

Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention

The year 2012 marks the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention adopted at the UNESCO General Assembly. The World Heritage Convention, properly titled the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, is a convention that protects Cultural Heritage and Natural Heritage from the threat of damage or destruction and preserves them through the establishment of a system of international cooperation and assistance. Currently, 190 States Parties have ratified the Convention and 962 properties have been inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Since the official event to celebrate the anniversary year was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, on January 30, 2012, numerous events have been organized by a number of States Parties to celebrate the 40th anniversary, within the overall anniversary theme of “World Heritage and Sustainable Development: the Role of Local Communities.”

On November 6–8, 2012, the Closing Event of the Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention was held by the government of Japan at the Kyoto International Conference Center in cooperation with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. The Closing Event attracted about 590 participants from sixty-one countries including UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova and World Heritage Committee Chairperson Sok An.

At the Opening Session, Director-General Bokova said, “Japan is an outstanding and a longstanding champion of the World Heritage Convention. This commitment reflects values deeply held in this soci-



Closing Event of the Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention at Kyoto International Conference Center

ety—values that are sustained by local authorities, chambers of commerce and tourist offices, by ordinary people across this country.”

The Closing Event held presentations and panel discussions by experts and other stakeholders of the World Heritage under themes such as “World Heritage Convention from its Dawn,” “The World Heritage Convention at Present,” and “The Future of the Convention.”

The Closing Event presented “the Kyoto Vision.” “The Kyoto Vision” confirms that the World Heritage Convention is one of the most powerful tools for heritage conservation, with a shared vision combining the protection of cultural and natural heritage in one single instrument. “The Kyoto Vision” confirms that the sustainable development perspective and the role of community are important to implement the Convention. “The Kyoto Vision” also calls for mobilizing financial resources globally and sharing responsibility for effectively addressing threats to the World Heritage. It also calls for ensuring effective involvement of local communities, indigenous peoples, experts and youth in conservation from the preparatory phase of the World Heritage nomination process, and ensuring the sustainability of local communities through other domains such as intangible cultural heritage and cultural and creative industries. 