

INTRODUCTION

of expertise, shows once again that many monuments and heritage sites are threatened worldwide even if they are on the World Heritage List and that the losses caused not only by natural disasters but also by man are immense. Faced with the gigantic tsunami catastrophe, which hit humankind exactly one year after the terrible Bam earthquake (26 December 2003, see pp. 105–110) and while this report was already being printed, we hope that the professional network of ICOMOS will prove successful in view of this tremendous challenge (see message by the President, pp. 23–25).

The annual report by ICOMOS on Heritage at Risk is intended to highlight problems and issues threatening monuments and sites around the world, and where possible to present case studies from various countries to share possible solutions with other areas of the world. This meets ICOMOS' objectives to serve as a forum for professional dialogue and exchange, and to disseminate information on conservation principles, techniques and policies.

In presenting these reports from many parts of the world, ICOMOS recognises that they are a mere drop in the bucket of the risks, threats and damage to individual sites and monuments and general patterns in the treatment of cultural heritage places that risks their fabric, their cultural integrity and the special values they have for associated communities. The reports are a snapshot, depicting issues considered to be important, pressing and serious to those reporting; they do not pretend to be comprehensive or present statistical trends and pressures.

Even so, this 2004/2005 *Heritage at Risk* report shows clearly that heritage protection and conservation / preservation still has a long way to go, before ICOMOS can be assured of a consistent worldwide recognition and concern for our monuments and sites, cultural landscapes and all kinds of heritage places. It appears that cultural heritage still does not gain the level of commitment that the international conventions for its protection might suggest. In many countries archaeological sites continue to be plundered by illegal excavations, and the illicit traffic of works of art represents a continuous loss of cultural goods that from a preservation perspective should be preserved on their original site. Not only paintings, sculptures and the artefacts of cult sites are being decimated in many countries through theft, but art monuments are actually being destroyed in order to gain fragments for the market: temple complexes are being looted, sculptures decapitated, frescoes cut up. Whilst damage from war and natural disasters gain international headlines, the enclosed reports show that just as great risks are more insidious and incremental. These dangers result from a lack of knowledge about what heritage there is, a lack of awareness of its value to our society, a lack of understanding of how it may be protected whilst allowing certain developments, including a lack of appreciation of technical solutions and conservation standards.

Analysis of the reports in this volume shows that apart from the general risks to heritage from natural disasters and physical decay of structures, there are certain patterns in human activity that risk our heritage. These are among others: war and inter-ethnic conflicts, development, tourism and redundancy.

Risks from war

The risks to heritage places due to conflicts such as war and inter-ethnic conflict have been demonstrated in the previous three *Heritage at Risk* reports. Again in this 2004 report, there are several instances of damage from warfare, including Afghanistan, Iraq,

shocking, dramatic and often directed at precious and unique icons of past and present cultures. It may be deliberately aimed at such monuments, for example to the Bamiyan Buddhas, or in Kosovo, for reasons of iconoclasm or centuries old internecine conflicts. In such cases, ICOMOS has been active, meeting its aim in putting the expertise of its highly qualified conservation experts at the service of the international community and the countries concerned to restore the damage. This volume's report on ICOMOS' activities at Bamiyan in Afghanistan is such an example. The ongoing conflict in Iraq has meant that little has been achieved on the ground to mitigate the ongoing damage to its heritage, despite strong international horror and good intentions about saving Iraq's millennia of monuments and sites.

Preventative measures against future destruction in times of conflict are harder to achieve, despite ICOMOS' support of the International Committee of the Blue Shield. Longer-term strategies, such as measures to celebrate and share the importance of such places with others, for example by World Heritage listing, may be one way to build bridges between previously polarised communities, breaking down longstanding enmities that can result in attacks on the cultural heritage of another group.

Risks from development

Whilst war, including the damage and looting of hundreds of important archaeological sites in Iraq, and natural destruction such as the earthquake destruction of the significant earthen city of Bam, are dramatic and lead to urgent actions at an international level, more insidious damage is taking place daily in many countries as part of the normal planning and building processes.

So again this 2004/2005 *Heritage at Risk* report raises concerns from several national committees about such risks from inappropriate development of heritage areas, impacting on their significance. This is especially the case in historic city centres. Austria and the Czech Republic both raise the threat to inner city streetscapes from the development of roof areas, changing the nature of the roofline and damaging the architectural heritage qualities. In Cyprus, the risk of development in areas where the full cultural history is not understood is risking earlier cultural phases of Nicosia, emphasising the need to identify all historic phases in urban areas and having protected zones of cultural and archaeological sensitivity.

In such urban areas, as mentioned in several country reports, a key issue may not be inadequate legislation, but the ineffectual application of such statutory regulations, either for a lack of understanding of the risks to the heritage values or the greater pressure exerted by the profit motive of property development. Italy shows that it is not necessarily developing countries where authorities lack the force or resources to stop inappropriate or frankly illegal developments, that both impact the general urban amenity as well as heritage values. Needed are case studies demonstrating how a successful balance was achieved between the retention of heritage values and development that ICOMOS could disseminate to its members and to countries and regions struggling to protect heritage against such development pressures. A serious and severe example is in the Casa Antigua World Heritage site in Panama, where historic façades were demolished, and in the World Heritage centre of Avila, Spain, where the insertion of new housing and car parks is seen as destroying the city's historic integrity.

Urban sprawl is another development that is mentioned by many national committees as impacting on the surroundings of urban centres, damaging the relationship between city and its rural surroundings, its landscape setting. Andorra, Australia, and Norway all mention aspects of this issue, whilst New Zealand mentions the destruction of the individual character of small towns in the trend to inserting notional 'heritage' features such as lighting, paving and shopfronts, causing them all to look the same and quite out of keeping with their historic style and fabric.

All the examples demonstrate how important it is to fully understand the reason buildings, structures, entire quarters of a city may be heritage listed, not just for their historical importance, but for values associated with the relationship to each other, integrity of scale and design, and for the memories and meanings such areas have for the local population. If such values are well understood by all, they stand a better chance of being maintained, and proposed new developments amended to limit their impact, even enhance the heritage sites. Again, the examples given, such as high-rise buildings threatening the visual integrity of Cologne in Germany, or Prague in the Czech Republic, highlight the risks of incremental change. However, development is not restricted to such urban areas, and can result in large swathes of country landscapes being irretrievably changed. These include large-scale mining, windfarms, increasingly wide and straight highways and bridges, dams, open mining, and increasingly invasive agricultural practices. Countries such as Australia, Germany, Serbia and Montenegro, and the Archaeological Heritage committee have noted the impact in rural areas to cultural landscape values as well as the ongoing risk to sub-surface archaeological sites, for example in New Zealand, Poland, and Japan, so destroying important evidence of cultures and times past. The description of how much of the historic Jain route in India has been destroyed or is at risk from dam building is sobering.

Tourism

Tourism development is actually a sub-set of the above problem, but deserves separate mention as it is so widespread and so often cited by national committees in their *Heritage at Risk* reports. In many developing countries, international tourism is seen as a major source of income and major developments, such as along coastal areas, are dedicated to the pleasure of foreigners. Such developments are hardly compatible with the protection of the way of life, cultural traditions and cultural heritage of local communities. Even remote heritage sites are no longer protected by their isolation, on the contrary, their very distance from settlement places them at risk, often resulting in either accidental damage, rubbish pollution and even vandalism. This is reported from Kazakhstan, regarding the rock engravings at Tamgaly-Tas, or the stone arrangements (geoglyphs) at the Trujillo ceremonial sites in the northern Peruvian desert, damaged by vehicles running over the sites, in this latter case also damaged by mining development. Visitation numbers and uncontrolled tourism are also risks to heritage as shown in the reports from Costa Rica, where inappropriate tourism development is destroying the integrity of the town of Liberia.

As was stated in the 2002-03 *Heritage at Risk* report, ICOMOS is disappointed at the lack of commitment to heritage by the tourism industry, which is still exploiting it through over-use, not contributing to the protection and conservation of cultural heritage from its profits. It should however also be noted, that the sooner it is understood that tourism is not the automatic solution to heritage conservation and heritage funding, or the economic well-being of

a local community, the more considered might be any tourism development of our precious and non-renewable heritage sites and landscapes.

Redundancy

Social, economic and technical changes often result in certain structures no longer being used or useful. This is a normal result of change, but in recent decades such changes are often rapid or imposed from outside an area with little opportunity to slowly incorporate them into the existing systems and structures, resulting in their lying empty and abandoned. Examples from big industry, Hungary, Germany and elsewhere, all point to the difficulty of finding adaptive reuses for such large complexes, for presenting them as industrial museums or even residential areas, cannot be applied to all. The report from Belgium highlights another issue related to redundant industrial complexes, that of the pollution and ongoing toxic impact on the surrounding environment, with potential conflicts between environment conservationists and heritage conservators.

Military installations are also increasingly going out of use with changed technology. This is described for Poland, which outlines the problems of keeping places that are no longer useful, including the lack of physical maintenance, lack of funds, and the difficulty of finding a future use and purpose. Previous *Heritage at Risk* reports have shown how manor houses in Eastern European countries are faced with such problems, their going out of government hands, often resulting in inappropriate development or their decay. A report from Russia shows that these risks are also threatening the integrity of former palaces, until now protected and managed by the state. Italy also reports on concern about the sale of heritage places by the government and the public response to this.

The Ottoman churches of Turkey form another such redundant type of heritage at risk, for due to demographic and social changes, these buildings are no more being used and may not be valued as part of the historic heritage of Turkey. Highlighting their plight is a first step in raising awareness, which should be followed by an appreciation of their importance in the diversity of the cultural landscape.

Changes in agricultural practice has meant that farmsteads, the complexes of residence, barns, sheds and other outhouses, are also falling out of use, as most clearly described in The Netherlands and in Finland. Norway also describes this process, and raises the issue of abandoned farms being overgrown by forest, that is disappearing traces of human activity of the formerly rural landscapes, as well as resulting in a loss of biodiversity.

Changes in lifestyle and technology are also resulting in certain building forms and styles going out of fashion and use. Previous *Heritage at Risk* reports have described how this is resulting in a shift away from traditional, vernacular building forms, perhaps because they are not thought 'modern', or because they require more effort to construct and maintain. Either way, the change results in a more homogenous built landscape around the world, often resulting in forms that are less suited to the local environment and climate. It is often only after the change is irreparable that local communities realise what they have lost by way of unique signatures of their cultural landscape. Examples in the 2004/2005 report include the mudbrick vernacular courtyard houses of Sardinia, Italy, adobe structures in Mexico, and wooden suburban housing in Vilnius, Lithuania.

Both the Dutch and Mexican reports describe measures to maintain and appreciate traditional styles, in Mexico, using ver-

naacular adobe building techniques for modern and inexpensive adobe housing, and in Holland, an active program of the 'Year of the Historic Farmhouse' in 2003, and holding an ICOMOS Vernacular Architecture conference, were able to raise awareness and a wider support for this traditional built form in the landscape.

Other risks

Not knowing about heritage is of course a key risk, and remote areas or particular types of heritage can be neglected. Central Asian countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan both have reports on remote Buddhist or Islamic sites that without detailed recording or conservation currently taking place with foreign funding would not be documented; nonetheless, the risk is that once such special projects are completed, the site may still not be sufficiently well managed for any long-term protection or survival. Ukraine highlights the frustration of apathy or lack of funding for its wide range of heritage sites, representing its diverse ethnic history as a crossroads between East and West. Guinea's important Slave Sites, evidence of a particularly brutal phase in African history, are at risk from lack of expertise and funding. An international effort is needed in the long-term, for these sites are part of humanity's reminder of past brutal times, they are not only Guinea's responsibility.

Another threat mentioned by both Sweden and Australia is the issue of delegating heritage management and conservation to local authorities. This trend in many countries, which whilst benefiting from the local community's knowledge of its history, their local attachment and connection, may risk a loss or fragmentation of centralised conservation expertise and knowledge of and access to solutions in other regions.

Whilst the above analysis of risks has focused on those caused by human activity, natural disasters continue to damage heritage, as outlined in the Czech report on the 2002 flood damage to numerous heritage buildings throughout the countryside. It is difficult to know how to prevent such damage, although the report from Japan provides an excellent study for the prevention and mitigation of earthquake damage, particularly affecting historic wooden buildings around the historic city of Kyoto. This case study is one that could be applied for heritage places in other earthquake zones. However, how to protect against for example global warming is a longer term issue that has barely been addressed internationally in regard to cultural heritage protection; the risks of rising sea levels are however already visible in the Polar regions as shown in this report, and also mentioned by New Zealand.

ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites with some 8000 members organised in 125 National Committees and 25 International Scientific Committees is the advisory body for UNESCO on issues concerning the World Cultural Heritage, in particular the evaluation of monuments and sites that have been placed on the World Heritage List or are under consideration for listing. On the whole, the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage remains one of the few successful efforts at world cultural politics directed at saving humankind's historic heritage, and ICOMOS is proud to be able to work with UNESCO as an advisory body. The monuments and sites, historic districts and cultural landscapes that are entered on UNESCO's World Heritage List should in fact be numbered among the non-endangered monuments, but our reports show that here, too, there are cases of substantial danger.

So the *Heritage at Risk Report 2004/2005* is proof that the situation of the cultural heritage is still highly critical in many regions

of the world. While time and again billions are being invested into the preparation of war and destruction, the responsible often lack the necessary commitment when it comes to preserving the threatened heritage of past centuries and millennia. Therefore, we can only hope that the H@R report will inspire further commitments on national and international levels, generate new initiatives in preservation, and provide an additional positive impulse for existing institutions such as the ICOMOS-supported International Committee of the Blue Shield. The effect should also extend to international foundations that are involved in preservation such as the Getty Foundation or the World Monuments Fund. Their good example could also influence other internationally operating sponsors, now that there is also increased awareness of the economic importance of heritage conservation and its special role in terms of "sustainable development". In this sense, with its *Heritage at Risk Report* ICOMOS hopes not only to gain the moral support of the world public in the battle against all kinds of threats, but also to achieve practical results in co-operation with all forces that are interested in preservation/conservation of the cultural heritage.

Acknowledgments

Unlike the previous *Heritage at Risk* reports, this 2004/2005 volume was not produced by the earlier taskforce of members from Australia, Canada and Germany, but steered by members of the Editorial Board, particularly under the guidance of the President of ICOMOS International. The report includes not only contributions from national committees and a few of the International Scientific Committees, but some reports by individual experts. I would also like to thank the 45 experts from 29 countries and eight scientific committees, as well as the Holy See and ICCROM, who attended a workshop held in Bergen, Norway, on 6 September 2004 during the ICOMOS Advisory Committee meeting. Their contributions as well as those of the "Heritage at Risk" workshop at Victoria Falls in October 2003 are important to this publication. Whilst commending the input from all ICOMOS colleagues and committees it is also noted, in line with ICOMOS policy, that the information provided for this publication reflects the independent view of each committee and the different authors.

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As previous reports, this 2004/2005 report is also available on the Internet at www.international.icomos.org/risk.

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