



 World Heritage  
Site Managers Forum  
世界遗产地管理者论坛  
FUZHOU, CHINA 2021

**4th World Heritage Site Managers' Forum**  
*In conjunction with the extended 44th session of the  
World Heritage Committee*

## **World Heritage Governance - Being prepared to manage change and continuity**

Fuzhou (China)/Online Meeting  
7-13 July 2021

### **Statement of the 4th World Heritage Site Managers' Forum at the extended 44th World Heritage Committee meeting**

#### **Preamble**

The 4th World Heritage Site Managers' Forum was held online hosted by the People's Republic of China from 7 to 13 July 2021. The Forum brought together 90 World Heritage site managers, coordinators and practitioners from 48 countries (Albania, Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Botswana, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Honduras, Hungary, India, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Libya, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Namibia, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, and Zambia) with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee; ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN.

Participants would like to thank the People's Republic of China for hosting and facilitating the online meeting to ensure the continuation of the Forum as a venue for discussion, knowledge sharing and exchange, especially in the COVID-19 global health crisis. Participants are also grateful for the opportunity to work with and learn about the management and governance structure of the World Heritage property of *Kulangsu, a Historic International Settlement*.

#### **Context**

The Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* outline that States Parties should develop "equitable governance arrangements" in relation to implementing effective management.<sup>1</sup> Equitable governance arrangements are needed to arrive at better decisions with the participation of all necessary actors, through the use of appropriate legal and customary frameworks. Active consultation and involvement of rights-holders, local communities and stakeholders are essential in the management of World Heritage properties. Management systems and governance arrangements at World Heritage properties need adaptive and interactive processes to ensure meaningful contribution and collaboration of all concerned actors.

---

<sup>1</sup> 117. *States Parties are responsible for implementing effective management activities for a World Heritage property. States Parties should do so in close collaboration with property managers, the agency with management authority and other partners, local communities and indigenous peoples, rights-holders and stakeholders in property management, by developing, when appropriate, equitable governance arrangements, collaborative management systems and redress mechanisms.*

### Governance arrangements gaps and needs

At the site level, it is difficult to arrive at management decisions respecting a consensus system and it is often challenging to determine the appropriate level of understanding and participation needed for meaningful participatory decision-making processes. Proactive and innovative approaches to engage with different levels of governance and diverse actors are continuously needed.

Due to discrepancies between the World Heritage inscription and national designations, in many cases, more than one entity or institution could be responsible for the management of a World Heritage property, and it is crucial, to ensure a management system includes all relevant actors. Recognition should be given to how people relate to their World Heritage, allowing for a more integrated articulation between values and attributes of the heritage place, including the World Heritage property, and its wider social, economic and environmental contexts.

### Way forward

The *World Heritage Convention* is a global standard-setting conservation instrument. National, regional, and local legal frameworks and policies regarding heritage conservation should be encouraged to be revised and updated on a cyclic basis, in order to address the different scope, size and typology of heritage places whilst also equipping measures for wider participation in management. Traditional management practices reflecting community values should be integrated with the management frameworks for World Heritage properties, to include monitoring, reporting, and adaptive strategies. World Heritage properties must review and update their respective management plans and governance arrangements regularly, in order to adapt continuously to change.

At World Heritage properties, heritage should be at the center of local development strategies, contributing towards the quality of life of local communities and the conservation of the heritage values.

Whilst respecting legal and customary frameworks of heritage protection, the management system of World Heritage properties needs to be based on approaches that enable functional management, with decision-making grounded on technical advice, promoting active consultation with all relevant and concerned actors, and setting up an appropriate data management system for management actions.

The management system should be interconnected and respond to different levels - national, regional, and local - with reciprocal cooperation between the different levels of governance. In particular, State Parties are encouraged to establish management systems at the site level, and provide continuous resources for site managers to set and achieve sustainable and strategic management objectives to respond to ongoing issues and challenges, whilst preserving the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties. Heritage is not only a component to be preserved but to be seen as a sustainable resource for the future which has developed in a time-tested manner.

Governance arrangements must strive to be as inclusive and transparent as possible. Stable and continuous financial resources and support must be secured for World Heritage management within general governance budgets and including financial support from different sectors of society to ensure timely and adequate budget execution at the site level. Collaboration and engagement of financing agencies need to be permanently considered and active communication and negotiation skills need to be fostered to acquire sustainable funding mechanisms.

Participants request that holistic guidance and practical tools on governance are produced and promoted to be adopted at all World Heritage properties.

There is also the continuous need for better capacity building, guidance and knowledge resources to be provided to World Heritage properties on management planning and monitoring, 2030 Agenda, and targeted assistance for properties included on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Participants call upon the future Host Countries of the World Heritage Committee to continue convening the World Heritage Site Managers' Forum in conjunction with the session of the World Heritage Committee meeting, to continue the discussion of many important themes relating to World Heritage management.

