Estrategias relativas al Patrimonio Cultural Mundial. La Salvaguarda en un Mundo Globalizado: Principios, Prácticas y Perspectivas
Strategies for the World's Cultural Heritage. Preservation in a globalised world: principles, practices and perspectives
Stratégies pour le Patrimoine culturel du monde. La conservation, dans un monde globalisé: principes, pratiques, perspectives

# THE WORLD MONUMENTS WATCH PROGRAM: A UNIQUE PUBLIC-AWARENESS RAISING TOOL.

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The World Monuments Watch is a global program established by the World Monuments Fund in 1995 to identify and preserve the world's endangered cultural heritage sites. While the Watch program aims at attracting financial and technical resources, it was conceived as a tool to heighten public awareness. Informing the public of dangers that are threatening cultural heritage sites around the world is also a goal of the UNESCO World Heritage List and more specifically the List of World Heritage in Danger, as well as of ICOMOS Heritage@Risk. However the three programs have different structures and means of accomplishing their goals. Comparing them to the Watch program and looking at selected Watch case studies will enable us to understand better why the Watch program is a unique public-awareness raising tool and how it is used.

## I. UNESCO World Heritage List, World Heritage in Danger & Watch List of 100

### I. 1. UNESCO World Heritage List and Watch List of 100

The UNESCO World Heritage List and the Watch list of 100 share the common goal of raising awareness for heritage preservation both programs being based on the belief that heightened awareness can lead to preservation and conservation of cultural heritage. However, the UNESCO World Heritage List is a *catalyst* to raising awareness while the Watch program is a *tool*. Furthermore, both programs differ from each other on three principal levels.

First, unlike a Watch listing, UNESCO's inscription conveys an **honorific designation**. The prestige of UNESCO designation is due to the fact that the UNESCO World Heritage List is conceived as a comprehensive, cumulative catalogue of cultural sites around the world that have been deemed to be of "outstanding universal value" and to the international recognition to which it is attached. Unlike UNESCO World Heritage List, the World Monuments Watch listing is not a guarantee of publicity as it is the responsibility of the nominators and sponsors to take advantage of the listing by distributing press materials and publications at the local level. Again, the list of 100 is a tool for concerned individuals and organizations to increase public awareness of an endangered cultural site and advocate for its protection.

Secondly, UNESCO inscription is **permanent**[1] while sites selected for inclusion on the Watch list change with each two-year cycle. Ideally, WMF would hope to remove each site from the list within the two years of its inclusion by targeting its key problems and devising solutions. However, watch sites are automatically considered for re-listing for the next round and on average, 30% of the sites get re-listed a second consecutive time. Reasons for re-listing a site for the second or third time are various:

- Very little progress or no progress has been made at a site, which is still endangered and a second listing might give additional time/opportunity to work toward its preservation. (Beauvais, St. Pierre Cathedral; Indonesia, Omo Hada; Kenya, Thimlich Ohinga).

- Although it is unknown whether an additional listing will be beneficial, de-listing the site would send the message that the site has been preserved, while it clearly is not. (Croatia, Vukovar City Center; Yugoslavia, Subotica; Turkey, Ani; Malaysia, Georgetown Historic Enclave).

- Very positive effects have been observed at a Watch site (whether they are due to the Watch listing or not), a de-listing might break/stop the leveraging effect as the complete preservation of the site has not yet been achieved (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Mostar Historic Center; Italy, Cinque Terre; Jordan, Petra Archaeological Site; Egypt, Valley of the Kings; Mexico, San Juan de Ulua Fort)

- A new threat has occurred at the site during the past two years and the site has become more endangered than before, in spite of the nominators' efforts. (Malta, Mnajdra Prehistoric Temples).

Reasons for de-listing a site also are multiple:

- The threats at a site have been removed, the site is not longer endangered and therefore does not need an additional Watch listing. (Belgium, Tours & Taxis)

- WMF has awarded a grant to a site, and although the site is not yet out of danger, WMF is planning on continuing to monitor the site through the management of the grant. (India, Jaisalmer)

- The Watch listing has done all it could, whether there has been progress at the site or not, a second Watch listing would not be beneficial. Another site should be given a chance to use the Watch listing. (USA, Eastern State

Penitentiary; USA, Tree Studios)

The third main difference between the UNESCO World Heritage List and the List of 100 resides in the **sponsorship requirement**. The World Heritage list relies on governmental sponsorship for consideration in listing and the Convention demands appropriate state protective regulations for the monuments and its surroundings. Watch nominations for any sites (as long as they fit the selection criteria) can be nominated by pretty much anyone as long as there are a nominator (individual, organization or government agency) and a sponsor (government agency or non-profit organization adding support and endorsement to the project).

### I. 2. UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger and Watch List of 100

The Watch list and UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger share only two of the differences described above between the Watch list and the UNESCO World Heritage List. Indeed the Watch list of 100 and the list of World Heritage in Danger are both temporary lists; both are conceived to attract attention on particularly endangered sites around the world and both share a common ultimate goal which is the removal of the sites from the lists: "Inscription of any site on the List of World Heritage in Danger requires the Committee to develop and adopt, in consultation with the State Party concerned, a program for corrective measures, and subsequently to monitor the situation of the site. All efforts must be made to restore the site's values in order to enable its removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger as soon as possible."

Another similarity between those two lists is that they both have been perceived by respective applicants or others as a **dishonor** or a sanction. However, for the majority of cases, applicants decide to nominate a site to the List of World Heritage in Danger or to the Watch list in order to focus international attention on the site's problems and to obtain expert assistance in solving them. The List of World Heritage in Danger is defined "as a *system* established to respond to specific conservation needs in an efficient manner."

## II. ICOMOS HERITAGE@RISK and the Watch Program

*Heritage at Risk: ICOMOS World Report on Monuments and Sites in Danger* is the most recent of the three programs. Endorsed by ICOMOS members at the General Assembly in Mexico in 1999, a first report was published in 2000 and a second more recently for 2001-2002. Heritage@Risk and the Watch program differ completely in format: the Watch program is a biennial list of 100 sites while Heritage@Risk is a report (annual or biennial) which aim "to identify threatened heritage places, monuments and sites, present typical case studies and trends, and share suggestions for solving individual or global threats to our cultural heritage."[2]

Heritage@Risk depends on the participation of ICOMOS National Committees, International Scientific Committees and ICOMOS' world-wide professional network who are invited to provide short reports outlining risks in their country of area of expertise, while each Watch list is selected from applications coming from any parts of the world. WMF can never predict the composition of the next Watch (at the exception that it will include about 30 of the previously listed sites). On the other hand, there is a certain geographic consistency with Heritage@Risk since reports from each members and National and International Scientific Committees can be expected (although it is not a requirement). This is one of the reasons why Heritage@Risk is an analytical tool which should develop over the next years as updates on endangered sites will be provided consistently, while, at this point, the Watch program does not have a system of updating the information of sites previously listed.

## III. Categories of Public-Awareness Raising Uses & Case Studies

To summarize, the Watch program is a unique awareness-raising tool because:

- it does not require governmental sponsorship or preservation laws;
- it is a temporary listing;
- it is designed as a tool to be used by the site representatives.

These three points lead us in defining three categories of uses of the Watch listing to raise public awareness.

### III. 1. First Category

The first category includes cases where sites are facing a threat, generally imminent and issued from the government. Because the Watch program does not require any sponsorship from the government or the existence of preservation laws pertaining to the site candidates, sites facing such threats can be nominated to the Watch program (and would not be found on the UNESCO World Heritage List).

- **The Lutyens Bungalow Zone in India** is a 2,800-hectare area included in Sir Edwin Lutyens 's radial plan for New Delhi built from 1912 to 1931. This zone was built to house government officials and their administrative offices, and although it comprises less than 2 % of present-day Delhi, it gives the capital a distinctive and rare character. The threat comes from an official lobby of politicians and builders determined to demolish the buildings to replace them with high-rise, high-occupancy residential and commercial developments. The nominators have been using the Watch listing to advocate for the preservation of the Bungalow zone, outlining that the uniqueness of New Delhi lays in the fact that it is a city of

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gardens. They are notably proposing to group some of the bungalows together to make garden hotels. They have advocated their cause using the listing in many articles published notably in the Times of India, The Indian Express, the Hindu and Historic Gardens Review and are hoping to draw the attention of the world and of the authorities as well as to nominate the site to the UNESCO world Heritage list.

- **Tomo Port Town in Fukuyama, Japan** dating from 1600 to 1800 and sited on a dramatic, yet slight stretch of land between mountains and see, has preserved the human scale of its civic plan and architecture and retained much of its original character with townhouses, temples, shrines, as well as port facilities, docks and warehouses. Today, however, the Edo-period (ad. 1603-1867) port is threatened by the construction of a landfill and bridge that will radically alter its waterfront and increase traffic within the city. Although the historic center of Tomo was declared a historic district in 2000, the port area was not included in the landmark designation. The site's nominators seek the protection of the waterfront and the development of Tomo in its entirety as a tourist destination, it being one of the few remaining traditional landscapes of the Edo Period.

- **Whylly Plantation at Clifton Point in New Providence** is the only site in the Bahamas that has cultural remains spanning a millennium of Bahamian history, including unexplored twin Lucayan-Taino aboriginal village sites; an ocean bath carved from living rock, where slaves were washed following transport through the Middle Passage; and Loyalist plantation, where two generations of African slaves worked and died. Most of the standing architecture dates to the mid-eighteenth-century occupation of the site by slave traders Lewis Johnson and Thomas Moss. The plantation's three-kilometer stretch of coastline sandwiched between a residential area and an industrial park is slated for demolition and development, which would be a disaster as it is the last part of the waterfront accessible to the public. Bulldozers from the Ministry of Works illegally destroyed part of the north wall of the church. Nominators, descendants of Whylly plantation slaves, are proposing to convert this cultural treasure into a national park, where the buildings and ruins will be protected and preserved so that visitors and the Bahamian public can learn about the island's history.

## III. 2. Second Category

The second category includes world renowned sites, inscribed on the World Heritage List, which use the – temporary- Watch listing, to raise public awareness as a new threat to the site has emerged, or to have an additional tool which might raise the chances to remove the threats at the site (it is interesting to point out that out of 302 sites listed on the Watch between 1996 and 2002, 88 sites are inscribed on the UNESCO world heritage list).

- Established as a British trading port in 1786, the Malaysian **City of George Town** boasts one of the largest ensembles of pre-war buildings in Southeast Asia. The capital of Penang Island, George Town has maintained its original city plan but, like most historic urban centers, it is facing development pressures—new buildings scheduled to replace old, conversions of houses into offices, and the ever-present threat of developers not hesitating to demolish architectural treasures. Many of the city's vernacular buildings had been protected by default through the Rent Control Act of 1966, which made the eviction of tenants difficult and provided no incentive for landlords to alter, demolish, or reconstruct buildings. In January 2000, however, the act was repealed, allowing building owners to raise rents, forcing tenants to move and businesses to close. While the local Municipal Council has been willing to consider historic preservation since the mid-1990s, it has been slow to put conservation laws, heritage guidelines, and local planning in place. Now vacant, many of the historic buildings, which have fallen into ruin through lack of tenant maintenance, are slated for demolition. Since the town's inclusion on the 2000 list, the federal government has submitted George Town to UNESCO for inclusion as a World Heritage Site. Private sector and NGO efforts have provided funds for several restoration and conservation projects.

- **Great Wall of China Cultural Landscape (Beijing) Beijing, China 1638 to 1644.** One of the world's most famous monuments inscribed by UNESCO in 1987, the Great Wall is the most recent of China's many walls, built to protect the country from nomadic invasions from the north. While the Great Wall has long been a tourist destination, recent initiatives to increase tourism and developments to accommodate it have placed new pressures on the monument and its fragile surrounding landscape. The nominator, a foreigner, conducted an initial effort, clean up at one section of the wall outside the capital which received considerable attention from the local press and from the international press since the listing.

- **The Valley of the Kings** at Luxor in Egypt which includes more than 60 New Kingdom (1539-1075 b.c.) royal burials, notably Tutankhamun's tomb, the 3,300-year-old tomb, was inscribed by UNESCO in 1979. Once ravaged by nature and looters, the site has been facing for the last decade a new threat: uncontrolled tourism. Since Watch listing in 2000, new signage was designed and installed to encourage tour guides to give their presentations outside the tombs. It is the first time standardized signage has been used in the valley. A masterplan is in development to ensure the long-term preservation and

management of the tombs and to regulate tourist access. New hand rails and walkways need to be installed to keep visitors from leaning on and touching fragile paintings and air exchange systems need to be placed in the tombs to regulate humidity.

## III. 3. Third Category

The third category includes cultural heritage sites of great local significance not always recognized as such by the local population and governments. Representatives of these sites (local or foreigners) are hoping to use the Watch listing to raise public attention, to convince the local communities and governments of the importance to preserve the sites and to give them the means to do so.

- The earliest of eight such mosques in **Ghana, Larabanga**, a masterpiece of Sudanese architecture, continues to serve as an important pilgrimage site for the region's Muslim community. The building's structural fabric has been greatly threatened by inappropriate restoration undertaken in the 1970s, when a layer of waterproof sand-cement was applied to the entire building, trapping moisture within its raw earthen walls, weakening them significantly. In the past three decades, and notably in September 2000, parts of the mosque have collapsed; some have yet to be rebuilt. The project coordinated by CRA-Terre includes the complete restoration of the monument when cement plaster will be replaced by mud plaster to reduce decay problems related to humidity, as well as set up of management and maintenance plan for the building, training of local participants and production of various materials such as brochures and cards.

- A one-time waystation on the Tea and Horse Caravan Trail that linked Tibet with Southeast Asia, the **Shaxi Market in Shaxi, China** is the only surviving example of such an entrepot, complete with an intact theater, guesthouses for merchants enroute to the Tibet high plateau, a temple precinct, and protective gates.. Following the Cultural Revolution in China in 1949, trade between Tibet and Yunnan ceased and the market area fell into decline. Mountainous and inhabited primarily by the Bai, one of China's largest ethnic minorities, the area has become increasingly poverty-stricken. Since the 1960s, the traditions of the Bai, including their Sino-Tibetan language and culture, have steadily faded. The future Tibet-Yunnan Railway may bring tourism and renewed interest in the area. However, the site needs to be protected and restored, and a plan for site interpretation and socio-economic reintegration, including the revival of the market area,

needs to be developed. The Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, in Zurich has nominated the site and has actively worked on a conservation plan and fundraising using the Watch listing. The Chinese government has since promised funding for the town restoration.

- **Pervomaisk Church in Belarus**, built as a Calvinist Protestant Church in 1575, became a Catholic Church and family tomb in 1648. It remained so until 1920, when it was plundered, then neglected in the wake of the October Revolution of 1917. Stylistically, Pervomaisk Church, built of brick faced with white lime mortar, is a harmonious blend of late Renaissance and early Neoclassical architecture. From 1938 to 1968, the building was used to house a thermoelectric power station with vibrations contributing to structural damage and has been in the hands of a local agricultural college since 1974. The announcement of the listing -nominated by the Humanitarian Initiative Center- came as a surprise to the Ministry of Culture in Beralus. Hopefully the effect of surprise will lead to the preservation of this structure.

## Conclusion

ICOMOS Heritage@Risk, UNESCO World Heritage List, World Heritage List in Danger and World Monuments Watch list have a common goal: to raise public awareness for the preservation of our endangered built heritage. Each program and institution are different: ICOMOS Heritage@Risk can be used as an analytical tool, UNESCO World Heritage List is an honorific designation and has a system in place to offer emergency funding, while the Watch program is a tool to be used by nominators and can offer grants to selected Watch sites from American Express, its sponsor. It is important that all professionals and the public understand what is available to try to preserve threatened cultural heritage sites around the world as efficiently as possible.

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