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UN agency identifies new world heritage sites



[UNESCO Director-General Irina Bukova addresses World Heritage Committee meeting](#)

31 July 2010 – The United Nations agency tasked with preserving humanity's cultural heritage today added a selection of new sites situated in various countries around the globe to its World Heritage List, after deciding that they were of outstanding universal value.

The new sites recognized by the World Heritage Committee of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), include the Central Highlands in Sri Lanka, the Papahânaumokuâkea islands and atolls in the United States and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania.

Others are the Turaif District in ad-Dir'iyah, Saudi Arabia, the Australian Convict Sites, the Jantar Mantar in India, the Sheikh Safi al-Din Khânegâh and Shrine Ensemble in Ardabil, Iran, the Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex also in Iran, the Bikini Atoll in Marshall Islands and the Historic Villages of Korea – Hahoe and Yangdong – in the Republic of Korea.

The World Heritage Committee has been meeting in Brasilia, Brazil, this week to review candidates for inclusion on its World Heritage List and assess the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Situated in the south-central part of Sri Lanka, the Central Highlands comprise the Peak Wilderness Protected Area, the Horton Plains National Park and the Knuckles Conservation Forest.

The forests, where the land rises to 2,500 metres above sea-level, are home to an extraordinary range of flora and fauna, including several endangered species such as the western-purple-faced langur, the Horton Plains slender loris and the Sri Lankan leopard. The region is considered a super biodiversity hotspot.

Papahânaumokuâkea is a vast and isolated linear cluster of small, low lying islands and atolls, with their surrounding ocean, roughly 250 kilometres to the northwest of the main Hawaiian Archipelago and extending over some 1,931 kilometres.

The area has deep cosmological and traditional significance for living native Hawaiian culture, as an ancestral environment, as an embodiment of the Hawaiian concept of kinship between people and the natural world, and as the place where it is believed that life originates and to where the spirits return after death.

The Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania has an extraordinary record of human evolution at the site. It spans a vast area of land from the Serengeti National Park in the north-west of Tanzania to the eastern arm of the Great Rift Valley. The property had previously been inscribed on the list as a natural site.

Archaeological research in the area has also yielded a long sequence of evidence of human evolution and human-environment dynamics, collectively spanning almost four million years to the early modern era.

The Ngorongoro conservancy also contains the spectacular Ngorongoro Crater, which is the world's largest caldera, and the Olduvai Gorge, one of the world's most important pre-historic sites, where anthropologists Louis and Mary Leakey made many of their greatest discoveries.

The At Turaif District in ad-Dir'iyah was the first capital of the Saudi Dynasty, in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula, north-west of Riyadh.

Founded in the 15th century, it bears witness to the Najdi architectural style, which is specific to the centre of the Arabian peninsula.

The Australian Convict Sites includes a selection of 11 penal sites, among the thousands established by the British Empire on Australian soil in the 18th and 19th centuries. They are located on the fertile coastal strip from which the Aboriginal peoples were then forced back, mainly around Sydney and in Tasmania, as well as on Norfolk Island and in Fremantle.

The Jantar Mantar in Jaipur, India, is an astronomical observation site built in the early 18th century. It includes a set of some 20 main fixed instruments. They are monumental examples in masonry of known instruments but which in many cases have specific characteristics of their own.

Sheikh Safi al-Din Khânegâh and Shrine Ensemble in Ardabil was built between the beginning of the 16th century and the end of the 18th century. It is a place of spiritual retreat in the Sufi tradition uses Iranian traditional architectural forms to maximize use of available space to accommodate a variety of functions – including a library, a mosque, a school, mausolea, a cistern, a hospital, kitchens, a bakery, and some offices.

The Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex, also in Iran, has been a place of cultural exchange since antiquity and its historic bazaar complex is one of the most important commercial centres on the Silk Road. It consists of a series of interconnected, covered, brick structures, buildings, and enclosed spaces for different functions.

In the wake of World War II, the United States decided to resume nuclear testing in the Pacific Ocean, on Bikini Atoll in the Marshall archipelago. After the displacement of the local inhabitants, 67 nuclear tests were carried out from 1946 to 1958, including the explosion of the first H-bomb in 1952.

Historic Villages of Korea – Hahoe and Yangdong – were founded in the 14th-15th centuries and are seen as the two most representative historic clan villages in the Republic of Korea.

Their layout and location, sheltered by forested mountains and facing out onto a river and open agricultural fields, reflect the distinctive aristocratic Confucian culture of the early part of the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910).

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