

United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre



World Heritage Sites

Protected Areas and World Heritage



PHOENIX ISLANDS PROTECTED AREA KIRIBATI

The Phoenix Island Protected Area (PIPA) is a 408,250 sq. km expanse of marine and terrestrial habitats in the Southern Pacific Ocean. The property encompasses the Phoenix Island Group, one of three island groups in Kiribati, and is the largest designated Marine Protected Area in the world. PIPA conserves one of the world's largest intact oceanic coral archipelago ecosystems, together with 14 known underwater sea mounts (presumed to be extinct volcanoes) and other deep-sea habitats. The area contains approximately 800 known species of fauna, including about 200 coral species, 500 fish species, 18 marine mammals and 44 bird species. The structure and functioning of PIPA's ecosystems illustrates its pristine nature and importance as a migration route and reservoir.

COUNTRY

Kiribati

NAME

Phoenix Islands Protected Area

NATURAL WORLD HERITAGE SITE

2010: Inscribed on the World Heritage List under natural criteria (vii) and (ix).

STATEMENT OF OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

The UNESCO World Heritage Committee issued the following Statement of Outstanding Universal Value at the time of inscription:

Brief Synthesis

As a vast expanse of largely pristine mid-ocean environment, replete with a suite of largely intact uninhabited atolls, truly an oceanic wilderness, the Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA) (408,250 sq km), the largest marine protected area in the Pacific, is globally exceptional and as such is a superlative natural phenomenon of global importance.

PIPA contains an outstanding collection of large submerged volcanoes, presumed extinct, rising direct from the extensive deep sea floor with an average depth of more than 4,500 metres and a maximum depth of over 6,000 metres. Included are no less than 14 recognised seamounts, submerged mountains that don't penetrate to the surface. The collection of atolls and reef islands represent coral reef capping on 8 other volcanic mountains that approach the surface. The large bathymetric range of the submerged seamount landscape provides depth defined habitat types fully representative of the mid oceanic biota. Due to its great isolation, PIPA occupies a unique position in the biogeography of the Pacific as a critical stepping stone habitat for migratory and pelagic/planktonic species and for ocean currents in the region. PIPA embraces the full range of marine environments in this area and displays high levels of marine abundance as well as the full spectrum of age and size cohorts, increasingly rare in the tropics, and especially in the case of apex predator fish, sea turtles, sea birds, corals, giant clams, and coconut crabs, many of which have been depleted elsewhere. The overall marine tropic dynamics for these island communities across this archipelago are better functioning (relatively intact) compared with other island systems where human habitation and exploitation has significantly altered the environment. The complete representation of ocean and island environments and their connectivity, the remoteness and naturalness are important attributes which contribute to the outstanding universal value.

Criterion (vii): PIPA, an oceanic wilderness, is sufficiently remote and inhospitable to human colonisation as to be exceptional in terms of the minimal evidence of the impacts of human activities both on the atolls and in the adjacent seas. PIPA is a very large protected area, a vast wilderness domain where nature prevails and man is but an occasional visitor. PIPA is distinguished by containing a large suite of seamounts complete with a broad expanse of contextual abyssal plain with a natural phenomenon of global significance. The essentially pristine

environment, outstanding underwater clarity, the spectacle of large groups of charismatic aquatic animals (e.g. bumphead parrotfish, Napolean wrasse, surgeonfishes, parrotfishes, groupers, maori wrasse, sharks, turtles, dolphins, manta rays, giant clams) in quantities rarely found elsewhere in the world, aesthetically outstanding coral reef features (e.g. giant clams, large coral heads) together with the spectacle of huge concentrations of seabirds on remote atolls, makes PIPA a truly kaleidoscopic natural "oceanscape" exhibiting exceptional natural beauty of global significance.

Criterion (ix): With its rich biota, as a known breeding site for numerous nomadic, migratory and pelagic marine and terrestrial species, and the known and predicted high level of biodiversity and endemicity associated with these isolated mid-ocean atolls, submerged reefs and seamounts, PIPA makes an outstanding contribution to ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of global marine ecosystems and understanding of the significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and biological processes in the evolution and development of marine ecosystems of the Pacific, the world's largest ocean, indeed all oceans. PIPA is of crucial scientific importance in identifying and monitoring the processes of sea level change, growth rates and age of reefs and reef builders, (both geologically and historically) and in evaluating effects from climate change.

Integrity

PIPA's boundaries are clearly defined. The boundaries are mostly straight lines with some adjustments to the boundaries to align with the Exclusive Economic Zone (200NM) of Kiribati. There are various clearly delimited zones within PIPA as described in the Management Plan. PIPA's large size and full inclusion of oceanic and island habitats in this area and coverage of numerous examples of key habitats (coral reefs, islands, seamounts) together with its predominantly natural state give exceptional conservation importance. Despite some human impacts (fishing, invasive species) the integrity of the property and oceanic ecosystems processes at scale are globally outstanding for island archipelagos and most other tropical marine environments found worldwide.

Protection and Management Requirements

PIPA is a highly protected area fully legally established under the PIPA Regulations 2008. These regulations include provision of a management plan and clear permitting processes and rules for activities allowable within the site. The 2010-2014 PIPA Management Plan, endorsed by Kiribati's cabinet in 2009 is under implementation. Management capacity and success is steadily building and Kiribati is using a "whole of government approach with partners" to ensure a management system that is sustainable and suitable to the circumstances of a small developing state. Of particular note is the success in capture and fining of illegal fishing vessels and in the removal of invasive species from globally important islands for seabird conservation.

For long term sustainability Kiribati and its partners are committed to a PIPA Trust Fund. The Fund's legislation, the Board and by-laws are all now in place and 2.5 million USD secured for the endowment with fundraising now a primary focus. Kiribati has recognized the need to further build management capacity, particularly for surveillance and enforcement, and continues to do so through site, national, regional and bilateral partnerships. The link to the Nauru Agreement (8 Pacific Island States) to manage tuna fishing in the region are important and provide, through license provisions, the first active linkage to management of the neighbouring high seas for a World Heritage site. Kiribati licenses for fishing in the Kiribati EEZ, including PIPA, is only allowable if the licensee agrees not to fish in the adjacent high seas. This is enforceable through the mandatory 100% observer coverage.

IUCN MANAGEMENT CATEGORY

Unassigned

BIOGEOGRAPHICAL PROVINCE

Central Polynesian (5.5.13)

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

The Phoenix Islands are located in the island nation of Kiribati approximately 300 km north of Fiji. The coordinates for the corner points of the property's boundary are listed below.

Longitude	Latitude
174.242794°W	0.983476°S
169.706032°W	0.983476°S
169.706032°W	6.466132°S
173.220373°W	6.470758°S
173.510230°W	6.616143°S
175.865776°W	6.617835°S
175.865776°W	2.091330°S

DATES AND HISTORY OF ESTABLISHMENT

- 2006: Establishment of PIPA announced at the 2006 Convention on Biological Diversity Conference of the Parties in Brazil;
- 2008: PIPA designated in its current extent by the Phoenix Islands Protected Area Regulations

AREA

The property is 40,825,000ha. There are various clearly delimited zones within the property.

LAND TENURE

The property is owned by the Sovereign State of Kiribati.

ALTITUDE

From 6,147 m depth below sea level to nine m above sea level.

PHYSICAL FEATURES

The property comprises mainly ocean floor with a water column averaging more than 4,000m. An important feature of the marine environment is the abundance of large extinct underwater volcanoes, some rising more than 5,000m above the seabed. Beyond the volcanoes, the sea floor is flat terrain mid-ocean sea floor. The property includes all eight atoll and low reef islands of the Kiribati section of the Phoenix group: Rawaki, Enderbury, Nikumaroro, McKean, Manra, Birnie, Kanton and Orona. Their tops are all isolated peaks rising from the deep ocean floor (3,000m or greater) with several other presumed old volcanoes rising to near the surface, and many more known only from bathymetric study that do not reach to near the surface. Two known submerged reefs, Carondelet Reef, located 125km southeast from Nikumaroro, and Winslow Reef, located 240km northwest from the McKean Island, are shallow platform reefs with Carondelet Reef being as little as 3-4m underwater at low tide.

CLIMATE

The property is located in the Pacific equatorial dry zone that experiences droughts and periods of heavy rainfall. Most of the Phoenix Islands receive less than 1,000mm of rain annually with a dry period from March through June. During El Niño periods, the Phoenix Islands may experience high rainfall. Air temperature ranges from 21.7° to 36.7°C (average 28.9°C). Relative humidity ranges from 57% to 85%.

VEGETATION

The islands have a sparse and species-poor vegetation cover. The low rainfall islands of the north and east support few or no trees, but a small number of grasses (e.g. *Lepturus*) and prostrate shrubs such as *Tribulus, Portulaca, Boerhavia, Sesuvium* and the parasitic vine *Cassytha* are present. The higher rainfall islands of the south and southwest do support indigenous forests, including *Pisonia, Cordia,* and *Pandanus,* with the forests of Orona being the most intact and extensive of the group. However, these southern islands also support coconut plantations that were planted during a resettlement programme between the 1930s and 1960s. About 20 to 30 species of plants are considered native to the islands. These include: *Digitaria pacifica, Eragrostis whitneyi var. typical, Lepturus repens, Cocos nucifera, Boerhavia diffusa, Sesuvium portulacastrum, Portulaca lutea, Cassytha filiformis, Tribulus cistoides, Suriana maritime, Triumfetta procumbens, Sida fallax, Ipomoea pes-caprae, Ipomoea grandiflora, Cordia subcordata, Tournefortia argentea, Morinda citrifolia, and Scaevola frustiscens.*

The following natural vegetation types or communities have been recorded in the Phoenix Islands (local name in brackets; Mueller-Dombois and Fosberg 1998):

- 1) Pisonia grandis forest Nikumaroro, Orona
- 2) Cordia subcordata (te ango) forest and tall scrub Manra, Kanton, Enderbury
- 3) Scaevola taccada (te mao) scrub Manra, Nikumaroro, Orona, Kanton
- 4) Tournefortia argentea (te ren) scrub Enderbury, Kanton
- 5) Morinda citrifolia tall scrub Nikumaroro, Manra, Orona
- 6) Pemphis acidula (te ngea) scrub Orona
- 7) Suriana maritima scrub Kanton, Orona
- 8) Sida fallax (te kaura) scrub and dwarf scrub all Phoenix Islands
- 9) Triumfetta procumbens (te kiaou) mat Kanton, Enderbury
- 10) Sesuvium portulacastrum var. griseum mat all Phoenix Islands
- 11) Tribulus cistoides mat no island specified

- 12) Lepturus repens and Lepturus pilgerianus meadows all Phoenix Islands
- 13) Fimbristylis cymosa (te uteute ni mwane) turf Nikumaroro, Manra, Orona
- 14) Digitaria pacifica bunchgrass cover no island specified
- 15) Mixed-species communities Kanton

FAUNA

Millions of seabirds have been reported for the Phoenix Islands which are well known as a key breeding site for many species of birds. Nineteen bird species have been recorded breeding within PIPA with a total population exceeding 1 million birds in the islands. There are important breeding colonies or concentrations of the following species: Audubon's shearwater *Puffinus Iherminieri*, Christmas Island shearwater *Puffinus nativitatis*, Phoenix petrel *Pterodroma alba* (EN), white-throated storm-petrel *Nesofregetta fuliginosa* (EN), great frigatebird *Fregata minor*, lesser frigatebird *F.ariel*, brown booby Sula leucogaster, masked booby S. dactylactra, sooty tern *Sterna fuscata*, grey-backed tern S. lunata and blue-gray noddy *Procelsterna cerulea*.

The Phoenix Islands also contain very important feeding grounds for at least 15 transequatorial and other latitudinal migrants, particularly petrels *Pterodroma* spp. and shearwaters *Puffinus* spp. from the Australasian region, notably: mottled petrel *Pterodroma inexpectata,* Cook's petrel *P. cookii* (VU), Pycroft's petrel *P. pycrofti* (VU), black-winged petrel *P. nigripennis,* Gould's petrel *P. leucoptera* (VU), collared petrel *P. brevipes* (VU), Juan Fernandez petrel *P. externa* (VU), sooty shearwater *Puffinus griseus,* short-tailed shearwater *P. tenuirostris,* Buller's shearwater *P. bulleri* (VU), flesh-footed shearwater *P. carneipes;* also streaked shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas* Two species of birds petrel *Pterodroma alba* (EN) and white-throated storm-petrel *Nesofregetta fuliginosa* (EN); also bristle-thighed curlew *Numenius tahitiensis.*.

Terrestrial invertebrates include primarily arachnids and land crabs. Reptiles include marine turtles that nest on land. Other species of reptiles present include species of geckos and skinks. These were found on all Phoenix Islands except Birnie. Terrestrial mammals are primarily introduced and are considered destructive to native species of vegetation and birds. There are at least two species of rats and perhaps one species of mouse on various Phoenix Islands.

Dominant coral species on the outer reefs of the Phoenix Islands includes *Acropora* spp., *Pocillopora* spp., *Favia stelligera, Plerogyra sinuosa, Lobophyllia hemprichii, Porites* spp. and others. Within the lagoons, apart from the branching and tabulate *Acropora* stands, common corals include *Pavona* spp., *Montipora* spp., *Goniastrea pectinata*, and *Favia* spp., and in some locations beds of the rare coral *Anacropora forbesi*. Regional endemics include *Montipora capitata* and *M. dilatata*) the latter currently only known elsewhere from two small locations outside the Phoenix Islands. The motile invertebrate fauna of the Phoenix Islands is low in diversity, has a number of taxonomic gaps, and densities of large invertebrates are generally low. Kanton and Orona host spectacular small giant clam *Tridacna maxima* (VU) communities in sizes rarely seen elsewhere in the world.

The documented fish fauna of the Phoenix Islands consists mainly of shallow water species associated with coral reefs. The most abundant families in terms of number of species are wrasses (Labridae), including the napoleon wrasse *Cheilinus undulatus* (EN), groupers (Serranidae), gobies (Gobiidae), damselfishes (Pomacentridae), surgeonfishes (Acanthuridae), moray eels (Muraenidae), butterflyfishes (Chaetodontidae), blennies (Blenniidae), squirrelfishes (Holocentridae), and cardinalfishes (Apogonidae). A new species of damselfish, *Chrysiptera albata)* was collected in 42-50m depth at Nikumaroro Island (Allen and Bailey 2003). Other potential undescribed species were found in the genera *Myripristis* (Holocentridae), *Eviota* (Gobiidae) and *Trimma* (Gobiidae). Certain species are particularly common on Phoenix Islands reefs, occurring in much higher densities and full age/size cohorts than at most localities in the Indo-Pacific region. These include various surgeonfishes (Holocentridae), *Eviota* (Gobiidae), and *Trimma* (Gobiidae) *Acanthurus guttatus, A. nigricans, A. triostegus, A. xanthopterus, Naso literatus, Zebrasoma veliferum* and parrotfishes *Hipposcarus longiceps* and *Scarus ghobban.* Manta rays *Manta alfredi* (VU), polkadot cod *Plecropomus areolatus* (VU) and brindle bass *Epinephelus lanceolatus* (VU) are also found.

Globally threatened green *Chelonia mydas* (EN) and hawksbill *Eretmochelys imbricata* (CR) turtles and the following marine mammals have been sighted in the Phoenix Islands: Bryde's whale *Balaenoptera edeni, s*perm whale *Physeter macrocephalus* (VU), dwarf sperm whale *Kogia simus, pygmy sperm whale Kogia breviceps, short-finned pilot whale Globicephala macrorhynchus, killer whale Orcinus orca,*

false killer whale *Pseudorca crassidens*, pygmy killer whale *Feresa attenuata*, melon-headed whale *Peponocephala electra*, Risso's dolphin *Grampus griseus*, bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*, striped dolphin *Stenella coeruleoalba* pan-tropical spotted dolphin *S. attenuata* spinner dolphin *S. longirostris*, Fraser's dolphin *Lagenodelphis hosei*, rough-toothed dolphin *Steno bredanensis*, southern bottlenose whale *Hyperoodon planifrons*, Cuvier's beaked whale *Ziphius cavirostris* and other beaked whales (Mesoplodon spp.).

CONSERVATION VALUE

The Phoenix Islands provide very extensive and important natural habitats for in-situ conservation of globally important oceanic biological diversity, both marine and terrestrial. The islands also provide important breeding, passage and/or wintering areas for a number of threatened migratory oceanic birds. The property represents a very important habitat for the continued existence of a number of other globally endangered (e.g. Napoleon wrasse, hawksbill turtle), vulnerable (e.g. bristle-thighed curlew, green turtle, giant clam, bumphead parrotfish, polkadot cod, brindle bass) and numerous other globally depleted species, both marine and terrestrial, including for apex predators such as sharks and endemic and fragile species associated with seamounts.

The large bathymetric range of the submerged seamount landscape provides elevation defined habitat types broadly representative of the mid oceanic biota. The property is of crucial scientific importance in identifying and monitoring the processes of sea level change, growth rates and age of reefs and reef builders (both geologically and historically), and in evaluating effects from climate change.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Phoenix Islands present archaeological evidence of early colonization by both Micronesians and Polynesians, providing an important cultural link and an example of island voyaging over time. The Phoenix Islands could be considered an overlap area of these two important Pacific Islands peoples. Several islands in the group hold archaeological remains of settlements, guano mining and whaling/transiting ships from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

LOCAL HUMAN POPULATION

The Phoenix group islands have no permanent inhabitants. The one currently inhabited atoll, Kanton, has a non-permanent population of approximately 50 people comprising government employees and their families engaged in protection and management of Kiribati interests in the region.

VISITORS AND VISITOR FACILITIES

Currently very few visitors arrive to Phoenix Islands. No regular tourism visits are arranged at the moment. Occasional visitors are normally ocean going yachts and by special boat charters for recreational divers and various researchers. All visitors are mandated to apply for permits from the PIPA office (with associated fees) and to clear Customs and Immigration on Kanton upon arrival and departure from the country. This is working well for research and tourism operators but is as yet not sufficient for private recreational vessels visiting the islands. There are no facilities for visitors except for the local community's hospitality and some very old buildings left from WW II and the 1950s in Kanton.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND FACILITIES

Research to study the seamounts and other volcanoes of the Phoenix Islands is on-going. The New England Aquarium has carried out a research expedition in 2009 to further study the seamounts. This organization also carried research on reef shark in 2002. Further on-going research is steadily revealing a previously unexpected high diversity of deepwater corals, albeit somewhat different formations to the shallow reef forming corals.

MANAGEMENT

In August 2005 the Government of Kiribati (GoK) and partners New England Aquarium (NEAq) and Conservation International (CI) agreed a Memorandum of Understanding to design and establish the Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA). From 2006 until February 2008 all activities were overseen and decided upon by the Phoenix Islands Steering Committee (PISC). With the adoption of the PIPA Regulations in 2008, giving full legal establishment to the protected area, the PISC is now formally established under law as the Phoenix Islands Protected Area Management Committee. Its membership is based on the earlier PISC and is inclusive of all government agencies (12) with a responsibility for the Phoenix Islands. The PIPA-MC is chaired by the Secretary of Ministry of Environment, Lands, and Agricultural Development (MELAD) and it meets regularly with meeting decisions and follow-up implementation well documented and reported by the PIPA Director. The PIPA Management Committee

is tasked with finalizing a PIPA Management Plan within one year of the coming into force of the PIPA Regulations (i.e. by February 2009). A draft Management Plan has been prepared and is on track for finalization by this time. There are various clearly delimited zones within PIPA as described in the Management Plan (e.g. Zone 5 wherein purse-seining and long line tuna fishing may be allowed with a Kiribati Fisheries license).

Currently the Governments of Australia, New Zealand and France provide aerial surveillance of the Phoenix Islands area and positive discussions indicate that Australia and New Zealand will consider increasing surveillance and enforcement effort. Specific cooperation to assist with surveillance and enforcement technology and capacity building is under discussion with the USA's Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

MANAGEMENT CONSTRAINTS

The existing management arrangements are not yet considered sufficient and work is well underway for a significant increase in resources, capacity and tools to ensure effective PIPA management. This currently includes:

- Implementation of PIPA Management Plan (2010-2014), endorsed by Kiribati's cabinet in 2009
- Full establishment of PIPA Trust Fund and associated structures under Kiribati Law. The Fund's legislation, the Board and by-laws are all now in place and 2.5 million USD secured for the endowment with fundraising now a primary focus. Further building management capacity, particularly for surveillance and enforcement, through site, national, regional and bilateral partnerships.
- Implementation of agreed Phased Approach to capitalization of the PIPA Endowment and terms
 of Conservation Contract which cover compensation to GoK for tuna fishing access fees
 (commensurate with 25% closure additional to current zonation) and management plan
 implementation costs not covered by other grants.

COMPARISON WITH SIMILAR SITES

The four island based natural World Heritage sites in the Eastern Tropical Pacific (Galapagos (Ecuador), Cocos Island (Costa Rica), Malpelo (Columbia) and Coiba (Panama)) are all centred on volcanic islands, contain no atolls and most of them have very limited coral reef development. Of the existing World Heritage sites situated in the Pacific, only Galapagos contains an isolated archipelago, none of which are atolls. PIPA reaches down to 6147m depth, thus containing all the deep sea habitats, while the deepest areas in Galapagos World Heritage site are only 3,600m. Galapagos does not contain atolls or significant coral reefs. The Great Barrier Reef and New Caledonia sites - indeed other barrier reef systems - are located on shallow continental or sub-continental shelves. Both contain extensive shallow water coral reefs but suffer from anthropogenic stresses and are at on-going risk of pollution (e.g. mining, eutrophication, shipping) due to their proximity to large land masses and shipping lanes. The reefs of PIPA, on the other hand, are in near pristine state and far from any significant sources of pollutants and other threats. Coral reef ecosystems are predicted to decline globally due to climate change. This highlights the global importance of PIPA for safeguarding the fragile coral reef ecosystems well into the future.

The Marine Protected Area that deserves closest comparison with PIPA is the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument of the United States, given that together they are the two largest marine protected areas in the world and both situated in the Pacific Ocean. PIPA has more biomass due to its location in the tropics whereas Papahānaumokuākea is situated on the edge of the tropics. Hence also the reef fish and stony coral species numbers are higher in PIPA (518 versus 250 and over 200 versus 57, respectively). The maximum depth of Papahānaumokuākea is less than 4,000 m with extensive areas much shallower while PIPA extends down to 6,147m with a mean depth of around 4,500m.

STAFF

The PIPA Office and Director are based in Tarawa at the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development. There is currently no permanent government staff solely dedicated to the management of PIPA. The one staff member acting as the Director for the PIPA initiative is currently funded by supporters including Conservation International and the New England Aquarium.

BUDGET

The Government of Kiribati (GoK) contributes with significant staff time from more than 12 government agencies. New England Aquarium (NEAq) has provided and facilitated scientific and legal advice, as well as significant staff time to the PIPA project. Conservation International's (CI) Global Conservation

Fund and Pacific Islands Programme continue to commit resources for PIPA design and operation. From 2004-2008 this amounted to more than \$450,000 USD. CI has committed a further \$420,000 USD for core PIPA operation from 2008-2010, secured a first contribution to the PIPA Trust Fund of \$2.5 Million USD (subject to match provisions) and, together with GoK and NEAq, is actively fund raising. A further \$57,000 USD has been secured from CI's Marine Managed Area Science Programme for deep sea assessments and connectivity analyses. The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (Governments of Japan, France, MacArthur Foundation, CI, GEF) has provided initial funding for invasive species and seabird assessments (\$80,000 USD). The Government of Australia has been a consistent supporter of PIPA throughout its genesis. In 2006, Australia's Regional Natural Heritage Programme (RNHP) granted \$240,000 AUD for PIPA design and establishment. The Government of New Zealand (NZODA) has been the primary donor to the atoll restoration with a commitment of more than \$360,000 NZD.

LOCAL ADDRESSES

Phoenix Islands Protected Area Office, Ministry of Environment Lands and Agricultural Development, P.O Box 234, Bikenibeu, Tarawa, Republic of Kiribati. Webpage: www.phoenixislands.org

REFERENCES

The principal sources for the above information were the original World Heritage nomination (see the reference list therein for full citations of the references cited above), IUCN's evaluation report and Decision 34 COM 8B.2 of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.

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