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Natural Heritage Bulletin

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

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



World Heritage Sites continue to garner attention whether for their unfortunate fate at the hands of terrorism or for the spirit of hope by humankind in striving to protect them and inscribe new properties. Celebrating the International Day for Monuments and Sites on 18th April every year offers an opportunity to raise awareness about the diversity of cultural and natural heritage and the efforts that are required to protect and conserve it, as well as draw attention to their vulnerability.

The C2C at Wildlife Institute of India celebrated the events of Heritage Day and Environment Day with fervor while also being actively engaged in the nomination process of several tentatively listed World Heritage Sites from India. This bulletin features its regular UNESCO news compilation and Conservation Outlook site profiles. An interview with Mr. David Sheppard, Former Head of Protected Area Programme, IUCN is also included in this issue.

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

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

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE NEWS

New Inscriptions 2016

40th Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee was held at Istanbul, Turkey from 10th to 17th July, 2016. 21 new inscriptions took place on the World Heritage List, including 12 Cultural, 6 Natural and 3 Mixed Sites. 9 new sites from Asia-Pacific Sites were:

- **Cultural**
 - Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavira (Nalanda University) at Nalanda, Bihar [India]
 - The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an outstanding contribution to the modern movement [Argentina, Belgium, France, Germany, India, Japan, Switzerland]
 - The Persian Qanat [Iran]
 - Nan Madol: Ceremonial Centre of Eastern Micronesia (In Danger List) [Micronesia]
 - Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art Cultural Landscape [China]
- **Natural**
 - Hubei Shennongjia [China]
 - Lut Desert [Iran]
 - Western Tien Shan [Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan]
- **Mixed**
 - Khangchendzonga National Park [India]



© Rajneesh Raj

Nalanda Mahavira , India



© Arjun Goel

Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, India



© FEWMD

Khangchendzonga National Park, India

United Action to Protect Vulnerable Sites

Ms. Mechtild Rössler, Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, acknowledges the great efforts of those engaged for World Heritage protection, and calls for civil society as a whole to increase its commitment to protecting World Heritage sites. World Heritage is humankind's common heritage, and the responsibility for its conservation is shared by everyone.

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1473>

Sensitive Sea Area Status for Tubbataha Reefs

Following years of preparation, the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park received an “in principle” approval as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) from the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) last week. The endorsement is a major breakthrough in securing protection from the impacts of international shipping for the World Heritage site and a substantial step toward preventing future ship groundings.

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1486>

World Heritage Day

ICOMOS wished to dedicate the 2016 International Day for Monuments and Sites on 18th April to the heritage of sports, since sports have developed from the origin of humankind onwards and have left testimonies to the diversity of installations and facilities related to their practice, many of them bearing values related to the development of architecture, art and techniques.

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1478>



Challenges for Heritage and Sustainability

From 25 to 27 May, 2016 an international conference entitled “Cultural Heritage and Development Initiatives: a Challenge or a Contribution to Sustainability?” was held at the Palazzo Barberini in Rome. Organized by the UNESCO Office in Kabul together with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the World Bank, in cooperation with the Government of Italy, it focused on the relationship between archaeology, landscape protection and development initiatives.

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1502>



World Environment Day

“Go Wild for Life!” was the theme of the message from Ms. Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO, on the occasion of the World Environment Day, 5 June 2016. Wildlife is an integral part of our biosphere. It is not only essential for healthy ecosystems but also key to peace and sustainable development. Illegal trade, poaching and illegal logging are some of the largest threats to the future of many of the world’s most vulnerable species, after habitat loss. The protection of wildlife must be an essential component of all efforts to eradicate poverty, bolster food security and advance sustainable economic development – this is clearly recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1504>



World Oceans Day

As we celebrate our marine treasures this World Oceans Day on 8th June, we at UNESCO are also reflecting on the work needed to sustain them as sea levels rise, and the water grows warmer and more acidic. Perhaps the most visible effect of the current temperature spike has been mass bleaching of coral reefs. The latest scientific data suggests that up to 15 of the universally outstanding coral reef systems on UNESCO’s World Heritage List might be affected by the time the current bleaching event is over.

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1507>

SPECIES DISCOVERY

Two New Plant Species found in Western Ghats

Scientists working at Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Shala's Centre for Medicinal Plants Research (CMPR) have discovered two new species of medicinal plants from the Western Ghats, India. The research team led by K.M. Prabhukumar and Indira Balachandran discovered a new *Habenaria* species during their floristic explorations in the Shola forests on the Elival hills of the Muthikulam forest area in Palakkad. P.B. Sreekumar, scientist at Kerala Forest Research Institute, played a key role in the discovery of *Habenaria sahyadrica*, named after the Sahyadris. The same team discovered a new *Zingiber* species from the Dhoni region of Palakkad, naming it as *Zingiber sabuanum* after renowned taxonomist Mamiyil Sabu.

Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-in-school/two-new-plant-species-found-in-western-ghats/article8533900.ece>



Habenaria sahyadrica



Zingiber sabuanum

WORLD HERITAGE OUTLOOK

Lord Howe Island Group (Australia)

(Inscribed in 1982), Criteria vii, x

Conservation Outlook: Good

A remarkable example of isolated oceanic islands, born of volcanic activity more than 2,000 m under the sea, these islands boast a spectacular topography and are home to numerous endemic species, especially birds. The outstanding scenic values are likely to remain in good condition and subject to funding and effective program implementation for significant natural habitat, rare plants and threatened wildlife that are likely to persist in their current or an improved condition.

Source: http://www.worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org/search-sites/-/wdpaid/en/500?p_p_auth=dsLqr9Sk&p_p_state=maximized

Sundarbans National Park (India)

(Inscribed in 1985), Criteria ix, x

Conservation Outlook: Significant Concern

Sundarbans contains the world's largest area of mangrove forests. A number of rare or endangered species live in the park, including tigers, aquatic mammals, birds and reptiles. While it appears that the site's biodiversity values (rare and threatened mammals, birds and reptiles) are largely currently in a promising situation, degradation of the floral diversity (globally endangered Sundri mangals) and on-going ecological processes has been, and continues to be, significant. Sea level rise, hydrological alteration and coastal erosion have been severe, and the long-term impact of climate change on the integrity of the site's values is a cause for great concern.

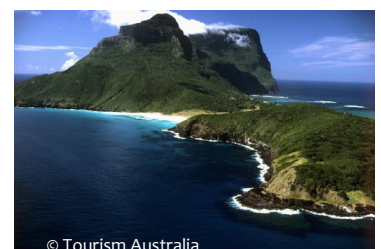
Source: http://www.worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org/search-sites/-/wdpaid/en/14177?p_p_auth=NtxwiqV5



The assessments have classified the sites according to five rating categories namely, (i) Good; (ii) Good with some concern; (iii) Significant concern; (iv) Critical; and (v) Data Deficient.

This Conservation Outlook Gauge has been reproduced from:

<http://www.worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org/web/iucn/understanding-ratings>



© Tourism Australia

Lord Howe Island Group, Australia



School students participating in painting competition, WHD



Director WII performing in Cultural Programme, WHD



NIVH Students performing in Cultural Programme, WHD



Researchers performing in Cultural Programme, WHD



UNESCO C2C INDIA: CURRENT ACTIVITIES

World Heritage Day 2016

UNESCO C2C India celebrated World Heritage Day on 18th April, 2016 at its Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun campus by organising a series of events. Participants included school students residing near two UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS) of India namely, Nanda Devi & Valley of Flowers National Park (Uttarakhand) and Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (Himachal Pradesh), as well as from Model School, National Institute for the Visually Handicapped (NIVH), Dehradun. The celebration was focused on raising awareness of school students through Nature Trail walk, visit to Forest Research Institute museum, drawing-painting competition and cultural performances. A total of 36 students from the three schools participated in the WHD celebration in WII along with nearly 200 WII faculty, researchers and staff.

For further details please visit site: http://wii.gov.in/world_heritage_day_2016

Green Hub Festival in Assam

UNESCO C2C India hosted a session on “World Heritage Sites in Northeast India” on 14th May, 2016 on the occasion of GreenHub Festival, a video documentation centre in Tezpur, Assam. C2C was represented by Dr. Sonali Ghosh, Scientist-F and Ms. Jyoti Negi, World Heritage Assistant. Around 100 participants from different organizations such as Forest Department, NGOs, journalists, academicians and film makers participated in the programme. Site representatives of different heritage sites of North East gave presentation on ‘Opportunities and challenges to document the OUVs of World Heritage’. Further, a panel discussion was conducted on the topic ‘Taking heritage to the commons’ in which media professionals, NGOs, and academicians provided their inputs.

For further details please visit site: http://wii.gov.in/images/images/documents/unesco/unesco_green_hub_report.pdf



Session on ‘Taking World Heritage to the Commons’ at Green Hub Festival, Assam



Community participation at Green Hub Festival, Assam



Dr. Sonali Ghosh, Faculty UNESCO C2C delivering a talk at Green Hub Festival, Assam

2016 Asian ESP Conference, Republic of Korea

UNESCO C2C India conducted a session titled 'Natural Heritage Sites and their role in Ecosystem Services provisioning, DRR and Climate Change Adaptation in the Asia-Pacific Region' at the 2016 Asian ESP Conference : Ecosystem Services for Nature Based Solutions held in Ansan-si, Republic of Korea on 3rd June, 2016. C2C was represented by Dr. Sonali Ghosh, Scientist-F and Ms. Rupa, World Heritage Assistant. The session featured expert speakers and a panel discussion. The session highlighted the role of Protected Areas (including Natural World Heritage Sites) as an Ecosystem-based DRR strategy that can readily be incorporated in the planning and management of natural resource in Asia. At the same time World Heritage Sites are more vulnerable to disasters because of the uniqueness that they preserve in terms of the OUV. It is expected that DRR strategies will find a prominent place in the road map for action that emerged from the Asian ESP-Conference.

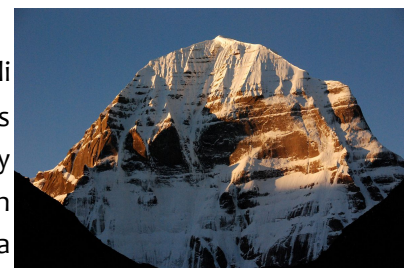
For further details please visit site: http://wii.gov.in/images//images/documents/unesco/unesco_esp_korea_july_2016.pdf



2016 Asian ESP Conference,
Republic of Korea

World Heritage Nominations

Kailash Sacred Landscape: UNESCO C2C India was represented by Dr. Sonali Ghosh, Scientist-F and Dr. Bhumes Singh, Technical Officer at a meeting to discuss nomination of Kailash Sacred Landscape as a potential UNESCO Transboundary World Heritage Site, organised by MoEF&CC, Government of India at New Delhi on 14th June, 2016. Elements of a road map for action for nomination of KSL as a Transboundary (Serial) World Heritage Site has been drafted by C2C India for further deliberations with ICIMOD as a partner.



View of Mount Kailash North
Face from Dirapuk Gompa

Evaluation of Bhitarkanika World Heritage Nomination: Subsequent to the nomination dossier of Bhitarkanika Conservation Area (BCA), prepared with technical support from the UNESCO C2C India, being declared as accepted and complete by the World Heritage Centre, its Advisory Body – IUCN, has announced initiation of the evaluation process of the nomination. In this context, a Field Mission is scheduled to be undertaken to the site during October, 2016.



© Chandan Jani

Bhitarkanika Conservation Area



© Bijoy

Mangrove Pitta, BCA

INTERVIEW

Mr. David Sheppard, Former Head of Protected Area Programme, IUCN and Former Director, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Samoa, visited Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun on 29th February, 2016. Ms. Jyoti Negi from UNESCO C2C India had a brief conversation with him on the occasion. Following are the excerpts:

Q1. Can Natural Heritage Conservation be undertaken only under the conventional Protected Area system? Is it viable to take it beyond Protected Areas?

Ans. Well, the growth of PAs around the world has been remarkable in the last 20 years. But while we have seen the loss of species, losses of ecosystems have also accelerated. **So, it is essential to look at options that are outside PAs and how that can be linked and integrated with the management of PAs.** Both are important. PAs by themselves are not sufficient; It is important to look at the development of conservation friendly practices outside PA's. But PA as a core and a major tool for *in situ* conservation of biodiversity is essential.



Q2.What is your perception of India's role in the global conservation fora?

Ans: Well, I have worked internationally for 25 years. Wildlife conservation in India is looked on as a model by many other countries. Project Tiger, for example, is seen as a remarkable flagship programme which is being emulated elsewhere. Also many individuals from India have played a key role internationally. Prof. Swaminathan was former President of IUCN. Mr. H. S. Panwar, first Director of WII, was very active. Dr. V.B. Mathur, current Director of WII, is actively engaged in conventions like World Heritage Convention and Convention on Biological Diversity. So, **India has made major contribution and that continues today.**

Q3. What potential do you expect for partnership between SPREP and UNESCO C2C India?

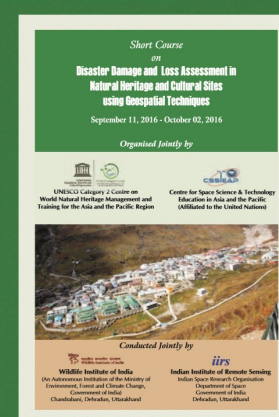
Ans: I have worked as the Director General of SPREP for the last 6 years and I just finished in December. So I can't really speak now on behalf of SPREP. But based on my experience, there are lots of good avenues for collaboration. In the Pacific, we have some of the world's largest World Heritage Sites particularly the Marine WHS. But capacity is a real challenge, both for numbers of staff, the level of training as well as the level of resourcing. So I think we can look at partnership with Wildlife Institute of India to see how we can strengthen the capacity of the management of some of these sites. I think the Pacific is particularly strong and experienced in Marine & Coastal conservation, so that experience may be useful for the countries of South and Southeast Asia. I think we can learn from each other. We had a discussion while being with Dr. Mathur and we have agreed that we should look at developing a programme of work and looking at some areas where we can achieve some benefits. **We look forward very much to working with the Wildlife Institute of India.** I know the Institute is very strong and well established in Asia and not in the Pacific. Hence, it is critically important to work with and through an agency like SPREP which is credible, well established in the region and a lead in World Heritage Conservation.

COLLABORATIONS

- **Indo-US MoU:** After the approval of the Union Cabinet, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between United States of America and India to enhance cooperation in the field of wildlife conservation and combating wildlife trafficking. Along with Wildlife Forensics and Conservation Awareness, the MoU also includes cooperation in Natural Heritage Conservation by facilitating the institutional capacity of the UNESCO C2C at Wildlife Institute of India.
- **Assam State Biodiversity Board:** UNESCO C2C India has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Assam State Biodiversity Board for preparation of the Assam State Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Short Course on “Disaster Damage and Loss Assessment in Natural Heritage and Cultural Sites using Geospatial Techniques”, 11th September – 2nd October, 2016, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, India. For details: http://wii.gov.in/unesco_disaster_damage_course_2016



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