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To: Permanent Delegations to UNESCO of the Asia-Pacific States Parties to the *World Heritage Convention*
National Commissions for UNESCO of the Asia-Pacific States Parties to the *World Heritage Convention*
National Focal Points for the Periodic Reporting Exercise of the Asia-Pacific States Parties to the *World Heritage Convention*

Subject: 27th session of the World Heritage Committee
Periodic Reporting on the application of the *World Heritage Convention* and on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties in the Asia-Pacific Region

Madam/Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the World Heritage Committee, at its 27th session held in Paris, France, from 30 June to 5 July 2003, examined Agenda Item 6A: "Periodic Reporting: State of the World Heritage in Asia and the Pacific, 2003, and Synthesis Periodic Report for the Asia-Pacific Region", which was presented by the representatives of the Asia-Pacific Region. After discussion, the Committee adopted the following decision:

Decision 27 COM 6A

The World Heritage Committee,

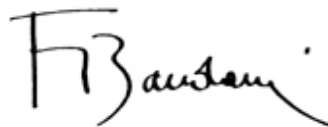
1. *Expresses its sincere appreciation to the Asia-Pacific States Parties, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for their collaboration over the past 6 years that led to the successful preparation of the comprehensive "Synthesis Regional Periodic Report for the Asia-Pacific Region 2003";*
2. *Takes note of the sub-regional and regional recommendations and action plans proposed in the "Synthesis Regional Periodic Report for the Asia-Pacific Region 2003", which were elaborated by the States Parties together with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, based upon the conclusions of the Periodic Reporting Exercise and the national, sub-regional and regional Consultative Meetings;*

3. *Requests the World Heritage Centre to produce a publication within three months if possible, to be funded from extrabudgetary funds, on “The State of World Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region”, and to make the report and the information contained in the Asia-Pacific States Parties’ national periodic reports available through electronic or other appropriate means. (CD-ROM and/or on the UNESCO World Heritage Centre’s web-site);*
4. *Recommends to the Director-General of UNESCO that he reviews operations and staffing in the regional offices in Asia and the Pacific by 2005 to ensure that improved services are provided in a coordinated manner with the World Heritage Centre to assist the Asia-Pacific States Parties in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention;*
5. *Decides to favourably consider and support the proposed Programmes “ActionAsia 2003-2009” and “World Heritage-Pacific 2009”, which directly respond to the conclusions, recommendations, and action plans resulting from this Periodic Reporting Exercise (Document WHC-03/27COM/20B);*
6. *Strongly encourages the Asia-Pacific States Parties to take the necessary actions to follow up in a concerted and concrete manner, the recommendations and action plans proposed at national levels to address effectively and in a timely manner the conservation challenges to World Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region.*

The final Summary Records and Decisions taken during the 27th session of the World Heritage Committee will be sent to you shortly. My colleagues at the Asia-Pacific Unit of the World Heritage Centre are at your disposal to develop follow-up actions to the above-mentioned decision, especially concerning the upcoming publication on the cultural and natural heritage of the Asia-Pacific Region, as well as the “ActionAsia 2003-2009” and the “World Heritage-Pacific 2009” Programmes, also approved by the Committee, which you will both find annexed to this letter for your ease of reference.

I would like to thank you for your continued commitment in the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* and in safeguarding the heritage of humankind.

Please accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Francesco Bandarin
Director
UNESCO World Heritage Centre

cc.

Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee

Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee (ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN)

World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC)

UNESCO Field Offices in Asia and the Pacific

CLT/CH

SC/ECO

ERC/RMS/APA

ERC/NCP

ANNEX I – ACTIONASIA 2003-2009 PROGRAMME AND DECISION

This new regional ActionAsia 2003-2009 Programme is proposed by the WHC's Asian Region Unit in direct response to the conclusions and prioritized action plan elaborated by 27 Asian States Parties to the World Heritage Convention through the 2003 Asian Regional Periodic Reporting Exercise. The programme aims to assist the Asian States Parties at sub-regional and regional levels in carrying out specific actions to strengthen the application of the World Heritage Convention and to enhance the conservation process at Asian WH properties, especially those inscribed on the WH List until 1994.

Objectives	Methodology
1. Improve the representativity of Asian natural and cultural heritage on the WH List	<p>1.1 Asian States Parties with support from the WH Committee and WH Centre, as well as other partners, should address the lack of national inventories at many Asian States Parties, as well as the fact that existing inventories are often biased towards monumental and archaeological sites through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.1.1 Reviewing national inventories,<li>1.1.2 Elaborating or harmonizing Tentative Lists based upon national inventories and analysis,<li>1.1.3 Preparing nomination dossiers, especially of non or under-represented heritage, with particular focus on:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- West Central Asian heritage,<li>- modern and industrial heritage,<li>- proto-historic heritage,<li>- vernacular architectural heritage;
	<p>1.2 UNESCO WH Centre shall provide Asian States Parties with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.2.1 Examples of the definitions of heritage and national inventory formats gathered from various countries,<li>1.2.2 Good examples of Tentative Lists and statements of significance;
	<p>1.3 UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies were requested by the Asian States Parties to submit reports by 2005 on action taken to identify under-represented categories of natural and mixed WH sites in the Asian region, particularly in Central Asia.</p>

Objectives	Methodology
2. Strengthen legal mechanisms to adequately protect the WH values of WH List or Tentative List properties	<p>2.1 In order to foster heritage identification and protection, Asian States Parties should consolidate, review, harmonize and update national legislation through:</p> <p>2.1.1 Analyzing existing legal provisions for WH or Tentative List properties, including the development of regulations (eg. town and planning acts) to identify omissions and overlaps in jurisdiction and to strengthen legal provisions,</p> <p>2.1.2 Reviewing core and buffer / support zones of WH properties inscribed on the WH List in or before 1994 and ensure that protective zones are legally demarcated, supported by adequate legal regulations which are effectively implemented,</p> <p>2.1.3 Reviewing the management mechanisms at WH properties inscribed in or before 1994, and if necessary, elaborate management plans with systematic monitoring, appropriate development control and stakeholders' participation;</p> <p>2.2 UNESCO WH Centre should establish an on-line database for collecting national heritage legislation in the Asian Region concerning World Heritage.</p>
3. Upgrade conservation and management skills to better conserve the WH List and Tentative List properties	<p>3.1 Improve co-operation between different stakeholders with emphasis on the establishment of national GIS systems for inventorying and mapping cultural heritage resources, together with demographic, infrastructural information into data layers for joint and shared information management and utilization by the relevant planning authorities;</p> <p>3.2 Establish effective monitoring indicators;</p> <p>3.3 Assess cultural impact of proposed development activities in co-operation with the donor agencies with UNESCO's active participation;</p> <p>3.4 Raise awareness of the development agencies on the impact of heritage conservation on development and identify innovative mechanisms for the Asian region, such as trust funds and partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders, to achieve sustainable financial management of World Heritage properties, especially those on the List of World Heritage in Danger, TheWorld Heriatge Centre will submit a report to the Committee. On these innovative methods.</p>

Objectives	Methodology
	<p>3.5 Build capacity for application of other UNESCO legal instruments and complementary programmes for the protection of cultural heritage: Hague Convention (1954), Illicit Traffic Convention (1970), Underwater Cultural Heritage Convention (2001), "Memory of the World" and "Proclamation of the Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage" programmes;</p> <p>3.6 Application of sustainable tourism management for the Asian WH properties, through the Sustainable Tourism Programme adopted by the Committee in December 2001. The WH Centre should undertake case studies to:</p> <p>3.1.1 examine current and potential conflict,</p> <p>3.1.2 propose partnership solutions for sustainable heritage tourism management,</p> <p>3.1.3 document heritage conservation strategies and financial support mechanisms for places where tourism is growing or expected to grow, such as Ha Long Bay, Vietnam, and World Heritage sites in China, Indonesia and Japan;</p> <p>3.7 In the Asian region, UNESCO should co-ordinate a strategic Workshop in 2004-5 to examine the case studies involving States Parties, site managers and the private sector, especially regional eco-tourism operators. The Workshop should elaborate a programme outline for the Committee's consideration in 2005 to guide sustainable heritage tourism management in the region.</p>
<p>4. Respond to the challenge of poverty alleviation in the Region</p>	<p>4.1 Pursuant to Article 5(a) of the WH Convention, the Asian States Parties encourage the Committee to take into account in its policy the potential impact – positive and negative – of heritage conservation decisions on local communities. The Asian States Parties recommended that the WH Centre should develop, for consideration by the Committee in 2004, an action plan to:</p> <p>4.1.1 Ensure dialogue with international organisations, donor bodies, NGOs and individual experts,</p> <p>4.1.2 Discuss the potential role of cultural and natural World Heritage in poverty alleviation projects,</p> <p>4.1.3 Seek heritage conservation and management funding opportunities and increase awareness of the place of heritage in the social and economic lives of communities.</p>

Objectives	Methodology
5. Address the challenges of information-sharing in the region	<p>5.1 UNESCO and the WH Centre should formally review its operations in the region by 2005 to ensure that services are provided in a co-ordinated fashion to enhance the implementation of the WH Convention by Asian States Parties;</p> <p>5.2 The States Parties affirmed the role and contribution of the Asia-Pacific Focal Point, hosted by Australia, and encourage the APFP to:</p> <p>5.2.1 Seek funding opportunities for direct exchange programmes for World Heritage managers from the region,</p> <p>5.2.2 Establish an information network on its web site to complement UNESCO website to allow States Parties in the region to share information on management planning and periodic reporting,</p> <p>5.2.3 Develop resources and training materials to respond to the challenges of heritage tourism in the region;</p> <p>5.3 To assist States Parties to achieve the above, the WH Centre shall widely disseminate and publicize on its website, good examples of management plans, case studies of best practice examples of sustainable heritage conservation and development at Asian WH cultural properties, and nomination files which can be adapted as appropriate.</p>

Time frame

This Action Asia 2003-2009 Programme consists of operational actions, which should be implemented in order to have concrete results for review at the second Regional Periodic Reporting Exercise in 2009.

Partners of the programme

States Parties, Advisory Bodies, NGOs and universities active in the field of heritage conservation and management in Asia, UNESCO Regional Offices and concerned divisions at Headquarters

Decision 27 COM 20B (3)

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Congratulates the Asian States Parties, the Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat for the excellent quality of the Synthesis Regional Periodic Report (see Document WHC-03/27.COM/6A Rev);
2. Notes with appreciation the increasing interest in heritage conservation among the Asian States Parties;
3. Expresses concern, however, on the continued loss of heritage caused by uncontrolled development, in particular urban encroachment, mass tourism and inappropriate public infrastructure projects;
4. Takes note of the recommendations and priority action plans elaborated by the States Parties as indicated in the Synthesis Regional Periodic Report;
5. Requests the States Parties concerned and the World Heritage Centre to follow-up on the recommendations and to mobilise national resources and international technical and financial co-operation for their implementation;
6. Decides to allocate an amount of US\$ 100,000 for the 2004-2005 biennium to launch the "ActionAsia 2003-2009 Programme".

ANNEX II - WORLD HERITAGE - PACIFIC 2009 PROGRAMME AND DECISION

As a logical follow-up to the Periodic Reporting exercise for Asia and the Pacific, a WH Programme for the Pacific is proposed - with a focus on consultation, capacity-building, education and preparation of Tentative Lists and nominations of properties for inclusion in the World Heritage List using a co-operative partnership approach. Lessons learned from the Africa 2009 Programme will be used to develop the WH Pacific Programme. It is proposed that the Programme will include activities at the State Party level, transboundary pilot projects, new sub-regional initiatives etc. Such a Programme could consolidate a number of different activities being funded, or that have been funded, by the World Heritage Fund, Italian, the Netherlands, Japanese, Spanish, the Norwegian and French Governments along with support from Australia and New Zealand.

Objectives	Methodology
1. Ensure full membership of the WH Convention in the Pacific to strengthen a collaborative sub-regional approach to implementation.	1.1 Country visits, awareness-raising, briefings and follow-up as required to include Nauru, Tonga and Tuvalu and confirm the status of Cook Islands and Tokelau
2. Raise awareness about the World Heritage Convention and the potential benefits of World Heritage in the Pacific.	2.1 The Pacific version of “World Heritage in Young Hands” being prepared with funding from the Netherlands Government and the assistance of the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO and other contributors in the Pacific, is nearing completion. It will be disseminated, teacher-training organized and if possible integrated into national curricula; 2.2 A “Study Tour” for leaders from Nan Madol in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) to Tongariro National Park, New Zealand is being planned. The intention of this Study Tour is to demonstrate to the traditional leaders and elected leaders of FSM the benefits of the World Heritage Convention and create awareness about World Heritage. This project is being financed by the Italian Funds in Trust; 2.3 National and sub-regional awareness-raising and workshops.

Objectives	Methodology
3. Build capacity for the preparation of Tentative Lists and nominations of properties for inclusion in the World Heritage List	3.1 Training in the preparation of inventories, Tentative Lists and nominations; 3.2 Involve Pacific Island representatives at training workshops being organized for the Asia-Pacific region.
4. Ensure the representation of the Pacific cultural and natural heritage on the World Heritage List within the framework of the Global Strategy for a credible, balanced and representative World Heritage List	4.1 Support and assist on-going and new projects to develop national and sub-regional inventories, Tentative Lists and World Heritage nominations; 4.2 Preparation of comparative and thematic studies to provide global context for future World Heritage cultural and/or natural nominations in the Pacific.
5. Promote transboundary and/or serial marine and terrestrial nominations including serial cultural landscape projects in view of the recommendations of the Global Strategy meetings held in Fiji in 1997 and Vanuatu in 1999, the meeting on “Filling Critical Gaps and Promoting Multi-Site Approaches to New Nominations of Tropical Coastal, Marine and Small Island Ecosystems” in Hanoi in February 2002 and the Capacity-Building workshop in Samoa in February 2003.	5.1 Provide assistance (capacity-building, expertise and financial assistance) to States Parties to begin to discuss and work on transboundary and serial World Heritage nominations in the Pacific. 5.2 Continue to support the pilot project to examine the feasibility of a transboundary World Heritage nomination of the Central Pacific Islands (to potentially include atolls and islands in the Cook Islands, French Polynesia (France), Kiribati and the United States of America) being conducted under the global Marine theme. This project has been initially supported by the Netherlands Funds in Trust, the France-UNESCO Convention and the US National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

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| 6. Build partnerships with Government organizations, NGOs, international and multilateral organizations and donors for assistance in the implementation of the WH Convention in the Pacific. | 6.1 Build the network of partners and donors and develop agreements (such as the MoU between Australia and UNESCO signed in May 2002 and the Arrangement between New Zealand and UNESCO signed in April 2003) and identify actions to be taken in partnership to benefit World Heritage conservation in the Pacific. |
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Partners of the Programme

Under the umbrella of the Programme, the beneficiary Pacific Island countries, UNESCO (WHC, Apia and other units at HQ), IUCN, ICOMOS, ICCROM, SPREP (South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme), PIMA (Pacific Islands Museums Association) the Bishop Museum and other relevant organizations (including NGOs such as CI, WWF, TNC etc) along with interested States Parties from the region, the donors (existing and new) will have the opportunity to work together in a more coordinated way to build opportunities for World Heritage conservation.

Time frame

In the first instance it is proposed that a consultation meeting take place in late 2003 or early 2004 with UNESCO's Pacific Island Member States, Australia, New Zealand, other States Parties with interests in the sub-region and relevant partners and donors. The consultation meeting would plan the Pacific Programme by developing a results-based action plan to commence in 2004, with a review each 2 years and reporting as part of the next round of Periodic Reporting for the Asia-Pacific region in 2009.

Decision 27 COM 20B (4)

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Noting with satisfaction that almost all Pacific Island countries have now joined the World Heritage Convention,*
2. *Acknowledging the needs identified by Pacific Island States Parties in the Periodic Reports summarized in WHC-03/27.COM/6A,*
3. *Requests the World Heritage Centre to begin consultations, planning and the first phase of implementation of a new sub-regional Programme called WORLD HERITAGE - PACIFIC 2009;*
4. *Decides to allocate US\$100,000 in 2004-2005 from the World Heritage Fund for the development of the new sub-regional Programme called WORLD HERITAGE - PACIFIC 2009 (see WHC-03/27.COM/11);*
5. *Requests the Secretariat to prepare a report on the Regional Programme for the Pacific to be presented to the 31th session of the World Heritage Committee (2007).*