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Proposal for assessment of cultural heritage monuments and sites in the Arctic

- Action initiator:** Norway
- Project leader:** Susan Barr, Directorate for Cultural Heritage, Oslo, Norway and President of the International Council on Monuments and Sites' (ICOMOS) Polar Heritage Committee (IPHC)
- Participants:** All Arctic States and Permanent Participants are welcome to take part.
- Proposal date:** March 2008
- Proposed duration:** Jan 2010-March 2011 (may need to be extended)

Background - Justification

The proposal notes that the SDWG Work Plan 2009-11, presented in the SAO Report to Ministers, Tromsø, Norway, April 2009, identifies six subject areas of special importance under the heading of sustainable development. This proposal addresses the Priority Area *Education and Cultural Heritage*, with emphasis on the latter represented through monuments and sites in the Arctic.

The proposal was originally presented by Norway in the SDWG in 2008. The project was unfortunately delayed due to illness, but was re-presented to the SDWG in November 2009 in a revised version according to comments that had been received.

Immediately following the SAO meeting in Narvik in November 2007 and at the same venue, the World Heritage Centre in Paris organised an expert meeting on World Heritage and the Arctic. The aim of the meeting was an opportunity for the Arctic countries to present their World Heritage sites and the Arctic sites currently on or proposed for each country's Tentative List. As a result of the discussions, the following resolution (amongst others) was agreed on:

7. Scientific research, exchange and comparative studies

The participants encouraged the governments of the Arctic States Parties to the World Heritage Convention to make best use of scientific information available and enhance scientific information exchange in the identification, preservation and management of outstanding Arctic heritage.

The participants suggested that States Parties share information concerning comparative analysis of Arctic sites in order to contribute to baseline information in the preparation of serial and transnational cultural and natural properties.

The participants noted the proposal by IUCN to prepare a thematic study on natural heritage in the Arctic region. The participants also noted the "Arctic Biodiversity Assessment" (ABA) being conducted by CAFF which has been endorsed by the Arctic

Council and which is now in the planning phase. The participants encouraged ICOMOS to consider the preparation of a thematic study of the cultural heritage of the Arctic and that this be coordinated with the IUCN study. (underlining done here).

This proposal is an answer both to the resolution of the World Heritage Centre's Expert Meeting on the Arctic and relates to the SDWG Priority Area Education and Cultural Heritage. It recognises that information and designations of cultural heritage monuments and sites already exist in each of the Arctic countries, but that there is no international agreement on which monuments and sites are in the class of particularly international importance. This could be of World Heritage scale, but it could also be sufficient that they have International Significance as Arctic Sites. The proposal also recognises that cultural heritage sites in the Arctic are being affected by new challenges that have arisen in connection with current climate changes.

Aim of the project

The project seeks to present a short list of an estimated c. 20 (the actual number will be decided as the project progresses) cultural heritage sites in the Arctic which are considered by a core expert group (see under) to be of particular international importance. While each Arctic nation already has a form for ranking and a management strategy for its own national sites, the project will seek to identify sites that have significance which transcends national boundaries.

It is therefore not a criterium for the project that the final list will contain an equal number of sites from each country or region, or even a minimum of one from each country or region. It will be the international criteria which decide the listed sites, while "non-listed" sites will of course retain their national importance and designations. This same principle is reflected in the World Heritage List which, although it ideally may seek equal representation from all nations and themes, will not accept nominations solely to fill these criteria.

It is intended that the project's core group will start their work by agreeing on a suitable set of principles for the designation of sites in the Arctic which will clarify the international significance which is at the heart of this project proposal. Guidelines such as Resolution 3 (2009) of the Antarctic Treaty System (see: <http://www.polarheritage.com/content/documents/50.pdf>) with its *Guidelines for the designation and protection of Historic Sites and Monuments in Antarctica*, and other relevant guidelines for cultural heritage in more populated areas, will be consulted. Once agreement has been reached on this foundation, the project will continue on to assess sites which meet the principles and finally to form a proposal for Guidelines, or a Statement of Best Practice, for the protection and preservation of these designated sites on the lines of the World Heritage standard for the protection and management of WH Sites. Amongst other matters, such questions as open or limited access for tourism purposes will be addressed.

There are no fixed preconceptions of which sites should constitute the final list. This will be worked out through the expert group discussions. Nor are there preconceptions of the types of sites (for example relating to indigenous groups, explorers, exploiters, or nature as a cultural site). It will also be considered whether some important sites *should not* be listed as a strategy for best protection – i.e. attention should not be drawn to them in this way.

Expert group

It is envisaged that the project will have a small core group of cultural heritage experts proposed by states and PPs from the Arctic nations, each of whom will use the wider resources of their national cultural heritage networks in order to assess and designate proposals for sites from their own countries. The networks must also include representatives for indigenous cultural heritage and traditional knowledge. The expert group will discuss the various proposals and use the agreed designation principles to form the final short list. The members of the group must have national backing and be willing and able to use a wide network that sufficiently represents the relevant interests within their country.

Outcome

1. **Objectives:** Knowledge concerning particularly significant heritage monuments and sites within the Arctic region will be summarized and any gaps in the current knowledge will be identified and filled where possible. General agreement on the irreplaceable heritage values of the identified monuments and sites will be sought through the Arctic Council with a recognition of the necessity of paying particular attention to the future well being of these monuments and sites.
2. **Outreach:** Guidelines, or a Statement of Best Practice, for the protection and preservation of these designated sites will be presented and an information strategy for international dissemination will be developed for consideration and recommendation by the Arctic Council.
3. **Strengthening the Arctic identity:** Work towards agreement on a limited number of particularly significant Arctic sites, together with principles for their protection and management, will increase international understanding of the human history of the Arctic and strengthen the bonds between the nations which share this history.

Method

Objectives:

As a parallel to CAFF's Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA: <http://arcticportal.org/en/caff/aba>) and in collaboration with IUCN where appropriate, international heritage networks such as the International Council on Monuments and Sites (www.international.icomos.org), with its National committees and its Polar Heritage Committee (www.polarheritage.com), together with national heritage agencies, SDWG Permanent Participant representatives and other relevant contacts, will be contacted for information and assessment of what they consider to be particularly internationally significant heritage monuments and sites in the Arctic region. It is expected that the members of the project's core group will use their own networks to facilitate this stage of the project.

The list thus compiled will be presented to the Arctic Council for assessment and comment. If the final list is accepted by the Council, then this will provide the identified monuments and sites with increased international recognition with regard to their international significance and irreplaceable values.

Outreach:

Through the Arctic Council, a common understanding of the intention of special attention to and protection of these identified monuments and sites will be developed. General principles/guidelines will be drawn up for 1) the protection of and 2) dissemination of information concerning these monuments and sites.

It is recognised that the Arctic countries already have protection and management strategies for their cultural heritage, but the objective here is to combine the best of these to a Statement of Best Practice which is tailored to suit the special Arctic conditions.

A programme and method for regular future reporting to the Arctic Council should be included to ensure that the principles/guidelines are successfully incorporated and to follow the development of the state of the sites.

Coordination

The collection and assessment of information as outlined above will be coordinated by Senior Advisor in polar matters Susan Barr (susan.barr@ra.no) at the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage, who is also president of the ICOMOS Polar Heritage Committee. A project secretary will be engaged.

A number of workshops (minimum two) will be held for the compilation and assessment of the suggested monuments and sites for final identification and presentation to the Arctic Council, and for the development of the guidelines/principles. Work will otherwise be carried out through email contact.

Timeline

It is hoped that the core expert group can be formed immediately after the project has been endorsed by the SAOs. A first workshop for the group will be held in Norway early in 2010. A final workshop will be held towards the end of 2010 or early 2011, before the final proposal is presented for approval at the SAO meeting in March/April 2011. One workshop may be held between the two mentioned above. After the first workshop in Norway, the succeeding workshops may be held in other of the Arctic countries.

It must be noted that this timeframe may be too short and may have to be considered extended to cover more than one year, with two years as a maximum.

Budget

Norway is prepared to finance this initiative with a maximum of NOK 400 000 per year (NOK 800 000 if two whole years). This will include costs for a part-time project secretary (including any travel) and expenses for the first workshop (not including travel and hotel expenses for participants), as well as a certain amount of necessary consultancy expenses. Norway will also cover the cost of publication and dissemination of the results of this

initiative by other means than Internet links. In addition to this the coordinator will contribute within her position at the Directorate for Cultural Heritage.

Funding of PP representatives is expected to be solved nationally, and all participants will be expected to contribute some work time within their own budgets as well as travel expenses for core group members. The members will be expected to use time and if necessary some travel expenses in connection with network contacting. Hosting of a workshop will also be appreciated.

References (a preliminary list)

Barr, Susan and Joel Bergland, Þór Hjaltalín, Ina Rognerud 2005: *Kulturmiljøer i Arktis. Prinsipper for bærekraftig forvaltning* [Cultural Heritage Sites in the Arctic. Principles for Sustainable Management]. TemaNord 2005:552, Nordic Council of Ministers, Copenhagen.

Barr, Susan and Paul Chaplin 2005: Cultural Heritage in the Arctic and Antarctic Regions. IPHC, c/o Riksantikvaren, Oslo.

Barr, Susan and Paul Chaplin 2008: Historical Polar Bases - Preservation and Management. IPHC, c/o Riksantikvaren, Oslo.

<http://www.siberian-studies.org/publications/PDF/cpyefimenko.pdf>

RAIPON in cooperation with CAFF produced the report Conservation Value of Sacred Sites of Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic (Nov 2004).