



Statement of the 3rd World Heritage Site Managers' Forum
at the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee
Towards Sustainable Heritage Management
Baku, Azerbaijan
26 June - 4 July 2019

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Preamble

The 3rd World Heritage Site Managers' Forum was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 26 June to 4 July 2019. The Forum was enriched by presentations and exchanges between "Site Managers", representatives of the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre.

The Forum brought together 60 site managers, coordinators and practitioners from 41 countries (Afghanistan, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cuba, Ethiopia, Germany, Haiti, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, Malaysia, Namibia, Nepal, Norway, Pakistan, Palau, Palestine, Papua New Guinea, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

Participants would like to thank the Republic of Azerbaijan for convening the meeting, supporting and facilitating the participation of site managers from SIDS and LDCs, and for providing resources and assistance in making the Forum a representative space for discussion and knowledge sharing. Introducing the interaction between the Site Managers' Forum, the Young Professionals' Forum together with the Icherisheher Administration of Azerbaijan sparked mutually beneficial ideas for sustainable heritage management practices for the city of Baku as well for the respective sites of all participants.

Context

World Heritage sites face multiple challenges and changes, whilst being required to promote the sustainable development agenda. At the same time, "Site Managers" are also exploring and experiencing new opportunities for sharing benefits with diverse range of communities and environments through key concepts such as effective management, impact assessment, climate change adaptation and mitigation. The World Heritage Site Managers' Forum is a shared space for "Site Managers" to meet and exchange, and to better understand the World Heritage system. The Site Managers' Forum has become a space for discussion about pressing challenges and emerging concepts to promote sustainable heritage management practices.

Capacity Building

We, the participants of the third World Heritage Site Managers' Forum, recall the *World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy* adopted by the World Heritage Committee in 2011 through Decision **39 COM 9B**. We call upon States Parties to commit to the implementation of the strategy, which should be used as a guiding document towards operationalizing capacity building policies at the national, regional and local levels.

These policies should recognize that capacity building is required at all levels of site management, addressing institutions and communities, including States Parties representatives, national focal points, and site managers operating at national, regional and local levels.

Capacity building will require the allocation of adequate resources, time and expertise. We, the “Site Managers”, through our knowledge and experience, are committed to support States Parties in initiating, developing and implementing capacity building opportunities for diverse actors. We can and should be involved as key resources for these activities.

Empowerment and Communication

We recall the 2018 statement of the Site Managers’ Forum that emphasized that the term “Site Manager” does not fully capture the complexity of coordinated efforts of diverse people involved in this work, which incorrectly implies that it is a task undertaken by a single person rather than as a collaborative process of all those involved.

As “Site Managers”, we aspire at being continuously involved and included throughout World Heritage decision making processes, for improving management practices and be more effective in the implementation and use of resources. We would highlight the importance of formally recognizing in the *Operational Guidelines* the crucial role “Site Managers” play in all processes of the *World Heritage Convention*, and to empower and support “Site Managers” working in different levels, functions and capacities. We call upon States Parties to include “Site Managers” in their delegations to the World Heritage Committee.

The creation of effective policies and improvement of management practices is achievable only through the involvement of those included in the wider site management team. A fair representation of diverse “Site Managers” should be the driving force when new policies and guidelines are developed within the World Heritage context.

Communication is a fundamental component of capacity building and can be enhanced through active web of networks established between “Site Managers” and other actors in diverse levels. Capacity building policies should include networking partners, such as Category 2 Centres and other regional platforms, to better understand World Heritage processes and decisions in working languages of the sites. We must also find ways to simplify the technical terminology used within the framework of the World Heritage Convention to enable better and easier translations. The information must reach not only the “Site Managers” but also the wider extent of society to ensure that World Heritage can have an active role in sustainable development and at the same time can share benefits of heritage with the wider society.

We call upon the future Host Countries to continue convening the Site Managers’ Forum in conjunction with the annual session of the World Heritage Committee. We also encourage States Parties to explore the possibility of organizing regional Site Managers’ Fora to extend the positive impacts of this initiative.