World Heritage

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**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
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**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Thirty-fourth session

**Brasilia, Brazil
25 July – 3 August 2010**

<u>Item 5F of the Provisional Agenda</u>: Report on the World Heritage
Thematic Programmes

INF.5F.1 Report on the international workshop « *Advancing Sustainable
Tourism at Natural and Cultural Heritage Sites* **», Mogao Caves,
World Heritage site, China, 26-29 September 2009**

I. REPORT ON THE WORKSHOP

A. Introduction

1. The international workshop, *Advancing Sustainable Tourism at Natural and Cultural Heritage Sites*, was organised by the Australian and Chinese Governments, and the Getty Conservation Institute, with support from the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Tourism Working Group. The workshop was held at the Mogao Caves World Heritage site in Gansu Province, China, from 26-29 September 2009, and was hosted by the Dunhuang Academy, the authority responsible for managing the site. This workshop built on three previous workshops on sustainable tourism organised in 2008 and 2009 by the World Heritage Centre in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee (IUCN, ICOMOS and ICCROM) and a number of key partners.

2. The workshop brought together around 100 experts and representatives from 21 countries to position World Heritage in relation to tourism by discussing:
    - potential changes to the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (the Operational Guidelines) to provide guidance on managing tourism at World Heritage sites
    - the development of best practice policy guidance on sustainable tourism management
    - proposed *Principles for Sustainable Tourism at World Heritage Properties*
    - strategies and methods for successful tourism management and means for sharing sustainable tourism "best practices" of cultural and natural heritage sites from around the globe.

3. The workshop itself was judged by all present as an outstanding success. The quality of discussions was high with excellent contributions on the themes of planning for sustainable tourism; working with the tourism industry; managing the tourist/visitor experience on-site; and maximising community benefits. The location of the workshop at the Mogao Caves offered the opportunity to see world-leading management at a World Heritage listed place, and showcased over a decade of international cooperation in conservation and tourism management.

4. There were many conclusions drawn from the workshop. Several merit highlighting:
    - tourism is mainstream business for World Heritage and should be integrated into mainstream processes
    - World Heritage should see tourism as an opportunity (successful sites control their relationship with tourism, rather than vice versa)
    - the recognition that World Heritage is an integral part of the tourist/visitor sector (not part of an "us and them" relationship), and that World Heritage listing makes many sites more attractive to visitors. That is, while conferring internationally-recognised designation to protect and conserve very special places and making them accessible as intended by *The Convention*, tourism also brings many new challenges for site management and protection.

- There is a range of excellent documents with tools and methods to manage tourism. Given this richness of information, what is needed is not so much another manual but rather a position statement that helps orient the World Heritage community to tourism. The workshop outcomes address this need.

These and the other conclusions of the workshop form a powerful, simple but durable basis for the relationship between World Heritage and tourism.

B. Mandate

5.   At its 33rd session at Sevilla, Spain, the World Heritage Committee endorsed the workshop in Decision 33 COM 5A:

The World Heritage Committee,

19. <u>Expresses its gratitude</u> to the Governments of Australia and China for the organisation of a workshop on sustainable tourism at the World Heritage site, Mogao Caves, China, in September-October 2009 and <u>requests</u> that the following elements be submitted to the Committee for examination at its 34th session in 2010:

   a) A report on the workshop,

   b) The subsequent recommendations of the workshop regarding the adoption of best practices policy guidance, and concerning the changes proposed for the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention,*

   c) A document concerning the progress of the World Heritage Programme on Tourism.

This report constitutes the response to parts a) and b) of the Committee's request. A separate report regarding item c) has been prepared by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

C. Background

6.   A background document was disseminated to delegates prior to the workshop to provide contextual information on how tourism relates to the *World Heritage Convention.* The following information is drawn from this document, supplemented and reinforced by discussions that took place at the workshop.

7.   Tourism at World Heritage sites has implications for all aspects of protection of World Heritage properties. The aim of the *Convention* is to **identify**, **protect**, **conserve**, **present** and **transmit** the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal values of World Heritage sites to future generations[1]. Tourism, and the way in which the World Heritage community responds to the opportunities and threats it poses, can be a major factor in the success or otherwise of implementing the aims of the *Convention* at individual World Heritage sites. Importantly, the *Convention* embraces the concept of 'sustainable development.' Tourism and the tourist/visitor industry, in partnership with agencies and others responsible for the protection and conservation of cultural and natural heritage as well as local communities, can make a significant contribution to this important goal.[2]

8.   High levels of tourism interest at some properties nominated for World Heritage listing may occur prior to listing while other sites may be nominated with an expectation that tourism interest will be increased as a result of inscription.

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[1] 1B, The World Heritage Convention Article 7, p.2
[2] Ibid, 1B, Article 6, p.2; 11F, Article 119, p 29.

Whether this is the case or not, identification itself, and inscription on the World Heritage List inevitably draws attention to the site's values, and augments visitor and tourism industry interest.

9. The impacts of visitation are created irrespective of whether those visiting sites are local, national or international; independent travellers or part of a group. Therefore the term 'visitor' is preferred over 'tourist' due to the associated assumptions regarding profile and behaviour.

10. Increasingly, it appears that States Parties seek World Heritage listing for reasons that include the associated economic and status benefits. Listing almost always results in an increase in tourism. This increase provides opportunities to tell the story of World Heritage properties more widely, to garner public support for and appreciation of the values domestically and internationally, and to augment the amount of funding and assistance available for the protection and conservation of the property. However, identification and inscription can also, if not well managed, be a threat to the integrity of an inscribed site's OUV or impact adversely on the traditional ways of life of those who live in the vicinity. This process and period of initial **identification**, assessment and listing by the World Heritage Committee is therefore crucial to establishing a management framework to safeguard the identified values for the benefit of current and future generations, and consider the likely impacts on local populations arising from the inscription. It is the time when the World Heritage Committee, through procedures elaborated in the *Operational Guidelines*, can effectively ensure that tourism at a World Heritage site enhances its values, rather than endangers them.

11. **Protection** of an inscribed site generates major challenges when responding to public demand for access while sustaining the tangible and intangible values, respecting communities and generating greater benefits from tourism activities. Protection depends on the prevention of inappropriate use and development, both within the site's boundary, in the buffer zone and in the surrounding area. The relationship between site managers and tourism is dynamic, often complex, and can positively assist to sustain or enhance the values of both these zones. It can however have profound negative effects, if excessive or poorly managed, as numerous global examples attest. Therefore, a strong, cooperative partnership between site managers and the tourism sector, including tourism authorities, is an important part of the protection of heritage sites. Also of great importance to the ongoing protection of a site and its surrounding context is the involvement of the local population. This depends in part on sympathetic, sensitive tourism related development and on-site management respecting and involving the local communities and, through consultation, ensuring that the site provides benefits for its immediate stakeholders. The development of a sympathetic and locally sustaining tourism sector can contribute strongly to this aim.

12. Similarly, **conservation** requires working with the tourism sector to achieve the aims of the *Convention*. Long-term conservation and enhancement of a property's values is an inherent objective in the granting of World Heritage status. This requires careful planning – including tourism impact studies, appropriate response to demand pressure, and the establishment of a system of monitoring to ensure no loss to the values for which the site has been inscribed. Conservation of heritage is also crucial in sustaining the tourism sector into the future. To best achieve this mutually beneficial outcome, States

Parties should develop national policy that supports sustainable heritage tourism.

13. **Presentation** is an important but sometimes neglected goal of the *Convention* – that is, the presentation of the site to effectively display and explain its values. Tourism is intimately linked to this endeavour. The stories which are told and sold to visitors will profoundly influence their attitude to the property, and their appreciation of it. Visitor programs can play a crucial role in explaining the World Heritage values of a property and in presenting and explaining World Heritage values more generally. On the other hand inappropriate tourism promotion or on-site management can harm the presentation and transmission of World Heritage values, degrade the visitor experience and hence impact adversely on the tourism sector itself.

14. Overall, the universal values of World Heritage properties inevitably link them closely with tourism. Their **transmission** depends on an ongoing robust and successful tourism operation, fundamentally aligned to the values of the site and their conservation. It will be enhanced by the greater public awareness and support that is derived from well managed tourism programs and promotion.

15. In light of the fundamental, mutually dependent relationship between World Heritage and tourism, there have been a number of recent international initiatives relating to this issue. Many international non-government organisations have produced a range of charters, criteria, manuals, guidelines and handbooks. These organisations include the World Heritage Centre (WHC), United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), United Nations Foundation (UNF), Nordic World Heritage Foundation (NWHF), United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), as well as the Advisory Bodies to the *World Heritage Convention*: International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

16. The WHC's Tourism Program was developed in 2001 to aid the World Heritage Committee and site management using tourism as a positive force to retain World Heritage site values and to help mitigate threats. An important product of the Tourism Program has been draft *Principles for Sustainable Tourism at World Heritage Properties* (the Principles) that were developed and refined through the work of a coalition of partners including UN Agencies, specialised NGOs, States Parties and included reference to a number of key documents such as the ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter, UNWTO International Code of Ethics and the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria. The draft Principles were reviewed and endorsed by delegates at the *Advancing Sustainable Tourism at Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites* workshop. The Principles as agreed provide a best practice framework that all stakeholders should apply in the achievement of their specific objectives so that heritage resources will be protected and conserved and the many positive benefits of tourism realised.

D.   Overview of Workshop Discussions

17. The success of the workshop was due to the many inputs of a large number of people. The level of commitment shown by all participants, and in particular the contributions of Convenors, Chairs, Rapporteurs and presenters, was

impressive and demonstrated the importance of this issue to a wide range of stakeholders.

18. The workshop was structured into four themes which were highlighted through presentations, case studies, panel and small group discussions. In addition to the four main themes, the workshop was greatly enriched by its location at the Mogao Caves benefiting through site tours, a session on the management of the site, and contributions by Dunhuang Academy staff. A roundtable discussion on the management of cultural and natural heritage in China also provided a unique perspective on the situation in the host country, which all participants agreed was world-leading in its breadth and depth of activity. The following overview is a summary of information presented. The workshop discussion and outcomes will be published and disseminated through the World Heritage Papers Series.

E. Issues

19. Planning for sustainable tourism:

Concerns identified about the **threats posed by the fast-growing tourism industry** to the attributes and processes that embody heritage values, including:
   o alteration of social structures
   o loss of physical fabric by uncontrolled development within and nearby sites
   o quality of visits and values at risk
   o impacts on local cultures
   o low suitability of some sites with living heritage for large scale tourism
   o benefits of mass tourism not trickling down to local communities.

20. Successful planning for sustainable tourism requires **integrating heritage place planning with other planning instruments at the local, national and regional levels**. Additionally, governance mechanisms need to be strengthened for effective policy implementation. It is important to find ways to bridge the gap between official policy and sustainable tourism (for example George Town, Penang where tangible and intangible values are conserved and traditional street life maintained). Traditional views on the development of tourism destinations need to change (an example was given comparing Manila Intramuros and Manila city).

21. Heritage authorities and managers are often under **pressure from larger government and development agendas** including maximisation of visitor expenditure and income generation. Initiatives can be driven by short-term benefits with insufficient focus on sustainable conservation and use, for example:
   o links between sustainable place conservation and use may not be clearly understood by all stakeholders, often with a lack of shared values leading to the exploitation of resources or competition for scare resources
   o there is no consensus on what management means or entails
   o the balance between accessibility/use and conservation requirements needs to be better achieved.

22. **Managing the heritage values** of a site is an essential tool in planning for sustainable tourism. Often referred to as 'Values Based Management' it provides a framework in which all management decisions are based on the conservation of tangible and intangible values. All the site's values including

conflicting values need to be addressed (an example of this was given for Uluru in Australia). Best practice management planning requires an understanding of the range of values and interests held by different groups and is critical for sound decision-making. This management approach can empower different stakeholders and create equitable conditions for decision making. It should be used to encourage broad participation in both decision-making and implementation (for example at Mogao public participation in conservation helps people to understand the values and vulnerability of the caves). Indicators should be developed to monitor visitor management actions, to anticipate problems and to manage change.

23. Management planning based on heritage values should be used as part of tourism planning – visitors aren't the problem, rather **negative impacts are created through a lack of adequate visitor management planning and implementation**. Excellence in heritage management must include meaningful visitor experiences, convey conservation messages and the spirit of place. Education is critical to promoting a sense of belonging and the preservation of heritage. It plays a key role in achieving a better balance between use and conservation.

24. **Synergies between public and private initiatives and promoting community participation** and benefits can yield successful results (an example is the Rice Terraces in the Philippines where local people see ownership as a way out of poverty). Benefits that derive from tourism activities should seek to improve the quality of life, generate income and the fair distribution of benefits, particularly for host communities.

25. The workshop was keen to see the establishment of a process that brings the same level of awareness on the impacts of unsustainable tourism as there is for climate change.

F.   Working with the tourism industry

26. The **global tourism market is changing** with new audiences. The largest sources of growth will be Asia, the Pacific and the Americas. Before 2020 China will become the second largest source of tourists/visitors. The workshop heard that tourists/visitors are increasingly culturally sophisticated travelers who are connected to information technology, are often less fit, and are interested in experiences not just destinations. The market is expected to double by 2020 to 1.6 billion arrivals each year, with domestic tourism adding perhaps five times that number. Cultural tourism is currently 35-40% of all international trips and is growing by 15% each year. Ecotourism is also increasing from 20% by 10-12% of arrivals each year.

27. The **tourism sector is diverse and dynamic** in its business models and organisational or governance structures, and composed of many sizes and types of players, including those involved in transport, government, accommodation, food, tours, souvenirs, cultural experience and interpretation, and other services. Visitors themselves are also diverse in terms of their national and cultural background, interests, behaviour, economic power, awareness and expectations of World Heritage. As a "product", as viewed by the tourism industry, World Heritage sites also vary widely. This is also, importantly, true for the communities in or near World Heritage properties.

28. In this changing and fragmented environment it is **important to clarify the roles of the various stakeholders** to develop a better understanding between sectors. It is important to recognise the two-way relationship between tourism and heritage industries. Tourist/visitor operators have an interest in safeguarding heritage assets to ensure a sustainable future for all stakeholders.

29. The realities of **global inequality** are stark and disparities between developed and developing worlds are acute. Issues to address include capacity building, good governance, strengthening government to ensure benefits are spread across local communities, and economic benefits are retained for the country.

30. **Marketing mechanisms** can be useful in sustaining communities and conservation. Good marketing is a useful tool, as is linking sustainable tourism into existing industry processes. The local level is where innovation, partnerships and improved benefits often emerge. However there is always a need to manage expectations.

G.   Managing the tourist/visitor experience on site

31. **Presentation and interpretation play a key role as part of site management** in order to achieve the aims in Paragraph 4 of the *Convention.* Interpretation is the primary way that OUV, authenticity and integrity are conveyed to a wider public. However, "presentation" of sites does not equal "tourism". Tourism is not the only means to engage with heritage – public use of heritage sites encompasses a wide range of local, national and international audiences, each of which creates opportunities and threats for sites.

32. **Conveying the meaning of a site** is connected to every phase of the tourism/visitor chain. The encounter between the physical reality of the site and the individual should be a dialogue not a monologue. However, many changes in society present a challenge to conveying meaning. Sites are not static, and neither are audiences. With growing numbers of visitors, heritage site managers need to consider how to plan for and manage the pressure, or whether "sorry the site is full" will become a frequent reality. Another concern is that heritage may be seen as merely a driver for entertainment and experience – that the past may become a theme park. Heritage site managers therefore need to consider the other important elements in the *Convention*: integrity and authenticity.

33. **Not all World Heritage properties can and want to embrace providing for visitors**. One size does not fit all. In general, properties should base their planning mechanisms on the solid foundations of understanding the heritage values of the place and the needs of visitors. Planning needs to acknowledge that at most sites, visits by the public and the implementation of interpretation of all the significant values are integral elements of conservation. The focus should be on the visitor experience as a whole – what the visitor expectation should be and what should be best practice. Visitors should – it hardly needs to be said – receive a positive, informative and interactive experience. Conservation of the physical and intangible resources and values of a site are the building blocks of heritage interpretation.

34. **To achieve best practice it is imperative that organisations allocate resources** to employ and develop staff with the appropriate expertise, commitment, connections and vision. This applies to all disciplines and across

the organisation including conservation, tourism, corporate services, human resources, commercial operations, etc.

35. Similarly **the development of infrastructure for visitors must be subject to adequate planning** to ensure a level of control through effective policies, regulations and governance. Delivery needs quality assurance and resources to ensure all elements and heritage values are included and the community, stakeholders and associated people are involved.

H. Maximising community benefits

36. The workshop expressed concern that although tourism is increasing, the **benefits from mass industry are often not trickling down to the local communities**. The World Heritage brand encompasses some of the world's most attractive destinations and should be used as a mechanism to support sustainable development. Heritage is a resource, the benefits of which should be shared.

37. **Tourism can be of mutual benefit to communities, sites and the visitors**. Local community values, both tangible and intangible, and uses of the heritage site can also contribute to enhancing the visitor experience. However tourism markets and products must have buy-in from the local communities.

38. **Working with the community is essential to achieve better conservation and effective management of the site.** However, there are many issues surrounding this including:

- *community involvement and ownership of plans and strategies* – there is a need to avoid simplistic understandings of who the 'community' is; recognise the challenge of identifying and including all stakeholders; the contested nature of community/conflicting interests; consider whose voice is heard; consider diverse interests and what is needed to effectively and equitably involve/engage communities

- *values-based planning* – including tangible and intangible heritage; the historical and contemporary social, cultural and environmental context. Looking for congruence between site values, local values and tourism. Recognising the need to be careful, realistic, patient and manage everyone's expectations. Ensure that the benefits derived from tourism in and around World Heritage properties seek to improve quality of life, generate income with a fair distribution of benefits.

- *blurred boundaries* – past/future; public/private; local/visitor; local/industry.

- *technical expertise and support* – needed in nations where local governance is not well established. Weak governance erases the effectiveness of good policy and guidelines. More support is needed to strengthen governance mechanisms including empowering communities for equitable decision making, and ensure local planning and development supports heritage conservation.

- *skills training to support communities*:
  - need to get local people and local tourism operators involved in the nominations process, not just a top down process, especially as local people are sometimes re/dislocated and hence disengaged. Need to engage them and not force international processes on them.

- local people and cultural tourism need each other, so capacity building is important to provide adequate skills and confidence in traditional and local knowledge and practices.
- local companies often need assistance in the form of micro loans and other areas of business practices
- communication must be a two way process of dialogue providing access to heritage site management so local people and tourism operators can be informed and can fully understand the responsibilities, but also enable them to provide advice. Dialogue is essential to negotiating conflicting values, and to demystify conservation.

I.   Mogao Case Study

39.   The Mogao Caves property formed a highly significant feature of the workshop. The Mogao Caves showcases effective site management that controls visitation with a long term perspective to protect the values of the site. The Dunhuang Academy considers that visitor management is equally as important as conservation in the management of the site's Outstanding Universal Values. It also provides an example of international cooperation over time – this is very much in the spirit of the *World Heritage Convention* which calls for dialogue and mutual assistance. The Panel outlined the Dunhuang Academy's visitor management planning which includes clear policies with objectives for the short and long term. Strategies to manage the rising number of visitors and meet their expectations include implementing an advance booking system, strict control of visitor numbers through guided tours using defined circulation routes and careful selection of publicly accessible caves, exhibitions and monitoring. Training of Dunhuang Academy guides is a high priority. Visitors receive information from the guides on the importance of the physical conservation of the caves. Comprehensive visitor management at the Mogao Caves includes regular surveys to collect data on visitor profiles and information on visitor satisfaction and expectations and observations of visitor behaviour. Information gathered in the surveys alerts management to potential issues and informs decision making to improve visitor services and increase visitor satisfaction. Information on visitation provides management with effective tools for understanding the tourist/visitor market and for working cooperatively with tourism operators. This has been an empowering development for visitor management staff. To protect and safeguard the fragile wall paintings and statues in the caves a sophisticated visitor carrying capacity study has been developed by the international partners at Mogao. The study combines an integrated analysis of the environmental, physical and social elements which may be affected by visitors and the degree of this effect. The identified limiting conditions establish the visitor carrying capacity for the site. The conservation requirements of the site call for interdisciplinary cooperation among different fields using traditional conservation techniques as well as sophisticated new technologies. A visitor simulation flow model is being developed to assist with planning and an integrated visitor management system. This model links visitation at the Mogao Caves site with a new visitor orientation centre being planned close to the town of Dunhauang. The tourism sector has to meet the requirements of heritage conservation to ensure the long term sustainable use of heritage places, and not the opposite. Safeguarding heritage ensures tourism interests are maintained into the future. The conclusion for sustainable tourism is to have sustained site conservation.

II.   RECOMMENDATIONS

40.   The meeting recommends that the following policy approaches be adopted by the World Heritage Committee to establish the position of World Heritage in relation to tourism. The following three recommended approaches are outlined below:

   i. a policy orientations statement defining the relationship between World Heritage and tourism

   ii. proposed Principles to provide a best practice framework for stakeholders to protect and conserve heritage resources in the context of tourism

   iii. recommended minimal changes to the Operational Guidelines to ensure the appropriate consideration of tourism issues in nomination and state of conservation processes.

A.   Policy orientations: defining the relationship between World Heritage and tourism

41.   The tourism sector

The global tourism sector is large and rapidly growing, is diverse and dynamic in its business models and structures.

Tourists/visitors are diverse in terms of cultural background, interests, behaviour, economy, impact, awareness and expectations of World Heritage.

There is no one single way for the *World Heritage Convention*, or World Heritage properties, to engage with the tourism sector or with tourists/visitors.

42.   The relationship between World Heritage and tourism

The relationship between World Heritage and tourism is two-way:

   a. World Heritage offers tourists/visitors and the tourism sector destinations

   b. Tourism offers World Heritage the ability to meet the requirement in the *Convention* to 'present' World Heritage properties, and also a means to realise community and economic benefits through sustainable use.

Tourism is critical for World Heritage:

   a. For States Parties and their individual properties,

      i. to meet the requirement in the Convention to 'present' World Heritage

      ii. to realise community and economic benefits

   b. For the World Heritage *Convention* as a whole, as the means by which World Heritage properties are experienced by visitors travelling nationally and internationally

   c. As a major means by which the performance of World Heritage properties, and therefore the standing of the *Convention*, is judged,

      i. many World Heritage properties do not identify themselves as such, or do not adequately present their Outstanding Universal Value

> ii. it would be beneficial to develop indicators of the quality of presentation, and the representation of the World Heritage brand

> d. As a credibility issue in relation to:
>> i. the potential for tourism infrastructure to damage Outstanding Universal Value
>> ii. the threat that World Heritage properties may be unsustainably managed in relation to their adjoining communities
>> iii. sustaining the conservation objectives of the *Convention* whilst engaging with economic development
>> iv. realistic aspirations that World Heritage can attract tourism.

World Heritage is a major resource for the tourism sector:

> a. Almost all individual World Heritage properties are significant tourism destinations

> b. The World Heritage brand can attract tourists/visitors,
>> i. the World Heritage brand has more impact upon tourism to lesser known properties than to iconic properties.

Tourism, if managed well, offers benefits to World Heritage properties:

> a. to meet the requirement in Article 4 of the Convention to present World Heritage to current and future generations

> b. to realise economic benefits.

Tourism, if not managed well, poses threats to World Heritage properties.

43. The responses of World Heritage to tourism

The impact of tourism, and the management response, is different for each World Heritage property: World Heritage properties have many options to manage the impacts of tourism.

The management responses of World Heritage properties need to:

> a. work closely with the tourism sector

> b. be informed by the experiences of tourists/visitors to the visitation of the property

> c. include local communities in the planning and management of all aspects of properties, including tourism.

While there are many excellent examples of World Heritage properties successfully managing their relationship to tourism, it is also clear that many properties could improve:

> a. the prevention and management of tourism threats and impacts

> b. their relationship to the tourism sector inside and outside the property

> c. their interaction with local communities inside and outside the property

> d. their presentation of Outstanding Universal Value and focus upon the experience of tourists/visitors.

The management responses of World Heritage properties need to:

> a. be based on the protection and conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, and its effective and authentic presentation

> b. work closely with the tourism sector

> c. be informed by the experiences of tourists/visitors to the visitation of the property

d. to include local communities in the planning and management of all aspects of properties, including tourism.

44. <u>Responsibilities of different actors in relation to World Heritage and tourism</u>

The *World Heritage Convention* (World Heritage Committee, World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies):

a. set frameworks and policy approaches

b. confirm that properties have adequate mechanisms to address tourism before they are inscribed on the World Heritage List

    i. develop guidance on the expectations to be include in management plans

c. monitor the impact upon OUV of tourism activities at inscribed sites, including through indicators for state of conservation reporting

d. cooperate with other international organisations to enable:

    i. other international organisations to integrate World Heritage considerations in their programs

    ii. all parties involved in World Heritage to learn from the activities of other international organisations

e. assist State Parties and sites to access support and advice on good practices

f. reward best practice examples of World Heritage properties and businesses within the tourist/visitor sector

g. develop guidance on the use of the World Heritage emblem as part of site branding.

Individual States Parties:

a. developnational policies for protection

b. develop national policies for promotion

c. engage with their sites to provide and enable support, and to ensure that the promotion and the tourism objectives respect Outstanding Universal Value and are appropriate and sustainable

d. ensure that individual World Heritage properties within their territory do not have their OUV negatively affected by tourism.

Individual property managers:

a. manage the impact of tourism upon the OUV of properties

    i. common tools at properties include fees, charges, schedules of opening and restrictions on access

b. lead onsite presentation and provide meaningful visitor experiences

c. work with the tourist/visitor sector, and be aware of the needs and experiences of tourists/visitors, to best protect the property

    i. the best point of engagement between the *World Heritage Convention* and the tourism sector as a whole is at the direct site level, or within countries

d. engage with communities and business on conservation and development.

Tourism sector:

a. work with World Heritage property managers to help protect Outstanding Universal Value

b. recognise and engage in shared responsibility to sustain World Heritage properties as tourism resources

c. work on authentic presentation and quality experiences.

Individual tourists/visitors with the assistance of World Heritage property managers and the tourism sector, can be helped to appreciate and protect the OUV of World Heritage properties.

B. Proposed Principles for Sustainable Tourism at World Heritage Properties

Preamble

45. The *Principles for Sustainable Tourism at World Heritage Properties* define cooperative stakeholder relationships among all relevant government agencies, public and private tourism sectors, civil society including NGOs, visitors, site management, museums and community members, such that tourism and visitation associated with World Heritage Properties contributes to the long term sustainability of their heritage values and sense of place, while generating cultural and socio-economic benefits to the local population and surrounding region. These cooperative relationships are built on a shared concern for the long term protection and conservation of cultural and natural heritage places and their visitor attraction.

46. World Heritage Properties represent ecological, geological, material, intellectual and spiritual resources that are the common heritage of humanity. They provide an important narrative of environmental and historical development and serve as foundations for contemporary social identity and development. Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List are recognised for their Outstanding Universal Values. Many listed properties may have a range of additional or complementary heritage values that are established by further research or ascribed by the community.

47. World Heritage Properties are also among the most popular and heavily promoted visitor and tourist/visitor attractions in many countries. The dramatic current and projected growth of international and domestic travel represents both challenges and opportunities for World Heritage sites and surrounding populations. Poorly managed tourism or excessive visitor numbers at a site can pose major threats to the heritage significance of the place and degrade the quality of the visitor experience. Tourism development and visitor activity should enhance the visitor's understanding and appreciation of the heritage values through interpretation, presentation and visitor services. Sustainable tourism relies on the development and delivery of quality visitor experiences that do not degrade or damage any of the property's cultural or natural values and visitor attraction.

48. Much tourism promotion, visitor activity, cultural exchange and economic development associated with World Heritage Properties takes place in the surrounding locality, the nearby tourism destination, elsewhere in the country or internationally. Sustainable and responsible tourism development and visitor management requires effective, cooperative commitment and coordination between site management and all relevant public agencies and private enterprises.

49. The *World Heritage Convention* requires States Parties to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the inscribed properties under their responsibility. Article 4 of the *Convention* identifies "Presentation" of the Outstanding Universal Value as being of equal importance to its "Identification, Protection, Conservation and Transmission" to future generations. Responsible tourism management and the generation of widespread public support for protection and conservation should be a major contributor to the aims and objectives of the *World Heritage Convention*.

50. These *Principles* recognise the Charters and Guidelines already developed by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, UN World Tourism Organisation, ICOMOS, IUCN, ICOM and other international stakeholders, and are built upon these texts to ensure best practice tourism at heritage places.

51. **Principle 1**
Contribution to World Heritage objectives
Tourism development and visitor activities associated with World Heritage Properties must contribute to and must not damage the protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of their heritage values. Tourism should also generate sustainable socio-economic development and equitably contribute tangible as well as intangible benefits to local and regional communities in ways that are consistent with the conservation of the properties.

Principle 2
Cooperative partnerships
World Heritage Properties should be places where all stakeholders cooperate through effective partnerships to maximise conservation and presentation outcomes, whilst minimising threats and adverse impacts from tourism.

Principle 3
Public awareness and support
The Promotion, Presentation and Interpretation of World Heritage Properties should be effective, honest, comprehensive and engaging. It should mobilise local and international awareness, understanding and support for their protection, conservation and sustainable use.

Principle 4
Proactive tourism management
The contribution of tourism development and visitor activities associated with World Heritage Properties to their protection, conservation and presentation requires continuing and proactive planning and monitoring by Site Management, which must respect the capacity of the individual property to accept visitation without degrading or threatening heritage values. Site Management should have regard to relevant tourism supply chain and broader tourism destination issues, including congestion management and the quality of life for local people. Tourism planning and management, including cooperative partnerships, should be an integral aspect of the site management system.

Principle 5
Stakeholder empowerment
Planning for tourism development and visitor activity associated with World Heritage Properties should be undertaken in an inclusive and participatory manner, respecting and empowering the local community including property

owners, traditional or indigenous custodians, while taking account of their capacity and willingness to participate in visitor activity.

Principle 6
Tourism infrastructure and visitor facilities
Tourism infrastructure and visitor facilities associated with World Heritage Properties should be carefully planned, sited, designed, constructed and periodically upgraded as required to maximise the quality of visitor appreciation and experiences while ensuring there is no significant adverse impacts on heritage values and the surrounding environmental, social and cultural context.

Principle 7
Site management capacity
Management systems for World Heritage Properties should have sufficient skills, capacities and resources available when planning tourism infrastructure and managing visitor activity to ensure the protection and presentation of their identified heritage values and respect for local communities.

Principle 8
Application of tourism generated revenue
Relevant public agencies and Site Management should apply a sufficient proportion of the revenue derived from tourism and visitor activity associated with World Heritage Properties to ensure the protection, conservation and management of their heritage values.

Principle 9
Contribution to local community development
Tourism infrastructure development and visitor activity associated with World Heritage Properties should contribute to local community empowerment and socio-economic development in an effective and equitable manner.

C.   Implementing the *Principles*

52.   The *Principles for Sustainable Tourism at World Heritage Properties* are intended to be adopted and embraced by all stakeholders involved in tourism associated with the world's cultural and natural heritage places. They can be used to undertake the evaluation of existing and proposed tourism development and visitor programmes at heritage places in a consistent and comparable manner. Irrespective of the scale, physical and heritage characteristics of the destination, and the scale and nature of the tourism experience, a consistent basis for evaluation will enable different sites to be compared and managed in a useful and beneficial manner.

53.   **International Agencies**, such as the World Heritage Committee, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Category 2 centres working under the auspices of UNESCO, the UN World Tourism Organisation and professional bodies such as ICOMOS, IUCN, ICCROM and ICOM have an agreed framework for cooperation in the development of best practice tourism management at World Heritage Properties and other places of heritage significance.

54.   **States Parties to the *World Heritage Convention*** will have a consistent framework to respond to their obligations under Article 4 of *The Convention*.

55.   **Government agencies** at national, regional and local levels, including Destination Management Organisations, will have a consistent framework and a

clear set of objectives to facilitate cooperation and coordination within government and with the private sector to deliver the obligations accepted by their national government as a State Party to the *World Heritage Convention*.

56. **Heritage Site Management** and those who design or implement tourism programs and projects at heritage places will have a soundly based methodology for evaluating, benchmarking and monitoring the performance of their site or place over time, leading to improved conservation and visitor management policies and programs.

57. **Tourism Private Sector** operators and providers have a strong basis for cooperation and participation in the delivery of responsible and sustainable tourism development and visitor activities that protect heritage values, contribute to conservation and enhance the visitor experience.

58. **Researchers** will be able to use a consistent methodology when assessing the dynamic nature of tourism at heritage sites and the impact on heritage significance that may arise from tourism activities.

59. **Conservation Practitioners** will be able to confidently undertake and present their work to the public, knowing there is a strong basis for visitor management.

60. **Consent authorities** will be able to evaluate tourism development proposals at heritage sites against a widely recognised and consistent set of Principles. Consent for development will thus be more soundly based on well-established criteria.

61. Local Community, Civil Society and NGOs will have a set of agreed Principles with which to encourage responsible government agencies to develop good practice tourism management.

62. **Funding Providers** for tourism projects at heritage sites, whether by way of grant or investment, will have a set of criteria against which to evaluate applications for funding, investment or grant support, giving added security for those who invest in or support such programs.

63. **Tourism Promoters,** whether national, regional or local, will be able to include programs which communicate the heritage significance of historic places in their programs. Promoting the unique or distinctive features of a destination is an essential component of successful tourism promotion.

D.   Glossary

64. This Glossary has been prepared to provide those who use and implement the *Principles for Sustainable Tourism at World Heritage Properties* with a consistent terminology.

65. **Access** to places of heritage significance includes all form of access, including **physical access**, where the visitor experiences the place in person, **intellectual access**, where the visitor or others learn about the place, without possibly ever actually visiting it and **emotive access** where the sense of being there is felt, again even if a visit is never undertaken.

66. **Conservation** describes all of the processes of looking after a Heritage Place, Cultural Landscape, Heritage Collection or aspect of Intangible Heritage so as

to retain its cultural, indigenous or natural heritage significance. In some English speaking countries, the term Preservation is used as an alternative to Conservation for this general activity.

67. **Cultural Tourism** is essentially that form of tourism that focuses on the culture, and cultural environments including landscapes of the destination, the values and lifestyles, heritage, visual and performing arts, industries, traditions and leisure pursuits of the local population or host community. It can include attendance at cultural events, visits to museums and heritage places and mixing with local people. It should not be regarded as a definable niche within the broad range of tourism activities, but encompasses all experiences absorbed by the visitor to a place that is beyond their own living environment.

68. **Destination** means the place near the heritage site in which the visitor spends at least one overnight stay. They provide visitor arrival facilities, background physical infrastructure, such as accommodation and tourism support services for the various heritage sites and other attractions within their vicinity. Heritage sites may be located within Destinations which comprise urban settlements.

69. **Local Community** is a general concept that encompasses all of the people who, depending on the context of the discussion, inhabit a defined geographical entity, ranging from a continent, a country, a region, a town, village or historic site.

70. **Stakeholders** are all of the people and organisations who take part in the process of heritage conservation and tourism, from those who produce the material that helps a future visitor determine the nature of their vacation, to those who organise the transportation, manage the Destination and ultimately manage the heritage places and attractions that the tourist/visitor visits.

71. **Sustainable Tourism** refers to a level of tourism development and activity that does not compromise or regrade the heritage values of a place, including World Heritage Properties over the long term. It can be maintained because it results in a net benefit for the social, economic, cultural and natural environments of the area in which it takes place.

72. **Tangible Cultural Heritage** encompasses the vast created works of humankind, including places of human habitation, villages, towns and cities, buildings, structures, art works, documents, handicrafts, musical instruments, furniture, clothing and items of personal decoration, religious, ritual and funerary objects, and industrial systems.

73. **Tourism Sector** encompasses all those who work in, support, facilitate or provide goods and services to Domestic and International Tourism activities, both the public and private sectors.

74. **Tourism Infrastructure** includes all of the physical works that enable, facilitate, or enhance a visit to a destination, including the provision or upgrading of transportation, access, accommodation and visitor facilities, either on site or in the locality.

75. **Triple Bottom Line** covers the environmental, economic and social aspects of any development or conservation activity within a defined area.

III.   Proposed changes to the *Operational Guidelines*

76.   The workshop recommended minimal changes to the *Operational Guidelines* to ensure the appropriate consideration of tourism issues in the nomination process. The recommended revised sections are below and relate to sections of ANNEX 5: Format for the nomination of properties for inscription on the World Heritage List.

A. Factors affecting the property

Responsible visitation at World Heritage sites	Consider how your site's visitation is responsible in view of *The Principles for Sustainable Tourism at World Heritage Properties* (See Recommendations B.II of the Workshop on Advancing Sustainable Tourism at Natural and Cultural Heritage Sites, September 2009, Mogao Caves, China) [Note: Principles to be considered at WHC34]. Describe the current levels of visitation to the property including available baseline data; patterns of use, including concentrations of activity in parts of the property; and demand for different activities. Describe projected levels of visitation due to inscription or other factors. Describe how the site can absorb or be upgraded to meet the current or expected visitor numbers and related development pressure without adverse effects. Consider possible forms of deterioration due to visitor pressure including those to the physical and intangible fabric of the property.

B. Protection and Management of the Property

Visitor facilities and infrastructure	This section should describe the facilities available on site for visitors, for example interpretation/explanation, whether by trails, guides, notices or publications; property museum, visitor or interpretation centre; and/or use of digital technologies; overnight accommodation; restaurant or refreshment facilities; shops; car parking; lavatories; search and rescue. Are the facilities and infrastructure compatible with the heritage values of the property?

Staffing levels and expertise (professional, technical, maintenance)	Indicate the skills and training which are currently available at the property to deal with current and projected demands for appropriate management including in relation to visitation.