

## **ANNEX A – BACKGROUNDER ON UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE INSCRIPTION PROCESS**

A World Heritage Site is a place that has been inscribed by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) on its World Heritage List. To qualify, a site must be of outstanding universal cultural or natural value (or both). The List is maintained by the World Heritage Centre administered by UNESCO

- a. To nominate a World Heritage Site, a State Party must first submit a Tentative List to UNESCO, a national list of candidate natural and/or cultural properties which a country intends to nominate within a given time period.
- b. It is an important step since the UNESCO World Heritage Committee cannot consider a nomination for inscription on the World Heritage List unless the property has already been included on the State Party's Tentative List.
- c. Once a site has been selected for nomination, the nominating State Party must prepare a Nomination Document and a Management Plan. These two documents form the Nomination Dossier, which is then submitted to UNESCO as a State Party's formal World Heritage Site nomination. The site will be assessed by relevant technical advisory bodies – the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) for cultural sites and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for natural sites. The technical bodies will submit a recommendation on whether to inscribe the site to the World Heritage Committee, which sits yearly to decide on new World Heritage Site nominations. The World Heritage Committee will then decide to either inscribe the site on the World Heritage List, refer or defer it pending further information requested from the state party, or reject the nomination.

### Criteria for Selection

- d. To be inscribed as a World Heritage Site, sites must be of Outstanding Universal Value and meet at least one out of ten selection criteria. These OUVs are:
  - i. To represent a masterpiece of human creative genius
  - ii. To exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design
  - iii. To bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared
  - iv. To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape with illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history
  - v. To be an example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change

- vi. To be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should be preferably used in conjunction with other criteria)
- vii. To contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional beauty and aesthetic importance
- viii. To be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features
- ix. To be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals
- x. To contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation

## **2 SINGAPORE'S SITE SELECTION AND LISTING PROCESS**

- a. In 2010, a study was commissioned by then Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA) to identify sites that would potentially fulfil UNESCO's criteria as a World Heritage Site (WHS). Targeted consultation was also done with members of the Singapore Heritage Society who consist of academia, heritage advocates and heritage experts.
- b. Of the sites identified, the Singapore Botanic Gardens was considered to be the strongest candidate. The Singapore Botanic Gardens is proposed for inscription on the World Heritage List under Criteria (ii) and (iv) of the World Heritage Convention.:
  - i. criterion (ii) – exhibiting an exchange of human values on developments in technology and landscape design
    - The Gardens assumed a pre-eminent role in the promotion of economic botany in the Malay Peninsula and Straits Settlement administration during the late-19<sup>th</sup> Century and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
    - The pioneering work on rubber cultivation and techniques for sustainable tapping carried out in the Gardens in the 1890s set the foundation of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century “Rubber Boom” in Southeast Asia.
    - It is a leading centre for plant science, research and conservation. It is a cradle of breeding science for orchids in Southeast Asia, with a hybrid orchid garden programme which has been developed since the 1920s. It is an important reference centre for botanists globally on tropical botany and horticulture.
  - ii. criterion (iv) – outstanding example of landscape which illustrates significant stage in human history

- It is an exceptional example of a “British tropical colonial botanic garden” of the type that emerged during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century period of global expansion, exploration and colonisation in Southeast Asia.
  - It has well-defined cultural and historical landscape features. The site’s original 1860s pleasure garden layout in the style of the English Landscape Movement, including a six-hectare tract of primary lowland rainforest, is an unusual design for the tropics.
  - There are 47 heritage trees, historic buildings and structures that encapsulate natural and cultural heritage over more than 150 years.
- c. In June 2012, Singapore ratified the World Heritage Convention and in December 2012, submitted its World Heritage Tentative List to UNESCO to indicate interest in inscribing the Singapore Botanic Gardens as a World Heritage Site.
- d. Following a four-month consultation process where members of the public were invited to provide their feedback on the documents, a formal Nomination Dossier was submitted to the World Heritage Committee in February 2014.

1 ‘Natural Heritage’ includes natural features consisting of physical and biological formations (aesthetic and scientific point of view) and geological and physiographical formations (habitats from scientific and conservation point of view). ‘Cultural Heritage’ includes monuments (i.e., man-made) and sites which are the result of the combined efforts of men and nature. ‘Mixed’ properties satisfy the definitions of the previous two.