



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization  
Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'éducation, la science et la culture

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27 September 2005

To: - All States Parties to the *World Heritage Convention*

Cc: - Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee (ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN)  
- National Commissions of States Parties  
- DDG; ADG/ODG; ADG/ERC; ADG/ED; ADG/SC; ADG/SHS, ADG/CLT; ADG/AFR

Subject: **29<sup>th</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee.  
Thematic Initiative "Astronomy and World Heritage".**

Madam/Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that the World Heritage Committee, at its 29th session (Durban, South-Africa, 10 - 17 July 2005), examined the Thematic Initiative "Astronomy and World Heritage" and adopted the following decision (29 COM 5.1) :

*"The World Heritage Committee, requests the Director of the World Heritage Centre to further explore the thematic initiative "Astronomy and World Heritage" as a means to promote, in particular, nominations which recognize and celebrate achievements in science."*

The Thematic Initiative "Astronomy and World Heritage" provides an opportunity not only of identifying properties linked to astronomy but also of keeping their memory alive and preserving them from progressive deterioration, by recognizing and the promoting their scientific values through their inscription on the World Heritage List.

I would also like to underline that amongst the intersectoral activities of UNESCO, this Thematic Initiative is, to a date, the only cultural activity that could become a focal project in support of the proclamation of 2009 as International Year of Astronomy which was requested by Italy during the 172 session of the Executive Board (172 EX/51, 172 EX/INF.11).

../2

Following the Committee's decision, the World Heritage Centre finalized, thanks to financial support of the Royal Astronomical Society of the United Kingdom, a data base structure on the Web site of the World Heritage Centre. This data base will provide a network to share knowledge for all international, national cultural and scientific institutions, as well as NGO's, involved in the development and implementation of the aforementioned Initiative. A public web page was also created on our Web site in order to increase the visibility of the cultural world heritage sites which have a link to astronomical observations.

I would be pleased if you could provide the World Heritage Centre the name of the institution (scientific or cultural) which will be officially in charge of the implementation of this Initiative at national level. The nominative access code to the data base will be immediately created for the institutions in order to establish a interinstitutional and multidisciplinary collaboration aims to identify a properties linked to astronomy and to develop a strategy for the serial inscription of those particular sites on the World Heritage List.

For more information, please contact Mrs Anna Sidorenko-Dulom, coordinator of the Thematic Initiative "Astronomy and World Heritage" (tel: 33 (0) 1 45 68 20 96, e-mail: [a.sidorenko@unesco.org](mailto:a.sidorenko@unesco.org)).

Accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Francesco Bandarin  
Director  
UNESCO World Heritage Centre