

Historic forts on Panama's coastline placed on List of World Heritage in Danger



Ruins and Bay at Portobelo, Panama. Photo: CreativeCommons/Tedder

27 June 2012 –

Citing environmental factors, lack of maintenance and uncontrollable urban developments, the [World Heritage Committee](#) today placed an historic Panamanian property on its list of endangered world heritage.

The site, Portobelo-San Lorenzo, is made up of a group of fortifications and is considered an example of 17th and 18th century military architecture, built on Panama's Caribbean coast to protect transatlantic trade.

“The Committee considered that the site, inscribed on UNESCO’s [World Heritage List](#) in 1980, is deteriorating at a rate which could undermine the outstanding universal value for which it was inscribed,” according to a [news release](#) from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)).

The World Heritage Committee meets once a year, and is responsible for the implementation of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, which defines the kind of natural or cultural sites which can be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List. The Committee’s other responsibilities include the inscription or deletion of properties on the [List of World Heritage in Danger](#).

Over more than a decade, the Committee has been asking for measures to preserve Portobelo-San Lorenzo.

During its session on Wednesday, the Committee emphasized its call for Panama to undertake a risk assessment for the site’s structure, as well as reinforce the walls, batteries and platforms of the forts. Other measures requested included the development of a comprehensive conservation plan and an end to urban encroachment on the property.

The List of World Heritage in Danger is designed to inform the international community of threats to the outstanding universal values for which a property has been inscribed on the World Heritage List, and to encourage corrective action.

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