage Centre, and its longstanding partners such as ICCROM, ICOMOS and the other C2Cs as well as tying new relationships with practitioners and State Parties which will lead to the development of further activities, through side event and one to one meetings and side-line discussions.

The 46th session of the World Heritage Committee ended on Wednesday 31 July with the ratification of the World Heritage Convention by Nauru, which became the 196 State Party to the Convention, reinforcing its status as one of the most internationally ratified standard-setting instruments in the world and by the Committee announcing that its next session would be held next summer, in Sofia, Bulgaria, under the chairmanship of Professor Nikolay Nenov.

**2. ITEM 7 - STATE OF CONSERVATION**

**General trend**

**Marie-Noël Tournoux**  
WHITRAP Shanghai

The 250 State of Conservation (SOC) reports examined by the Committee highlighted properties face multiple threats and cumulative impacts on their Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). Main threats, rest unchanged year to year, with development pressures such as housing, infrastructure projects, urban expansion, mining, and tourism as the main ones, basically due to the lack of strong governance, respect for heritage values, and robust management systems. The Committee reiterated the need for integration of conservation and management into broader planning, regular assessments, and specialized guidance.

It discussed the challenge of the timely submission of the State of Conservation reports by State Parties by the statutory deadlines, which impacts the smooth dialogue between the State Parties, the Centre and the Advisory Bodies. The backlog of SOC created

by rescheduling two Committee sessions is being absorbed but still could be felt.

The Committee as in previous years and as recalled by the Director General, urged State Parties to not consider the World Heritage List in Danger not as a "punishment" but as a tool to support reaching desired states of conservation.

The Committee discussed the conflicts and civil unrest which threatened World Heritage properties, with half of the 56 sites on the List of World Heritage in Danger affected. It recalled that all recovery and reconstruction projects be guided by comprehensive recovery proposals, respectful of the needs of local communities and follow impact assessments.

On the issue of Climate Change, which the Committee reassessed as a critical threat, he promoted the *Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage*, focusing on risk assessment, adaptation, mitigation, capacity building and relevant toolkits.

Furthermore, the Committee underlined the critical role of World Heritage properties in biodiversity conservation and emphasized the need to support global biodiversity targets and secure international funding for conservation measures.





### Conservation issues in the Asia and Pacific

**Song Yuhong** (intern), **Li Hong**  
WHITRAP Shanghai

According to the 46 World Heritage Committee (COM), more than half of the World Heritage Sites are faced with inadequate management planning, funding and personnel. In the Asia and Pacific region, six heritage sites are on the List of World Heritage in Danger (7A) and nineteen sites are inscribed on the World Heritage List (7B). The conservation of properties is generally threatened and affected by natural impacts, commercial activities and the lack of a legal framework or management system.

Four of the properties listed on 7A are threatened by natural impacts, including invasive species, climate change, erosion, and flooding. All of properties are threatened by commercial activities, which consist of impacts of tourism, over-exploitation of land and marine resources, and infrastructure construction/urban development planning. Meanwhile, all of the properties are affected by the lack of a legal framework or management system. This can be due to the prevention of political and organizational processes, political instability, deficient professional personnel and inadequate conversations with WHC.

As for properties from 7B, nine of them are influenced by natural factors, including invasive species (termites), climate change, air and water pollution, natural disasters (monsoon and fire) as well as degradation of seamounts. Sixteen of the properties are affected by commercial activities such as agricultural development, infrastructure construction, tourism, and urban development. eighteen of them have mentioned of inadequate legal framework or management system, which can be resulted from deficient financial support and professional personnel, right issues with indigenous people and local communities, lack of clarity regarding property rights, as well as social changes and population growth. One property has not been previously reported of the factors.

In contrast with the state of conservation of world heritages worldwide, the proportion of properties in the Asia and Pacific region threatened by inadequacy of management planning is higher than that of worldwide. Property conservation is also encountered with other specific issues such as conversations with Indigenous people and requirement of appropriate urban development blueprint.

### Impact assessments

**Song Yuhong** (intern), **Li Hong**  
WHITRAP Shanghai

As stated by 46 COM, thirteen reports of properties in the Asia and Pacific region have mentioned impact assessments, in which Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment is regarded as an important reference for the conservation of world heritage. The majority of the properties are listed on 7B, which is assumed by researchers that IA mainly serves the precaution process.

HIA has been mentioned most compared to EIA and SEA in the 7A & 7B. In general, the majority of the State Parties have not addressed HIAs or used the Guidance for the conservation, as requested by the Committee. Other State Parties, though planning the process of HIA or have implemented HIAs on specific projects, the needs to provide full materials, review and further develop the HIAs. There are properties in difficult conditions. The conservation of **Nan Madol** (Federated States of Micronesia) has only been addressed with limited progress to its essential aspects, namely statutory protection, adoption of the proposed management system (which was prevented by political and organizational process) and the appointment of a Property Manager. Although the State Party has issued that HIA will be developed, the expansion of tourism resorts has taken place before the preparation of HIA. The conservation of **Archaeological Ruins at Moenjodaro** (Pakistan) is generally faced with deterioration and damages from the 2022 Monsoon. Expert research, short-term conservation actions, expanded workforce and site training have been addressed to the property.

As for the conservation of **Kakatiya Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple** (India), 'Palampet Special Area Development Authority' was founded to coordinate the overall governance of the property and establish commissions for HIAs. The tourism development plan has been assessed through an HIA, yet there are inadequate reports and materials provided, and a tourism building seems to be located in a sensitive location.

Positive progresses on the preservation of **Lumbini** (Nepal) can be noted, including its management on disaster risk, visitor, and community and sustainable development. Concerning current projects, such as the halting of the Lumbini World Peace City project, the

Committee believes that it emphasizes the need for a HIA of the project proposal along with the Guidance. The absence of submitting HIA and updating HIA guidelines of Nepal is thought to reflect a concerning gap in meeting property conservation standards of OUV. Similar requests have been given to the State Party of **Historical Monuments at Makli, Thatta** (Pakistan), in which the conservation measures have balanced the sustainability of the property's living nature and the security works after the Monsoon in 2022.

The preservation of the **Old Town of Galle and its Fortifications** (Sri Lanka) has been requested for addressing HIA for the port development plan, for the reclamation of land to the south of the port requires an evaluation, and the project for expanding the existing port is recommended to move the infrastructure from its proposed location, concerning the standards of OUV.

The current issues for conserving the **Town of Luang Prabang** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) made efforts to move forward, revising HIA for the Luang Prabang Hydroelectric Power Project and preparing the Guidance as well. However, the Committee requests that concerning methods for actual operation, the State Party should cooperate with the intervention modalities. Moreover, problems for urban development still exist, since the State Party made no response to the previous requests and HIA needs to be reviewed concerning threatening factors: major infrastructure and tourism projects.

Both HIA and ESIA are utilized in the current conservation issues of **Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements within the Champasak Cultural Landscape** (Lao People's Democratic Republic). The mitigation measures on the Champasak Water Supply State Enterprise water supply extension were implemented and reported. There are heritage laws adopted for further provisions of HIAs. The HIA processes are halted by inadequately trained personnel and international experts. The project of Phou Ngoy Dam was assessed by a HIA and a ESIA. WHC welcomes the progress in HIA, requesting that the State Party to change the location for the hydropower project and not start any limiting on-site operations.

A SEA for road development plans was completed in **Lorentz National Park** (Indonesia). Mitigation measures were implemented for the Habema-Kenyam road, and the dieback of *Nothofagus* species along the road was monitored. Further implementation needs time and assistance due to several reasons. Though previous assessments include Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Environmental Management Plan (EMP) have been utilized, the Committee concludes that the progress are limited, in contrast with SEAs, concerning the assessment of cumulative impacts of multiple projects and the planning of strategic mitigation measures.

### 3. ITEM 8 - NOMINATION PROCESS

**Mu Xingyu**  
WHITRAP Shanghai

From July 21 to 31, 2024, UNESCO held the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee in New Delhi, India. The main agenda of the meeting was to review 27 sites nominated for inclusion on the World Heritage List and to assess the conservation status of 124 existing sites on the List. After careful deliberation, the conference approved the inscription of 24 new sites on the World Heritage List, along with the acceptance of 2 boundary extension projects.

By the conclusion of this session, the total number of World Heritage sites worldwide reached 1,223, comprising 952 cultural sites, 231 natural sites, and 40 mixed cultural and natural sites. During this conference, China added one new natural heritage site, the **Badain Jaran Desert – Towers of Sand and Lakes**, and one cultural heritage site, the **Beijing Central Axis: A Building Ensemble Exhibiting the Ideal Order of the Chinese Capital**. Additionally, a significant modification to the boundaries of Natural property, the **Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf of China**, was also approved. This brought China's total number of World Heritage sites to 59, just one fewer than Italy, placing China second globally. However, China continues to lead the world in the number of natural heritage and mixed heritage sites, with 15 natural heritage sites, reaffirming its global leadership in recent years in this category.

Experts and speakers from the World Heritage Centre, advisory bodies, and Committee member states conducted orderly presentations and assessments of the nomination projects submitted this year and exchanged views on the uniqueness of certain sites. Compared to previous conferences, this year's deliberations seemed to involve less contention and more respect and understanding. Some uniquely qualified new heritage sites garnered widespread attention, reflecting emerging trends in the World Heritage nomination and evaluation process.

#### Unique new inscription of Mixed World Heritage

World Heritage nomination this year highlighted several new sites that stood out due to their unique cultural and natural values. Among them, **Te Henua Enata – The Marquesas Islands** emerged as a highlight. Located in the South Pacific, the Marquesas Islands belong to French Polynesia, a French overseas territory, and are geographically part of Oceania. The site exemplifies human migration to remote islands around AD 1000 and the subsequent flourishing of human life there from the 10th to 19th centuries. It is also a biodiversity hotspot, with irreplaceable and well-preserved marine and terrestrial ecosystems. The site met criteria (iii), (vi), (vii), (ix), and (x), making it the only mixed World Heritage site inscribed during this session.

Notably, the criteria (vi) regarding the "association with spiritual beliefs" for this site was proposed through an amendment and was eventually approved after thorough discussion. When assessing the state of conservation of this heritage site, ICOMOS acknowledged its satisfactory condition but also pointed out that factors affecting the nominated property include invasive species, erosion related to the presence of wild animals, potential natural disasters (notably tsunamis), and the impacts of climate change (such as rising sea levels and increasingly frequent and prolonged droughts). This has also raised awareness about how World Heritage sites should respond to the challenges posed by climate change.

#### Emphasis on the "Africa Priority" Strategy

During the deliberations, experts engaged in intense discussions about the evaluation criteria for several nomination projects. While some projects demonstrated historical and cultural value, their universal value remained a point of contention. The experts conducted detailed reviews, carefully weighing the uniqueness of these projects against their compatibility with the global heritage system.

In addition, the experts discussed how to better reflect regional balance and cultural diversity in the nomination process. In recent years, the number

of nominations and approvals from Africa has significantly increased. Of the 24 sites inscribed during this session, five are from Africa, highlighting the success of the "Africa Priority" strategy in World Heritage field. As shown in Table 1, the number of sites inscribed from Africa has increased from 1-2 per year to five in a single year, indicating the World Heritage Committee's efforts to address the previously low number of nominations from this region. This trend helps promote a more balanced and diverse World Heritage List globally.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that **Niokolo-Koba National Park** in Senegal was removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger on July 24 following a successful amendment discussion. This decision ended the park's 17-year status as an "in danger" site. Despite some concerns from advisory bodies regarding the current state of protection and management, the World Heritage Committee's approval of the amendment reflects recognition and encouragement of the progress made in African World Heritage conservation. This also reaffirms that being placed on the Danger List is not a punishment for the state parties but a means to promote the improvement of World Heritage sites.

2023	Natural	Congo	Forest Massif of Odzala-Kokoua
	Natural	Ethiopia	Bale Mountains National Park
	Cultural	Ethiopia	The Gedeo Cultural Landscape
	Cultural	Rwanda	Memorial sites of the Genocide: Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi and Bisesero
2021	Natural	Rwanda	Nyungwe National Park
	Cultural	Côte d'Ivoire	Sudanese style mosques in northern Côte d'Ivoire
2019	Natural	Gabon	Ivindo National Park
	Cultural	Burkina Faso	Ancient Ferrrous Metallurgy Sites of Burkina Faso

Overview of African World Heritage Sites inscribed in the last 5 years

Year	Type	State	Property
2024	Culture	Burkina Faso	Royal Court of Tiébébé
	Cultural	Ethiopia	Melka Kunture and Balchit: Archaeological and Palaeontological Sites in the Highland Area of Ethiopia
	Cultural	Kenya	The Historic Town and Archaeological Site of Gedi
	Cultural	South Africa	Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites
	Cultural	South Africa	The Emergence of Modern Human Behaviour: The Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa

#### Conclusion

The 46th World Heritage Conference not only injected new momentum into the protection of global cultural and natural heritage but also highlighted a series of emerging trends in the World Heritage nomination and evaluation process. From the increased focus on climate change to the significant growth in the number of inscriptions from Africa, as well as the continuous enhancement of regional balance and cultural diversity, these trends indicate that the World Heritage Committee is adopting a more comprehensive and diversified approach to protecting and preserving humanity's shared heritage. As the World Heritage List continues to expand, addressing the global environmental and social challenges while safeguarding heritage remains a critical issue for the future. The outcomes of this conference not only affirm past efforts but also provide direction for future global heritage conservation efforts.

## 4. SIDE EVENT "SCIENCE, CREATIVITY, EMPOWERMENT – WORLD HERITAGE EDUCATION TOWARDS THE FUTURE"

**Li Xin**

WHITRAP Secretariat

**Marie-Noël Tournoux**

WHITRAP Shanghai

On the afternoon of July 23rd, local time in India, the "Science, Creativity, Empowerment – World Heritage Education Towards the Future" side event of the 46th Session of the World Heritage Committee organized by World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (WHITRAP) was held at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. The side event includes announcing winners of the 2024 Global Awards for World Heritage Education Innovative Cases (AWHEIC) and an online sharing session of excellent winning cases. The conference was jointly organized by WHITRAP and The African World Heritage Fund (AWHF), adopting a hybrid form. Important guests from various countries, World Heritage Category II centre representatives, and some award-winning representatives were invited to attend the event.

### Opening remarks

The side event was moderated by Prof. Shao Yong, Secretary-General of WHITRAP.

M. Qin Changwei, Secretary-General of the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, sent a congratulatory letter to the conference, pointing out that the future of heritage education should feature a high-level integration of education with technology and culture, as this is mandated by the mission of UNESCO. In July 2021, the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO organized "World Heritage Education Towards a Sustainable Future" - a side event of the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee, where senior officials of UNESCO, ministers of education and World Heritage Education experts gathered, clarified the importance of heritage education for future social development and discussed the development trend of World Heritage Education. The side event is a landmark conference.

Ms Veronica Maduna, the Head of the Partnership of the African World Heritage Fund, emphasized that her organization is dedicated to advancing heritage conservation in Africa. Since the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation with WHITRAP in 2019, both sides have embarked on a series of collaborations, particularly in the realm of heritage education. We stand ready to collaborate with all stakeholders, leveraging AWHEIC as a pivotal mechanism and catalyst, to propel the innovative development of global World Heritage education.

### Announcement: Winners of 2024 AWHEIC

Dr Li Xin, chief planner of AWHEIC, introduced the background of the birth of AWHEIC, and elaborated on its inception, highlighting its mission to foster a globally interconnected and collaborative innovation ecosystem in World Heritage education featured by technological innovation and cross-sectoral collaboration. Over the past three years, AWHEIC has undergone rapid growth, reinforced by international cooperation and innovative demonstration projects. This momentum has propelled AWHEIC towards an evolution from a pioneering initiative to an incubator of innovative practices. Following this introduction, the promotional video of AWHEIC was played.

### Joint Projects and Networks

In recent years, WHITRAP and AWHEIC, together with many international organizations, have carried out a series of explorations in joint projects and network construction in heritage education.

Marie-Noël Tournoux, Project Director of WHITRAP (Shanghai), introduced the Urban Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Institutions (UHC-HEI) International Network project which currently spans from Chile to Australia, via the Arab States, and Asia of Course. She explained how WHITRAP Shanghai and the College of Architecture and Urban Planning of Tongji (CAUP) had launched the Network on the occasion of an international conference on "Urban Conservation and Design for Sustainable Development and International Network for Urban Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Institutions" they organized in September 2023. And how this initiative was in line with WHITRAP and the College of Architecture and Urban Planning of Tongji (CAUP)

ongoing work on urban conservation referring to the World Heritage Convention and the UNESCO 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL), with a focus on incorporating heritage in spatial planning at large way beyond the restricted approach to saving historic areas in isolation.

She recalled that in the area of heritage conservation, the lack of adequate competency and capacity at all levels is constantly highlighted on a daily basis by professionals or people active in the field as well as by UN Organisations, in international summits and committees such as the World Heritage Committee, or the World Urban Forums, to name a few and more recently at the UNESCO World Conference on Culture and Arts Education (Abu Dhabi 2024) as priority challenges to be urgently addressed. Hence the idea to address the question of education as a topic itself.

She introduced the objective to reflect on "What we teach, who we teach and how we teach" in order to reshape practices, identifying needs and filling the gaps in the area of education, research and action. She further explained the aim was to address theory and practice and develop hands-on activities.

Mr Carlos Augusto Torres Perez introduced the development of heritage education in Latin America by taking the example of the Sino-Mexico Heritage Education Demonstration Project jointly carried out by WHITRAP and the UNOSSC.

### Sharing of Excellent WH Education Innovative Cases

After the announcement, Ms Veronica Maduna hosted the online sharing session of Excellent World Heritage Education Innovative Cases. Five representatives from the 2024 award-winning cases around the world shared their international experience in combination with the exploration of model innovation.

#### I. Mak'TAB – School of "Restoration of Historical Monuments"

Speaker: Elsevar Mammadov, Head of the Department of International Relations and Protocol of the Administration of State Historical-Architectural Reserve "Icherisheher"

#### II. Development of Tiger Balm Garden Metaverse Platform for Collaborative Learning, Lost Heritage Reconstruction, and Public Awareness Enhancement

Speakers: Dr Wong Yin Cheung Eugene, Associate Professor, Department of Supply Chain and Information Management; Director, Virtual Reality Centre

III. Anthro on Foot Audio Walking Tours: the journey to publishing 50 audio walking tours for all 17 regions in the Philippines

Speaker: Raizel Pauline Albano, Founder-Director, Anthro on Foot Audio Walking Tours

IV. Heritage Lab: The Multidisciplinary Crossroads Where Heritage, Communities and Students Meet

Speaker: Alia Yunis, PhD, Co-Founder of Heritage Lab & Visiting Scholar at Arab Gulf States Institute; Salama Al Faheem: Heritage Lab Student Coordinator and Kawadar Post Graduate Researcher at New York University Abu Dhabi

V. Saving the Ancient Buildings in Kuche

Speaker: Xu Bin, Deputy Director of Planning and Cultural Heritage Centre

### Conclusion and Way Forward

Lastly, Dr Li Xin concluded the side event by presenting AWHEIC's future roadmap, bringing the side event to a successful conclusion.

This side event is another successful and exciting appearance of WHITRAP and AWHEIC on the international stage of the World Heritage Committee, following the 44th session in Fuzhou in 2021 and the 45th session in Saudi Arabia in 2023. It has received high praise from the international community, greatly expanding and enhancing the international cooperation network, and promoting AWHEIC to a new level while highlighting the comprehensive strength of WHITRAP. In the future, we will continue to work hard and play a leading role in the field of World Heritage education to provide an international platform for global heritage education innovators to exchange ideas.



## 5. CLIMATE CHANGE AND WORLD HERITAGE

**Mu Xingyu**  
WHITRAP Shanghai

At the 46th World Heritage Conference held in India, climate change remained one of the topics of frequent discussion. As the global climate crisis intensifies, the threats posed by climate change to World Heritage sites have become increasingly severe. Representatives from countries around the world, experts, and non-governmental organizations engaged in in-depth discussions on this issue during the conference, seeking collaborative solutions.

In recent years, the melting of glaciers, rising sea levels, and the increasing frequency of extreme weather events have threatened many significant World Heritage sites. As stated on the official website of the World Heritage Convention, "Climate change is now the biggest threat to some of the most beautiful places on Earth: World Natural Heritage. From shrinking glaciers to coral bleaching, to more frequent and severe fires and droughts, we have already seen the devastation caused by climate change. The rich biodiversity, diverse and unique ecosystems, and the human communities living in these locations are at risk." (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/futurekeepers>)

After two years of preparation, the World Heritage Committee adopted the *World Heritage Climate Action Policy Document* in 2023 to address climate change. This document outlines the goals for World Heritage climate action, including climate risk assessment, climate adaptation, climate mitigation, sharing knowledge, capacity building, and raising awareness. It also provides guidelines for implementing these action goals at different levels. To facilitate the implementation of this policy document, the World Heritage Centre and advisory bodies are developing the *World Heritage Climate Action Toolkit*. During the side events of this Heritage Conference, information regarding the "climate change" agenda was frequently highlighted. For example, at a side event on July 23, ICCROM, Australia & The Netherlands, IUCN, ICOMOS, and UNESCO gave a presentation on this toolkit, announcing that it will be completed by the end of 2024 under the coordination of the World Heritage Leadership Project. A side event on July 27, titled "Protecting World Heritage in the Face of Climate Change: Exploring the Intersection of SDG 13, Climate Vulnerability, and World Heritage Sites in the Asia-Pacific Region," discussed the intersection of sustainable development and climate change.

Technological innovation also featured prominently in the themes of several side events during the conference. For instance, the side events on "Digital Preservation: Ensuring Cultural Heritage" on July 26 and "World Heritage, Biodiversity, and Climate" on July 27 both addressed how advanced tools such as remote sensing technology, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and big data analytics can be better utilized to monitor and predict the impacts of climate change on heritage sites and to develop corresponding adaptive measures. During the Q&A sessions, some participants suggested that ecological restoration, vegetation recovery, and the revival of traditional architectural techniques could enhance the resilience of heritage sites and mitigate the adverse effects of climate change.

The discussions at this conference reflect the new challenges faced in the field of global heritage protection and demonstrate the proactive steps taken by the international community to safeguard precious World Heritage sites. It is clear that only through coordinated global efforts can we effectively address the threats posed by climate change to World Heritage sites and ensure that these treasures are preserved for future generations.

### "HeritAP Chat: 2024 World Heritage Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals" was successfully held

**Li Hong, Yu Huanglei** (intern)  
WHITRAP Shanghai

On 30 May 2024, the "HeritAP Chat: 2024 World Heritage Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (Environment and Resilience)" was successfully held online. The event was organized by the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO, Shanghai (WHITRAP Shanghai). A panel of six experts participated in the activity, including Gamini Wijesuriya (Special Advisor of WHITRAP Shanghai), Hatthaya Siriphatthanakun (Senior Specialist of SEAMEO SPAFA), Li Hong (Project Director of WHITRAP Shanghai), Wang Xinyuan (Deputy

Director of HIST), Rohit Jigyasu (Project Manager of ICCROM), and Nobuko Inaba (Emerit Professor, World Heritage Studies, Graduate School of Comprehensive Human Sciences, University of Tsukuba).

Representatives from 11 heritage sites in five countries (Pakistan, Thailand, Iran, India, and China) presented their cases. A total of 28 HeritAP members attended the Zoom meeting, and 1885 people watched the livestream.

The event is part of WHITRAP Shanghai's six-year project "World Heritage Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (2023-2028)," which aims to further understand the implementation of heritage protection projects and promote innovative practices of World Heritage contributing to Sustainable Development Goals to a broader audience.

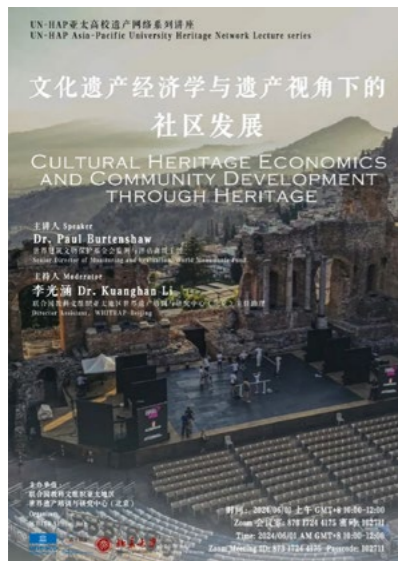
The event comprised two segments: case presentations and panel Q&A sessions. Representatives from the 11 heritage sites, which had passed the preliminary review for the 2024 Call for Good Practices under the theme "Environment and Resilience", shared their cases in three groups. Each Q&A session was hosted by two different experts, who were Gamini Wijesuriya and Hatthaya Siriphatthanakun, Wang Xinyuan and Li Hong, and Rohit Jigyasu and Nobuko Inaba. The selected good practices will be invited to participate in the HeritAP annual meeting, where their achievements will be further shared.





**UN-HAP Serial Lecture:  
Cultural Heritage Economics  
and Community Development  
through Heritage**

**Lina Park**  
WHITRAP Beijing



On the 1st of June, Dr Paul Burtenshaw, Senior Director of Monitoring and Evaluation, World Monuments Fund, was invited to speak about Cultural Heritage Economics and Community Development through Heritage.

Paul Burtenshaw is an expert in heritage economics, project evaluation, and how cultural heritage supports sustainable and community development. Paul completed his PhD at University College London on how cultural heritage is valued and measured as an economic asset. Paul has worked globally on a variety of heritage preservation, evaluation, economic development and tourism projects with community organizations, national governments, academics, private foundations,

international heritage organizations and development banks. Paul joined WMF in early 2024.

In this lecture, he presented case studies from around the world to explore how the "economic value" of heritage can be conceived and applied to help heritage managers, why we may wish to create economic impacts, the different ways in which economic benefits can be generated, and how we make such efforts effective and sustainable.

**The Ming Culture Forum 2024**

**Sun Shuya** (intern)  
WHITRAP Shanghai

The Ming Culture Forum 2024, was held from July 13-14 at the Ming Tombs Scenic Spot in Beijing. Marie-Noël Tournoux, Project Director of WHITRAP Shanghai, took part in the Forum on the recommendation of ICOMOS China. The agenda included several presentations highlighting Ming Culture and World Heritage Conservation. Integrated territorial planning was also a major discussion point, with a focus on the protection and valorization of the Ming Tombs landscape and the presentation of a tourism strategy. Additionally, the full opening of the Ming Tombs Scenic Area by 2030 was announced. To deepen the comprehension of Ming Culture, participants visited the Dingling and Changling Ming Tombs, as well as the Great Wall at Juyongguan.

**The first event in the "Suzhou  
Heritage Harmony: Expat Garden  
Gathering Series" launched**

**Jiang Yeqin**  
WHITRAP Suzhou



On 2 June 2024, the first event in the "Suzhou Heritage Harmony: Expat Garden Gathering Series" was formally launched by the SIP One-Stop Service Centre for Expats and WHITRAP Suzhou. Twenty participants from China and other countries came together with the aim of promoting cross-border cultural exchanges.

The "Suzhou Heritage Harmony: Expat Garden Gathering Series" offers Chinese and international participants an immersive experience of Suzhou's world-renowned gardens. It includes a variety of activities that provide insights into the historical and cultural values of the gardens, such as thematic exhibition tours and creative garden crafts. The two main themes of the event are "I Came to Suzhou to Enjoy the Gardens" and "I Built the Gardens in Suzhou." The "Enjoying the Gardens" includes bilingual tours

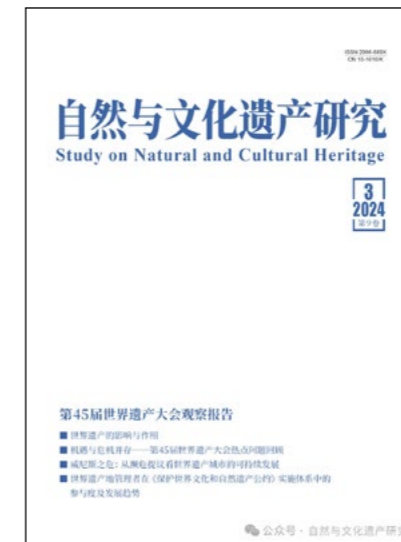
that explore the workings of major SIP expat service centres, explaining to international guests and locals the Suzhou style of gardens and the cultural background of the Grand Canal. During the event's "Building the Gardens", participants will be able to create garden aesthetics that have been passed down for thousands of years.

The programme was taught by WHITRAP Suzhou instructors and skilled technicians from a well-known ancient building company. Participants—both Chinese and international—admired the elegance of gardens and the delicate beauty of flower windows. They learned about the attractiveness of Chinese mortise and tenon structures, did hands-on assembly of wooden flower windows, and created paper flower window designs.

"Suzhou Heritage Harmony: Expat Garden Gathering Series" celebrates the exquisite artistry and rich cultural heritage of Suzhou-style gardens, which are recognized as a treasure in Chinese culture. This event, held in anticipation of the 8th "Cultural and Natural Heritage Day", uses improved gardening techniques as well as the integration of Chinese and foreign cultures to demonstrate the innate features and attraction of the gardens. It also highlights the importance of cultural preservation and environmental care.

**Publishing of Study on Natural  
and Culture Heritage, issue 3,  
2024**

**Lina Park**  
WHITRAP Beijing



The 2024 3rd issue of *Study on Natural and Cultural Heritage* was published in July. The special theme of this issue is the observation report of the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee and Prof. Lyu Zhou from the School of Architecture, Tsinghua University, is the guest editor of this issue. The 45th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Riyadh in 2023, is the first offline event since 2019. With the tremendous changes in the world, the current situation of World Heritage sites has also undergone significant changes. In addition to reviewing relevant hot topics related to the theme of the conference, this thematic issue also discussed endangered nominations, implementation of the Convention, practical issues for heritage site managers, and explored urban socio-economic issues in the context of World Heritage, using Venice as an example.

**Peking University Archaeology  
Summer School for Excellent  
Senior High Students was  
successfully held in Anxi, Fujian**

**Lina Park**  
WHITRAP Beijing

The School of Archaeology and Museology at Peking University is one of the earliest teaching institutions in China to cultivate archaeology professionals. It is an academic hub for archaeological research in China and is known as the "cradle of Chinese archaeologists". To provide a platform for middle school students to have direct exposure to archaeological activities, the School of Archaeology and Museology at Peking University continued to hold summer classes in Anxi County, Quanzhou City, Fujian Province in 2024. 122 high school students from 103 middle schools in 28 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions across the country gathered in Anxi to participate in a vivid and unforgettable archaeological journey through on-site visits, expert lectures, and hands-on experiences. This course is hosted by the School of Archaeology and Museology of Peking University, WHITRAP Beijing, and the Anxi Teaching and Research Base of the School of Archaeology and Museology of Peking University. It is also co-organized by the Anxi County Museum and the Peking University Public Archaeology and Art Research Centre. The summer archaeology class was led by Shen Ruiwen, Dean of the





School of Archaeology and Museology at Peking University, with nearly 30 faculty and students participating in the service.

During the one-week archaeology summer school, students attended exciting lectures and visited sites and museums such as Qingshuiyan Temple, Anxi Confucian Temple, and Quanzhou Maritime Museum Fujian. They also visited World Cultural Heritage Sites such as Jiuri Mountain Qifeng Stone Carvings, Luoyang Bridge, Kaiyuan Temple, and Dehua Kiln, and experienced archaeological excavation and drilling methods at the Xiacaopu Iron Smelting Archaeological Site. Through field investigations, they put their knowledge into practice and spread the seeds of archaeology to a wider world. From classrooms to the fields, students experienced the bustling foreign trade of Quanzhou during the Song and Yuan dynasties through site visits and the charm of archaeology through learning and practice.



**Delegation of WHITRAP and ICOMOS China visited Cité de la Céramique**

Sun Shuya (intern)  
WHITRAP Shanghai



On 5 July 2024, WHITRAP Shanghai organized a meeting with ICOMOS China and Cité de la Céramique in Sèvres, France, to discuss a shared interest in preserving the conservation of porcelain artefacts and porcelain production sites. This meeting was part of WHITRAP's broader agenda on enhancing global partnerships in cultural heritage preservation.

The meeting reinforced the commitment to international cooperation, with all parties expressing strong interest in future collaborations. ICOMOS China introduced the ongoing nomination project of the Imperial Kiln Sites of Jingdezhen and other significant kiln sites, seeking feedback from the Cité de la Céramique in Sèvres and invited them to an event at the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee.

The meeting marked a pivotal step in fostering international collaboration between ICOMOS China and the French heritage institution. The next phase of the WHITRAP initiative will

focus on further exploring possible areas of cooperation between parties. As a first step, it allowed to invite Cité de la Céramique to participate in the side event on Heritage in Hands: Conserving the Creativity of Craft Making Sites, organized on 25 July at the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee (New Delhi 21-31 July 2024), co-hosted by the National Cultural Heritage Administration of China and ICOMOS, and co-organized by ICOMOS China, Jingdezhen Municipal Government and ICOMOS India.

Cité de la Céramique, located in Sèvres and just outside Paris, is a unique cultural institution that seamlessly blends history, art, and craftsmanship. Established in 1740, it encompasses three main functions:

- 1) **Museum:** The National Ceramics Museum houses a world-renowned collection of nearly 50,000 works, of unique or representative masterpieces from all periods and all corners of the world, as well as contemporary creations and works produced on-site at the Manufacture.
- 2) **Archives:** The conservation and dissemination of the institution's archives has constituted an official mission ever since its creation in 1740. It provides public access to documents related to the Museum's collection, the Manufacture's production and a repository of drawings and moulds.
- 3) **Manufacture:** The Sèvres Manufacture is a living testament to the enduring tradition of porcelain production. The Manufacture operates with 120 on-site ceramists, curators, and researchers who continue to produce new pieces using historic kilns and moulds.

**Celebrating youth's efforts in safeguarding traditional building skills**

Jiang Yeqin  
WHITRAP Suzhou

On 15-16 July 2024, the "Youth and Traditional Building Skills Symposium" was held at Suzhou Conference Centre. The event was co-hosted by UNESCO and Suzhou Municipal People's Government, and co-organized by the UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia, Suzhou Municipal Administrative Bureau of Gardens and Landscaping, and WHITRAP Suzhou. The two-day program focused on the dynamic relationship between youth empowerment and the preservation of traditional building skills.

The symposium demonstrated UNESCO and its partners' commitment to promoting the role of the next generation in safeguarding cultural heritage. Over 120 participants attended the event, including international experts, artisans, policymakers, and young people, who shared insights and experiences across a spectrum of topics. The symposium also commemorated World Youth Skills Day on 15 July, which was established by the United Nations 10 years ago.

Prominent speakers from 16 countries attended the symposium, lending a wealth of experience and a global perspective to the discussions. At the symposium, young people from several Chinese provinces and cities- including Suzhou, Hangzhou, Quanzhou, Gansu, and Hong Kong SAR- participated to celebrate their role as stewards, innovators, and transformers in the cultural heritage field. They emphasized the need to be heard more while making decisions and affirmed that they should be at the centre of all actions to be done.

Through a series of panels, the symposium offered a chance for contemplation on a number of important themes. The expert talks and presentations emphasized how important it is to incorporate traditional building skills into formal educational curricula while keeping community-based programmes going, developing apprenticeship schemes that meet industry needs, and using cultural institutions like museums and heritage sites as learning spaces. The conversation looked at ways to boost the economy through tourism and revenue from renovated buildings, as well as strengthening the traditional architecture and craft supply chains. Incentives for the private sector to support traditional skills were also emphasized, along with the significance of community-based, sustainable, and demand-driven alternatives.

The symposium emphasized the importance of creating hands-on opportunities and spaces where young

people can express their creativity and interest in heritage preservation, as well as the requirement of innovation in engaging young people. The conference also emphasized how important policy frameworks are to creating an enabling environment that supports the preservation and promotion of traditional skills. It also emphasized how crucial strengthening cross-sectoral collaboration and public-private partnerships are to fully tackle this issue.

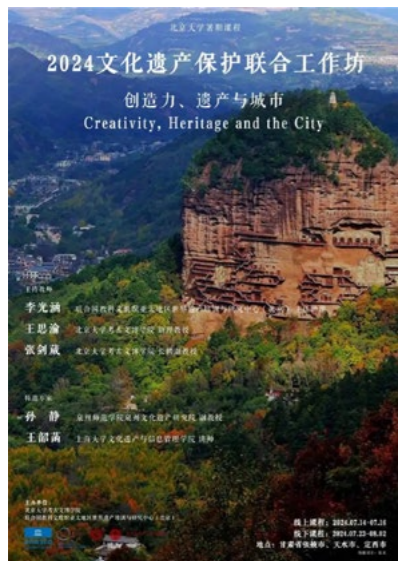
The field visit was an important component of the symposium as it gave participants a chance to interact thoroughly with Suzhou's architectural legacy. The visits to the city's well-known gardens and the "Xiangshan Bang" architectural sites provided an opportunity for hands-on learning, showcasing the practical applications of traditional building skills in a contemporary setting.





**The 2024 Joint Workshop on Cultural Heritage Conservation was successfully held in Gansu Province**

**Lina Park, Li Ziyi** (intern)  
WHITRAP Beijing



From 24 July to 2 August 2024, the Joint Workshop on Cultural Heritage Conservation and Peking University Summer Programme, organized by the School of Archaeology and Museology of Peking University, WHITRAP Beijing, and the Centre of Public Archaeology and Art at Peking University, was held in Gansu Province. The workshop received strong support from the Gansu Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism and the Graduate School of Peking University's "Graduate Innovation Programme". During ten days, participants were divided into four groups based on geographical locations, namely Zhangye, Dingxi, Tianshui, and Longnan. They conducted in-depth studies of the cultural resources and cultural and creative industries in four cities and seven districts: Ganzhou District of Zhangye City; Qin'an County and Maiji District of

Tianshui City; Tongwei County and Lintao County of Dingxi City; Wudu District and Cheng County of Longnan City. Under the guidance of workshop instructors, participants produced detailed reports with illustrations, exploring the contributions of heritage to local cultural tourism and cultural competitiveness development within the framework of the cultural and creative industries.

The workshop combined online courses with field research. From 15 to 17 July, instructors and experts in related fields gave online lectures on topics highly relevant to the workshop, including cultural economics, tourism studies, small and medium-sized museums, intangible cultural heritage, and rural heritage. On 2 August, the closing presentation of the 2024 Joint Workshop on Cultural Heritage Conservation was held at the Gansu Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, hosted by Lina Park, Programme Specialist at WHITRAP Beijing. During the presentation, the four groups of participants presented their research findings. Attendees included Zhang Shuyong, Director of the Finance Division and World Bank Project Manager at the Gansu Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism; Du Xiaofan, Professor at the Department of Cultural Heritage

and Museology at Fudan University and UNESCO Chair on Living Heritage and Community Development; Gao Yafang, Dean of the Tourism College at Lanzhou University of Arts and Science; Kong Da, Associate Professor in the Department of Cultural Heritage and Museology at Fudan University; and Liu Shaoyuan, a postdoctoral researcher in the same department. Other invited reviewers were Li Hangying, Cultural Project Assistant at the UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for East Asia, and Zhang Jianwei, Associate Professor at the School of Archaeology and Museology at Peking University and Executive Deputy Director of WHITRAP Beijing. The reviewers expressed high appreciation for the workshop's outcomes and their expectations for future work.



**Youth and Traditional Building Skills Excellent Cases Exhibition Tour held to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of World Youth Skills Day**

**Jiang Yeqin**  
WHITRAP Suzhou

On August 24th, the "Youth and Traditional Building Skills Excellent Cases Exhibition Tour" was officially opened at Xinghai Experimental Junior High School in Suzhou Industrial Park as part of UNESCO's "5C" strategic plan. The exhibition was hosted by the UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia and co-organized by the Suzhou Administrative Bureau of Gardens and Landscaping, WHITRAP Suzhou, and the Suzhou International Cultural Exchange Centre. As a key component of the 2024 World Heritage Youth Education Joint Conference, the exhibition not only commemorates the 10th anniversary of International Youth Skills Day but also highlights the remarkable achievements of young people all over the world in protecting and passing on traditional construction techniques.

This exhibition is an extension of the Traditional Building Skills Symposium, which was successfully held in Suzhou in July this year. Divided into four sections: education, policy, economic development, and innovation, it features outstanding case studies from some 20 countries, including China, France, Spain, Norway, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Japan, and South Korea. All of these cases were chosen from UNESCO's "Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" and the "Register of Good Safeguarding Practices," which recognize international contributions to the protection and transmission of traditional craftsmanship.

WHITRAP Suzhou and its partners presented the Chinese instances, which include 17 cases from 13 World Heritage sites and WHITRAP Youth Education Bases. These projects address the comprehensive

protection and cultural inheritance of heritage sites, as well as the active exploration of education bases for the preservation and innovation of intangible cultural heritage skills. In terms of heritage sites, the Suzhou Classical Gardens demonstrate their distinctive traditional construction techniques, such as the protection and inheritance of Suzhou-style bonsai, water management, translucent tile windows, and colour paintings of the Ruyi Pavilion. The Palace Museum promotes the transmission of ancient building techniques from a global perspective, whereas the Longmen Grottoes Research Institute, the Ming Xiaoling Mausoleum Museum, and the Qufu Ancient Building Engineering Management Office focus on the daily practice and transmission of traditional skills, ecological education on intangible cultural heritage, and maintenance of the Confucius Temple's lacquer paintings, respectively.

Institutions like Suzhou Xinghai Experimental Junior High School, Suzhou Tourism and Finance Institute, Northeast Yucai School, and Changshu Ancient City Tourism Service Company have improved the cultural experience on campus and help to preserve and transmit cultural heritage in relation to the provision of educational opportunities at the school and community level. Additionally, the public has been exposed to intangible cultural heritage techniques through programs such as cloisonné craft on campus, intangible cultural heritage rubbings experience, the transmission of Xiangshan Group traditional craftsmanship, and the incorporation of traditional techniques into teaching.



It is noteworthy that the 2024 World Heritage Youth Education Joint Conference and the exhibition's opening ceremony fell on the same day. WHITRAP Suzhou has established 52 World Heritage Youth Education Bases in China. In order to support the ongoing innovation and development of World Heritage youth education activities, the joint conference aims to strengthen the cooperation between WHITRAP Suzhou and various World Heritage Youth Education Bases. Over 40 representatives from World Heritage Youth Education Bases around China actively participated in this event.

The "Youth and Traditional Building Skills Excellent Cases Exhibition Tour" will take place across four sessions, beginning with Xinghai Experimental Junior High School in Suzhou Industrial Park. Subsequent sessions will be held at other youth education bases, Suzhou Gardens, and university architecture schools, with the goal of continuing to promote the appeal of traditional skills and inspiring a larger number of young people to embrace and spread traditional culture.

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of World Youth Skills Day, hosting the traditional building skills exhibition tour and joint conference serves not only to review and summarize the achievements made by young people in the field of traditional skills over the last decade but also to forecast and anticipate the future development of youth skills and the transmission of traditional culture. It is believed that traditional building skills thrive on a worldwide scale, owing to the collaborative efforts of the younger generation.





**Training programme on Tentative List Updating and Harmonization for South-East Asia was held in Bangkok, Thailand**

**Li Hong**  
WHITRAP Shanghai

UNESCO Bangkok and UNESCO Jakarta are organizing the training programme on **Building Capacity for Future Tentative List and World Heritage nominations from South-East Asia**. The 1st training on **Tentative List Updating and Harmonization for South-East Asia** is hosted by UNESCO Bangkok, from 27 to 30 August 2024, in Bangkok, Thailand.

**44 participants** from 10 state parties in the sub-region, 33 experts and officials from international organisations, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, cluster regional and national offices, and WHITRAP attended this training.

Ms Soo-hyun Kim, Regional Director of UNESCO Bangkok, made the opening address. Dr Jing Feng, Chief of the Culture Unit, and Ms Montira Unakul, Professional Officer, chaired the workshop. Ms Li Hong, Project Director of WHITRAP Shanghai, joined the training as a mentor and



provided technical assistance for the participants in updating the Tentative List.

The training aims to strengthen the use of the Tentative List as a tool for strategic planning in identifying, inventorying and prioritizing heritage sites within each country; optimize the success of future nomination efforts; and promote sub-regional collaboration and harmonization to ensure greater alignment with the Global Strategy for a **representative, balanced and credible** World Heritage List.

Experts were invited to give a presentation on the basic knowledge related to the World Heritage

Convention and updates on the nomination process. In addition, thematic lectures in gap analyses and emerging themes in the sub-region including industrial heritage, 20th-century heritage, human evolution sites, living landscapes, geological heritage and marine heritage are presented. Participants were divided into 6 thematic groups to follow the process of reviewing and updating the Tentative List. Ideas are shared to seek the possibility of harmonising the sites on the Tentative List in the sub-region.

Critical questions were raised such as how to harmonize among different countries. Dr Jing and other experts inspired participants by showing the cases. For example, natural heritage can be linked to ecosystems or other international programmes such as Man and Biosphere (MAB) Reserves, Gero Parks, and RAMSAR; for cultural heritage, a similar approach can be used and themes can be referred to identify the possibility of harmonization.

Participants will update and harmonize the Tentative List in the following month and present online in October. In March 2025, the 2nd training on World Heritage Nomination will be organized by UNESCO Jakarta.



**Training Workshop on Promotion of Ecotourism in UNESCO Designated Sites was held in Mongolia**

**Li Hong**  
WHITRAP Shanghai

From 2 to 5 September, the Training Workshop on **Promotion of Ecotourism in UNESCO Designated Sites** was held in Onon-Balj Biosphere Reserve in Mongolia. It was co-organized by the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia, the UNESCO Beijing Office, the World Wild Foundation Office in Mongolia, The Nature Conservancy office in Mongolia, and hosted by the Administration Office of Onon-Balj National Park as well as Governor's Office of Khentii Province and Dornod Province. 80 participants from 10 administration offices of the Biosphere Reserve and 6 administration offices of World Heritage properties attended the workshop. Ms Li Hong, Project Director of WHITRAP Shanghai, was invited to present **World Heritage and Current Trends in Sustainable Tourism**.

Mongolia, with its rich natural and cultural heritage, has actively engaged with UNESCO's natural sciences programs since 1990. The country has registered 10 sites in UNESCO's Biosphere Reserves Network and listed



6 properties on the World Heritage List. Additionally, Mongolia is currently working on establishing its first UNESCO Geopark.

The increasing number of UNESCO Designated sites globally underscores the importance of enhancing community engagement, promoting ecotourism, and strengthening organizational capacities. Local authorities and site managers play a crucial role in ensuring the sustainable management and preservation of these sites. The workshop enhanced the understanding of the MAB programme, and World Heritage Convention, and further discussed the management and community-led nature conservation, tourism development, waste management activities and projects of ADB.





# WORLD HERITAGE IN ASIA & PACIFIC

## DEER STONE MONUMENTS AND RELATED BRONZE AGE SITES

Collected by **Yang Kaiyue** (intern), WHITRAP Shanghai

**Country:** Mongolia  
**Category of site:** Cultural site  
**Date of inscription:** 2023  
**Criteria:** (i) (iii)

(Source: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1621/>)

### OUV

The Deer Stone Monuments and Related Sites are significant and striking examples associated with the Late Bronze Age culture of Eurasian nomadic peoples. Deer stone monuments dated from approximately 1200 to 600 BCE. They are almost always located within complexes that include khirgisüürs (elaborated burial mounds), sacrificial altars, human burials and remains of horses, and other elements. Deer stones are gigantic steles, ranging in height up to four metres with engravings of stylised stag images. Elaborately decorated the stones are set directly in the ground singly or in groups.

In terms of ornamentation, cultural significance, archaeological and landscape contexts, the Mongolian deer stones are unique within the world's Bronze Age monumental heritage sites. About 1,500 deer stones have been discovered across the Eurasian steppe, classified into three distinct forms based on their artistic traditions. More than eighty percent of these occur in Mongolia, and the images of a stylised stag that cover these stones are without parallels across Bronze Age Eurasia. The significance of deer stone complexes at Khoid Tamir, Jargalantyn Am, Urtyyn Bulag and Uushigiin Övör lies not only in their ancient origins and broad distribution, but also in their number, the variety and elegance of their ornamentation, and their intact spatial associations with khirgisüürs and other elements.



Deer stones of Tsatsiin Ereg, Khoid Tamir valley © J.Gantulga

### Criterion (i)

The Deer Stone Monuments are of exceptional beauty and cultural significance and are masterworks of Late Bronze Age culture. They constitute an outstanding example of Bronze Age megalithic monumental art of the highest quality, demonstrating the artistic vitality and creative genius of human achievement in prehistoric times. They demonstrate an extraordinary variety in their ornamentation, yet all featuring the imagery of a great antlered stag.

### Criterion (iii)

The Deer Stone Monuments and Related Sites provide an exceptional testimony to the culture of Eurasian Bronze Age nomads, which had evolved and disappeared slowly from the 2nd to the 1st millennia BCE. In their landscape settings, they are testimony to the ceremonial and funeral practices of these peoples.



Deer stones of Bayantsagaanii adag, Khoid Tamir valley © J.Gantulga

## HYRCANIAN FORESTS

Collected by **Yang Kaiyue** (intern), WHITRAP Shanghai

(Source: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1584>)



Hyrcanian Forests © Hirkan National Park



Hyrcanian Forests © Hirkan National Park



Wild goat (*Capra aegagrus*), Mazandaran Province, Dodangeh Wildlife refuge © Komeil Ghasempour

### OUV

The Hyrcanian Forests form a green arc of forest, separated from the Caucasus to the west and from semi-desert areas to the east: a unique forested massif that extends from south-eastern Azerbaijan eastwards to the Golestan Province, in Iran. The Hyrcanian Forests World Heritage property is situated in Azerbaijan and Iran, within the Caspian Hyrcanian mixed forests ecoregion. It stretches approximately one thousand kilometres along the southern and south-western coast of the Caspian Sea and covers around 7% of the remaining Hyrcanian forests in Iran.

The property is a serial site with 17 component parts shared across three Provinces (Gilan, Mazandaran and Golestan) in Iran and across two Districts (Lenkoran and Astara) in Azerbaijan and represents examples of the various stages and features of Hyrcanian forest ecosystems. Most of the ecological characteristics of the Caspian Hyrcanian mixed forests are represented in the property. A considerable part of the property is in inaccessible steep terrain. The property contains exceptional and ancient broad-leaved forests which were formerly much more extensive however, retreated during periods of glaciation and later expanded under milder climatic conditions. Due to this isolation, the property hosts many relict, endangered, and regionally and locally endemic species of flora, contributing to the high ecological value of the property and the Hyrcanian region in general.

### Criterion (ix)

The property represents a remarkable series of sites conserving the natural forest ecosystems of the Hyrcanian region. Its component parts contain exceptional broad-leaved forests with a history dating back 25 - 50 million years ago when such forests covered most parts of the Northern Temperate region. The property covers most environmental features and ecological values of the Hyrcanian region and represents the most important and key environmental processes illustrating the genesis of those forests, including succession, evolution and speciation.

The floristic biodiversity of the Hyrcanian region is remarkable at the global level with over 3,200 vascular plants documented. Approximately

280 taxa are endemic and sub-endemic for the Hyrcanian region and about 500 plant species are Iranian endemic.

The ecosystems of the property support populations of many forest birds and mammals of the Hyrcanian region which are significant on national, regional and global scales. To date, 180 species of birds typical of broad-leaved temperate forests have been recorded in the Hyrcanian region including Steppe Eagle, European Turtle Dove, Eastern Imperial Eagle, European Roller, Semicollared Flycatcher and Caspian Tit. Some 58 mammal species have been recorded across the region, including the iconic Persian Leopard and the threatened Wild Goat.



Alimestan Forest © Seyyed Vahid Hosseni