



## Identification of World Heritage properties in the Pacific

### Second World Heritage Global Strategy Meeting for the Pacific Islands region

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE

in association with the  
**Pacific Islands Museums Association (PIMA) and  
the Vanuatu Cultural Centre**

**Reserve Bank, Port Vila, Vanuatu**

**24-27 August 1999**

**FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### Summary

These recommendations were agreed upon by participants at the conclusion of the Second World Heritage Global Strategy for the Pacific Islands region held in Port Vila, Vanuatu from 24 to 27 August 1999.

The meeting was attended by representatives from Australia, the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, the United States of America and Vanuatu, representatives from the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the Pacific Islands Museums Association (PIMA), the Secretariat of the Pacific Commission (SPC), the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and a number of observers.

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**PREAMBLE**

The Second World Heritage Global Strategy meeting for the Pacific Islands region held in Port Vila, Vanuatu from 24 to 27 August 1999,

**NOTES** the *Findings and Recommendations*<sup>1</sup> arising from the First Global Strategy meeting for the Pacific held in Suva, Fiji in July 1997.

**REAFFIRMS** the relevance of the *Findings and Recommendations* arising from the Fiji meeting and stresses their importance, particularly those relating to the protection of intellectual property rights of the peoples of the Pacific and the maintenance of their cultural traditions.

**NOTES WITH CONCERN** that there have been no new signatories to the 1972 UNESCO *World Heritage Convention*<sup>2</sup> from the Pacific since the Fiji meeting.

**CONGRATULATES** the Solomon Islands for having successfully nominated East Rennell to the World Heritage List.

**STRESSES** that it is essential that future nominations of properties for inclusion in the World Heritage List in the Pacific be prepared by communities, through Governments, to ensure the agreement of communities in all issues relating to their land and traditions.

**FURTHERMORE** stresses the importance of recognizing that cultural issues and values are important at cultural and natural sites in the Pacific.

**REQUESTS** UNESCO to provide all possible support for World Heritage conservation in the Pacific by encouraging global and regional co-operation and support for the protection of the heritage of the region.

**EXPRESSES** concern regarding the difficulty some Member States may have in evaluating the environmental and cultural soundness of major financial loans and investments affecting existing and potential World Heritage properties.

**NOTES** that the *Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands 1999-2002*<sup>3</sup>, which includes regional and international key actions for the implementation of the 1972 UNESCO *World Heritage Convention* in the Pacific, was endorsed by the Tenth SPREP (South Pacific Regional Environment Programme) Meeting in Apia, Samoa from 15 to 18 September 1998 and has been signed by 7 regional and international organizations with active programmes in the Pacific.

**CONGRATULATES** Pacific Island government members of the Roundtable for Nature Conservation for the process, preparation and content of the *Action Strategy* especially the strong emphasis on collaborative efforts in the implementation and monitoring of key actions of the *Strategy*.

**EXPRESSED SINCERE APPRECIATION AND THANKS** to the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu, the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, the Pacific Islands Museums Association (PIMA) and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre for having hosted and organized the meeting with support provided from the World Heritage Fund by the World Heritage Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> *Identification of World Heritage properties in the Pacific, Findings and Recommendations, First Global Strategy Meeting for the Pacific, Suva, Fiji, 15-18 July 1997* WHC-97/CONF.208/INF.8 Available from The Director, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 7, place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP France Telephone: 33 1 45 68 15 71 Fax: 33 1 45 68 55 70 or on the UNESCO World Heritage Centre's website at <http://www.unesco.org/whc/archive/208inf8.htm>

<sup>2</sup> *Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage* adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at its seventeenth session, Paris, 16 November 1972 Available from The Director, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 7, place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP France Telephone: 33 1 45 68 15 71 or Fax: 33 1 45 68 55 70 or on the UNESCO World Heritage Centre's website at <http://www.unesco.org/whc/archive/convtext.htm>

<sup>3</sup> *The Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands Region 1999-2002* Available from The Director, SPREP (South Pacific Regional Environment Programme), P.O. Box 240, Vaitele, Apia, Samoa Telephone: (685) 21929 Fax: (685) 20231 E-mail: [sprep@sprep.org.ws](mailto:sprep@sprep.org.ws)

## 1. MEMBERSHIP OF THE 1972 UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION – STRENGTHENING THE WORLD HERITAGE PRESENCE IN THE PACIFIC

- 1.1 It is recommended that all eligible Pacific Island countries be encouraged to become Member States of UNESCO and signatories to the 1972 UNESCO *World Heritage Convention*.

The meeting recommends that this be achieved by the following:

- ❑ UNESCO Apia Office to undertake awareness raising visits to Pacific Island countries that are not yet Members States of UNESCO with the aim to promote the *Convention* and to encourage membership.
  - ❑ Participants of this meeting to report to their relevant ministers and recommend that their respective countries become signatories to the 1972 UNESCO *World Heritage Convention*.
- 1.2 It is recommended that the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and UNESCO Apia Office develop a regional World Heritage Strategy that encourages membership of the 1972 UNESCO *World Heritage Convention* via the following means:
- ❑ World Heritage Centre to arrange awareness raising visits to Pacific Island countries with the aim to encourage them to become signatories to the *Convention*.
  - ❑ UNESCO, World Heritage Centre and UNESCO Apia Office to arrange for World Heritage briefing for all delegates from Pacific Island Member States to the UNESCO General Conference 1999.
  - ❑ World Heritage Centre and UNESCO Apia Office to take the opportunity at regional ministerial meetings to brief Pacific Island countries on the value of joining the 1972 UNESCO *World Heritage Convention*.
- 1.3 It is recommended that UNESCO National Commissions in Pacific Island Member States encourage awareness and promote implementation of the 1972 UNESCO *World Heritage Convention* in their respective countries at all levels and at the Pacific Ministers Forum on Environment and Culture by raising the matter with their country ministers and relevant authorities.

## 2. IDENTIFICATION

- 2.1 The meeting
- ❑ expressed appreciation to the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZ MFAT) for their support in the successful nomination of East Rennell, Solomon Islands for inclusion in the World Heritage List.
  - ❑ strongly recommended that a case study documenting the process of the preparation of the nomination of East Rennell, Solomon Islands, including documentation of lessons learnt and technical support, and the steps to final nomination, be published as part of a series of reports prepared for the project for distribution in the region (NZ/UNESCO/SPREP).
- 2.2 Furthermore, the meeting recommended
- ❑ the urgent preparation of a desk-top review of all natural heritage protected areas and natural heritage documentation with a view to elaborating a list of mixed and natural sites (including serial sites) of potential World Heritage status.
  - ❑ the urgent preparation of a desk-top review of all data relating to cultural places and cultural landscapes (including serial sites) of conservation significance which may warrant World Heritage status.
  - ❑ the urgent preparation of national comparative and Pacific-wide thematic reviews of potential World Heritage properties (including serial sites), especially in non-State Parties to the *Convention*.

- ❑ that in gathering information for the reviews referred to above, that traditional techniques of information-sharing and knowledge-transfer be recognised and used.
- ❑ that in reviewing the significance of natural and cultural heritage throughout the Pacific to determine areas that warrant examination for World Heritage status, areas of regional significance also be identified.

### 2.3 The meeting

- ❑ noted the preparation by UNESCO of a new Convention for the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage.
- ❑ recommended that underwater heritage of international and regional significance in the Pacific be recognized and mechanisms for its protection be developed.
- ❑ noted that “Protection of Underwater Heritage”, within the Pacific, at the moment seems to refer more often to underwater wrecks from World War II, despite the existence of other underwater sites such as sacred cultural sites existing in many areas of the Pacific. The meeting urged the protection of these sites as well as those on land that may be protected by the *World Heritage Convention*. The meeting urged that the effects of global warming and sea level rises must be taken into account with regard to the protection of underwater heritage.

2.4 The meeting suggested that the *World Heritage Convention* should ensure protection of the intangible heritage, including languages and traditions. The meeting noted that the terms of the *Convention* may need to be expanded to include recognition of the importance of the spiritual elements of heritage. This recognition should also include recognition of, AND RESPECT FOR, aspects such as language, oratory, ritual, song and dance, etc

## 3. OPERATIONS

3.1 The meeting recommended that site specific management and conservation plans be prepared as a matter of priority for World Heritage sites and potential World Heritage sites in the Pacific. To facilitate this the meeting:

- ❑ encourages Member States in the Pacific to use existing ICOMOS, ICCROM, IUCN guidelines on site management and cultural and eco-tourism.
- ❑ asks ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN to circulate opportunities for internships, exchanges and opportunities to attend workshops and / or conferences in conservation planning methods (eg US ICOMOS Summer School Internships, IPAM) to Member States in the Pacific.
- ❑ asks the ICCROM secretariat, ICOMOS (Australia and NZ Committees) and the IUCN Oceania Committee, to circulate their guidelines for site management and examples of good conservation practices, including community conservation initiatives to Member States in the Pacific.
- ❑ asks the UNESCO World Heritage Centre to write to the above secretariats and committees seeking their co-operation and implementation of this recommendation.

3.2 The UNESCO National Commissions in Pacific Island Member States are encouraged to enhance legislative protection of their heritage by invoking the various charters of ICOMOS and IUCN, for example – the ICOMOS Cultural Tourism Charter.

3.3 ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN are encouraged to assist in the training of officials in UNESCO Member States on matters relating to the selection of properties for inclusion in the World Heritage List (eg requirements for authenticity).

3.4 The meeting recommended the preparation of ethical guidelines for the protection of the material, environmental and spiritual values of sites in the Pacific. Depending upon the culture and type of site, certain types of visitors may not necessarily be permitted to actually visit all

areas of certain historical/sacred sites. Certain dress and behaviour codes may need to be followed as well as restriction in numbers to protect the environment of the site.

#### 4. EDUCATION

- 4.1 The meeting recommended that UNESCO provide more emphasis on education in the region by ensuring a wider distribution of UNESCO educational materials which must be relevant to the Pacific and reflect Pacific concerns.
- 4.2 The meeting called for the recognition and utilization of, and respect for, traditional educational and learning techniques in the Pacific. The meeting noted that western-style educational systems, although useful, may have a damaging effect on traditional community / family-based systems of education based on listening and respect. Further advanced traditional Pacific learning techniques or memory-enhancing techniques (i.e. to learn must be able to recite hundreds of stories and songs) - sometimes involving the use of specific plant-medicine memory-enhancing techniques are being lost or forgotten in the few areas where there still exist. These ancient memory-learning and enhancement techniques should be recognized as of value. Secret aspects should be kept secret, but their existence and importance must be recognized and respected.
- 4.3 The meeting encouraged recognition of the 1972 UNESCO *World Heritage Convention* 'in-country' through the use of travelling lectures, promotion, T-shirts, caps, posters, radio and TV programmes etc. The meeting recommended that lectures should emphasize respect for the historical and spiritual aspects and the diversity of local and World Heritage.
- 4.4 The meeting referred to the existence of the World Heritage Educational Resource Kit for Teachers (*World Heritage in Young Hands*) and the video explaining the UNESCO Special Project "Young People's Participation in World Heritage Preservation and Promotion". The meeting recommended that the Kit and Video be introduced into the educational system throughout the Pacific, although specific local modifications may need to be made. The meeting recommended that a lighter, more easily transported version of the Kit be produced in more languages and for its contents to be reviewed every 2 years.

#### 5. FUNDING

- 5.1 The meeting recommended that information on opportunities for technical assistance and funding for World Heritage conservation in the Pacific be made easily available to Pacific countries (UNESCO).
- 5.2 The meeting recommended that both technical and financial assistance be made easily available to countries preparing tentative lists or specific site nominations (UNESCO).
- 5.3 The meeting recommended that UNESCO assist in identifying additional sources of funds for World Heritage conservation in the Pacific.

#### 6. REGIONAL NETWORKING FOR WORLD HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN THE PACIFIC

- 6.1 The meeting
- thanked the New Zealand Government for their generosity in providing funds for placing a World Heritage officer in the UNESCO office in Apia, Samoa.
  - thanked the Australian Government for its support for the establishment of a focal point for the Regional Network of World Heritage Managers in South East Asia, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.
  - requested that New Zealand continue to provide assistance in relation to the implementation of the 1972 UNESCO *World Heritage Convention* in the Pacific.
  - requested that New Zealand, with its close cultural and other ties to the Pacific, assist Australia in its work in the Pacific as focal point for the Regional Network, until such time as this role can be taken over by the UNESCO office in Apia, Samoa (UNESCO/Australia/NZ).

- 6.2 The meeting recommended that UNESCO recognize the need for a regional exchange of skills and information leading to coherent and realistic World Heritage site conservation in the Pacific (e.g. preparation of tentative lists and nominations, management of sites etc).
- 6.3 The meeting recommended that managers and representatives of local communities of other sites or areas, not only World Heritage areas, be invited to attend and participate in the World Heritage Managers Meeting to be held in New Zealand in 2000 (UNESCO and New Zealand)
- 6.4 The meeting noted that it may be of use in certain instances for traditional site owners to be given the opportunity to visit relevant or related World Heritage sites to give them a better understanding of aspects relating to the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*.
- 6.5 The meeting recommended that UNESCO convene a meeting of all representative cultural organisations of the Pacific with an interest in World cultural heritage to complement the Regional Network of World Heritage Managers in South East Asia, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific and provide input to determining regional significance in a Pacific context (UNESCO/SPC/PIMA/SPREP – Noumea, New Caledonia October/November 2000). This meeting should involve political and community leaders to allow the cultural identity of the Pacific to be explored and documented and to build solidarity amongst Pacific nations.
- 6.6 The meeting requested that a list of skills available through regional organisations eg IUCN, ICOMOS, PIMA, ICCROM be compiled and be available through the region to assist nations in the management of protected areas in the Pacific (UNESCO/Australia).
- 6.7 The meeting believed that continued support for the Pacific Islands Museums Association (PIMA) is essential for the development of the cultural identity of the Pacific (UNESCO/PIMA).
- 6.8 The meeting recommended that museums and cultural centres in the Pacific should develop cultural and other interpretation at sites in the Pacific to impart a deeper understanding of the cultures of the Pacific (PIMA/UNESCO – meeting in Yap, Federated States of Micronesia in 2001).
- 6.9 The meeting suggested that Member States in the Pacific appoint a focal point for World Heritage in their country and where appropriate that this person works closely with their National Commission and the UNESCO office in Apia .
- 6.10 The meeting recommended that UNESCO National Commissions and offices implement and maintain communication systems that ensure material about World Heritage is distributed to those people who are responsible for the protection of the heritage (UNESCO National Commissions/offices/focal points).
- 6.11 The meeting recommended that, where a country is not a signatory to the *World Heritage Convention*, but establishes a committee to advance issues associated with World Heritage in the country, this committee be recognized and encouraged by UNESCO and its associated structure of focal points, networks and servicing organisations.
- 6.12 The meeting recommended that the *World Heritage Convention* continue to be actively promoted throughout the region at appropriate forums (for example at the 7<sup>th</sup> Conference on Nature Conservation to be held in the Solomon Islands in 2001) (UNESCO/SPREP/PIMA/IUCN/ICOMOS/ICCROM).
- 6.13 Finally, the meeting recommended that the report of the First (Suva, Fiji July 1997) and Second World Heritage Global Strategy meetings for the Pacific be widely publicized throughout the Pacific at political, managerial and community levels (UNESCO).

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