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Introduction

The World Heritage Convention (1972) is today the most universal legal instrument in heritage conservation, ratified by 187 countries and covering 890 sites protected under this system. While the Convention is more and more known and nominations never cease to be submitted, the management, and especially the management of cultural heritage does not follow adequately.

The 1972 Convention provides for a framework for international cooperation to safeguard priceless cultural and natural heritage. This paper exemplifies the increasing challenges of heritage management both at a local and international scale. It outlines the key questions for the future based on the five strategic objectives for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention: Credibility, Conservation, Capacity Building, Communication and Communities. These 5 'Cs' were adopted in 2002 at the World Heritage Committee session held in Budapest, Hungary, and were enlarged to encompass 'communities' in 2007.

In view of the 40th anniversary of the Convention in 2012, a critical review of the situation and a call on the international community for an in-depth reflection is more than necessary.

This paper presents and illustrates the situation against the strategic objectives under the 1972 World Heritage Convention: Credibility, Conservation, Capacity Building, Communication and Communities. It concludes with suggestions for strengthening the 5th "C

best practice processes including management planning with community involvement at different levels.

Key principles

One of the key principles under the Convention of 1972 is the protection of the heritage of humankind for “transmission to future generations”, as it is defined in Article 4 of the Convention. Article 5 asks for “effective and active measures” to be taken by the States Parties, and in particular “to adopt a general policy which aims to give the ...heritage a function in the life of the community...”.

The 1972 Convention, one of the early conservation instruments, prior to the series of instruments stemming from the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, has therefore already included the notion of the common patrimony and has linked people and places. However the practice of the first decade (see Rossler, 2005) was different, as most World Heritage nominations were prepared and processed by central institutions and ministries and inscribed on the World Heritage List without consultation with local communities and stakeholders.

Strategic Objectives of the World Heritage Committee:

The current Strategic Objectives (also referred to as “the 5 Cs”) are the following:

1. Strengthen the **Credibility** of the World Heritage List;
2. Ensure the effective **Conservation** of World Heritage Properties;
3. Promote the development of effective **Capacity-building** in States Parties;
4. Increase public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage through **Communication**.
5. Enhance the role of **Communities** in the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*.

In 2002 the World Heritage Committee revised its Strategic Objectives. The *Budapest Declaration on World Heritage* (2002) is available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/budapestdeclaration>

From listing to management

The way in which a World Heritage property is managed has an impact on its values, integrity and authenticity. Management plans, systems and arrangements are therefore required for each site inscribed on the World Heritage List. The World Heritage Committee requests through the relevant provisions on the Operational Guidelines management plans and documented and proven management systems. They are crucial in implementing the World Heritage Convention. The management of cultural heritage under the Convention is only defined in very broad terms as each site and type of site differs: cultural landscapes or living cities, single monuments or large scale archaeological sites have completely different resources. They are managed through processes by which the outstanding universal value of the property is protected and cultural heritage resources are given consideration in both the local and global contexts, including issues such as local population pressures, increasing international tourism and climate or global change.

These considerations were not necessarily present at the time of the first inscriptions in 1978, but the beginning of the 1990s marked a turning point in the evolution of the World Heritage Convention: from a simple listing approach to mark the international recognition of the values, to enhancing site management with a view to address threats and changes. This was documented by the first strategic orientations adopted by the World Heritage Committee in Santa Fe in 1992. This also changed the implementation of the World Heritage Convention considerably: the World Heritage Committee considered management mechanisms as a tool in best practice conservation.

Henry Cleere (2006, xxii) in a foreword to a recent publication on the topic calls it the “most significant development in the Convention over the past two decades” and specifically the “establishment of standards and criteria for the management, presentation and promotion of World Heritage Sites.”

I would like to point out that another, potentially more significant shift was the inclusion of communities among the 5 Cs and in the management of World Heritage sites. Paragraph 12 of the *Operational Guidelines* states: “States Parties to the *Convention* are encouraged to ensure the participation of a wide variety of stakeholders, including site managers, local and

regional governments, local communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other interested parties and partners in the identification, nomination and protection of World Heritage properties. “

With the nominations of the first cultural landscapes the question of the involvement of local people became more evident than ever. Many cultural landscapes or natural areas were managed by people over time and only through them some areas have survived. Management practices also changed: at Uluru Kata Tjuta, the re-nomination of the site as a cultural landscape changed the management of the site: Aboriginal people, the owners of the land are part of the site management and they are telling their stories to visitors and tourists at the cultural resources centre created on the occasion of the recognition of the site as a living and associative cultural landscape.

Sustainable Use and Sustainable Management

Another major shift could be noted for the notion of sustainable use, first introduced in 1992 with the cultural landscapes as sustainable land-use. This was directly influenced by debates from the Rio Summit in 1992 and acknowledged the important contribution of local communities to the protection of biodiversity, specifically agrobiodiversity through sustainable land use. Only in 2005 was a paragraph on sustainable development included into the Operational Guidelines, again reflecting debates in the World Heritage community and in the sessions of the World Heritage Committee.

In 2008, the expert meeting on buffer zones held in Davos, Switzerland, specifically noted that the sites and areas around World Heritage site should provide benefits for local people and communities. The ongoing reflection on the “Future of the World Heritage Convention” in view of the 40th anniversary of the Convention in 2012 (Decision 32 COM 10 by the 32nd session of the World Heritage Committee, Quebec City), also included considerations on sustainable development and World Heritage. The World Heritage Committee at its 33rd session (Seville, 2009) took note of a “Draft Vision” for the implementation of the *Convention* and decided to forward it to the General Assembly of States Parties and to the next Committee session for further discussion. A crucial element of this draft vision is the view of World Heritage as “...a positive contributor to sustainable development”. The “Draft Action Plan”, accompanying this vision was recommended for further discussion (Decision 33 COM 14A.2). The draft action plan also includes the following actions:

- Explore the possibilities of pilot projects on the relation between conservation and sustainable development
- Investigate and report on the role of the *Convention* in relation to sustainable development
- Inventory of actions under the Convention related to sustainable development to date and develop lessons learned

In 2010 the Government of Brazil invited for an expert meeting on World Heritage and sustainable development. The meeting underscored *sustainable development as a condition for successful conservation, as unsustainable development may be the most significant threat to heritage conservation*. Sustainable conservation of the heritage should take into account and integrate a concern for the social, economic and environmental dimension of development. The possible conflict between conservation and development should be therefore addressed through a balanced analysis taking into account legitimate interests while reconciling global and local values. The detailed results will be presented to the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session in Brasilia (July-August 2010). Further debates will follow to fully explore the dimensions of sustainable development at World Heritage sites.

Conclusion

It is evident that the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and its interpretation changed considerably over time. This Convention - jointly with the other legal instruments UNESCO hosts in cultural heritage - provides international standards in preservation and develops in its framework methodologies, approaches and tools for heritage conservation.

I encourage universities and research institutes to feel part of the international community in its quest for best practice management of cultural heritage resources. It is too often that we are faced with new and emerging threats and search for appropriate solutions. We would like to see the universities and institutes as partners with focused research on those emerging needs: this will enable the students to work on specific case studies which are of use to site managers and other stakeholders.

The paradigmatic shift from listing process for global recognition of values to the best practice management and standards in the conservation of the heritage of humankind is a challenging process for all of us. When visiting many World Heritage sites around the globe, you will be faced with the challenging situation on the ground. How can we make World Heritage sites the best managed and presented places on earth worth visiting and experiencing their unique values shared by all of humanity? I truly hope that this is possible despite on-going cultural, economic and social globalization processes and new and emerging threats we have to face.

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