

August 2011

For the August press release, we are pleased to include an interview with keynote speaker **Timothy Curtis**, Head of the Culture Unit in UNESCO Bangkok office.

A Brief Interview with Timothy Curtis



Dr Curtis is responsible for the coordination and implementation of UNESCO's Culture Programme in South East Asia. He has been working on culture issues in international contexts for the last fifteen years, firstly as a cultural anthropologist and then for UNESCO. In June 2009 He moved to UNESCO Bangkok office. He has worked on numerous international programmes related to culture in the fields of heritage, cultural industries, cultural policies and culture and development.

What role does the Bangkok Office UNESCO play in the conservation and management of UCH in the Asia-Pacific region?

Over the last few years The UNESCO Bangkok office has been actively involved in both raising awareness about the UCH and the 2001 Convention and running an important capacity building programme for the implementation of the principles of the convention as outlined in the annex to the convention. Beyond that of course we are continually speaking to Governments and trying to encourage them to ratify the Convention or at least implement the principles of the convention. That may mean trying to dissuade governments from granting treasure hunters permits for operating in their territories, in line with the Convention, urging them to practice in-situ conservation if they do not have the full means for scientifically appropriate excavation.

The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Award programme has played a vital role in recognizing cultural heritage excellence over the last decade. Are there any UCH sites recognized within this programme? If not, are there any sites you would like to see nominated?

Since 2000, UNESCO has received 392 entries from 23 countries and territories for the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation, spanning a wide range of conservation projects from private residences to palace complexes, from industrial factories to cultural landscapes. In 2009, for the first time the category of heritage site, 'in-situ underwater cultural heritage', was also acknowledged. The M24 Midget Submarine Wreck located off the coast of Sydney in Australia, was recognized with an Award of Distinction.

The Jury praised the project for being “an exemplary model for in-situ conservation of underwater cultural heritage in the Asia-Pacific region. The project is commended for setting a new global benchmark in the application of heritage law and conservation practice to protect shipwreck sites and demonstrating best practice in the application of UNESCO’s guidelines for the protection of underwater cultural heritage.”

For more details:

<http://www.unescobkk.org/culture/world-heritage-and-immovable-heritage/asia-pacific-heritage-awards-for-culture-heritage-conservation/previous-heritage-awards-2000-2009/2009/award-winners/>

As per the 2001 Convention and subsequent 2003 regional workshop, can you tell us about regional training programmes for conservation and management of underwater archaeological sites in the Asia-Pacific region?

The capacity building programme, funded by the Royal Government of Norway through UNESCO, has been run in partnership with the Underwater Archeaology Department (UAD) of the Department Fine Arts of the Ministry of Culture of Thailand. The UAD has provided a centre at Chantaburi as well as equipment and staff to help us run 3 foundation courses of six-week duration and one advanced course on using GIS for UCH management (duration of 9 days), over the last two and a half years. In the second half of this year we will be running another advanced course on in situ conservation. To date this programme has allowed us to provide training to 72 practitioners from over 17 countries in Asia and the Pacific, and even to one from Kenya, since in East Africa there are several Chinese shipwrecks.

What are some of the other UCH-themed projects supported by UNESCO Bangkok?

In terms of awareness raising a major event was a two months exhibition at Siam Ocean World in Bangkok, which received over 100,000 visitors and which then moved to a permanent exhibit at the National Maritime Museum in Chantaburi. We have also published in newsletters and newspapers on UCH in the region. We have also upgraded our website to provide a more interactive explanation on UCH. We will also be working with other UNESCO offices in the region to organize a regional meeting next year on ratification of the 2001 Convention.

Conference News

Conference Sponsorship: Thanks to the Conference patron UNESCO and our wonderful sponsors (the Wenner Gren Foundation, the Australian National Commission for UNESCO, the Australian Government's Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, SEAMEO-SPAFA, the Australasian Institute for Maritime Archaeology (AIMA) and the Korean National Institute of Maritime Cultural Heritage) the Conference Organising Committee are pleased to announce that we have been able to arrange financial assistance for 22 paper presenters from 8 countries (Vietnam, Cambodia, China, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand and Tanzania) to attend the Conference in November.

Visas for travel to the Philippines: Please visit the link below for the list of the countries under Executive Order 408 whose nationals may be admitted visa free for an initial valid stay of 21 days upon arrival provided he/she presents a passport valid for at least six months beyond the contemplated period of stay and a return ticket to his/her country of origin or a ticket and/or visa to his/her next country of destination. Nationals of countries not included in the list are required to secure an entry visa at a Philippine Foreign Service Post prior to arrival. For the requirements in securing an entry visa, you may address your concern to the Philippine Foreign Service Post of legal residence.

http://immigration.gov.ph/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16&Itemid=80

Should you have other immigration-related queries, please do not hesitate to call the BI Helpdesk Hotline at (632) 524-3769.

Presentations: The deadline for submission of paper proposals to the conference closed on 30 June 2011 with more than 120 paper proposals from 35 countries submitted. More than 95 paper proposals (abstracts) have been accepted for sessions 1 to 12. Abstracts are now available online. To view, see sessions 1-12 listed under the conference organization tab.

Registration is still open: Conference organizers are pleased to announce that more than 290 people from more than 45 countries have registered interest in attending the conference – [to register your interest](#)

Media: Media passes are available for local and international media. For all media enquiries, please contact ejateff@history.sa.gov.au

Emily Jateff Chair, Public Affairs Media enquiries: ejateff@history.sa.gov.au Other enquiries: mark.staniforth@flinders.edu.au Conference website: http://www.apconf.org/	 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization With the support of  The Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage
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