

NOTES ON UNESCO *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape* (General Conference Resolution 36C/41),

On 10 November 2011 UNESCO's General Conference adopted the UNESCO *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape* (General Conference Resolution 36C/41), which was the culmination of a 6-year policy process to elaborate a new international instrument for the conservation of historic cities. This new instrument addresses the need to better frame heritage conservation strategies within the larger goals of urban sustainable development, in order to support public and private actions aimed at preserving and enhancing the quality of the human environment.

The *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape* defines the historic urban landscape as the urban area understood as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of "historic centre" or "district" to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting. The Historic Urban Landscape can be explained as a way of seeing and interpreting the city as a continuum in time and space (instead of cutting it up and parcelling it out through 'zoning', including separate conservation areas, which thereby become ghettos of historic preservation that are unsustainable), where countless population groups have left their marks, and continue to do so today. This recognition and understanding is expected to underpin the city's management, including the conservation of its historic structures and spaces, which should be integrated into processes of urban and spatial planning and socio-economic development.

A special programme has been set-up at Tongji University's Advanced Research Institute for Architecture and Urban Planning, with institutional assistance of WHITRAP in Shanghai, on the implementation of the new UNESCO Recommendation in Asia and subsequent application of the HUL approach in China. In the coming three years this approach will be applied in a series of pilot cities on Mainland China, the outcomes of which will become part of an advisory report to the central Government in Beijing on the merit and benefits of historic urban landscape conservation and management in China. Pilot cities that have been selected already include Hangzhou (Zhejiang Province), Yangzhou (Jiangsu Province), Hongjiang (Hunan Province), TongLi (Jiangsu Province) and the Miao villages in Guizhou Province. Next to this, a reference group of pilot cities will be selected outside Mainland China in the wider Asia-Pacific region to provide for regional comparisons and broader insights into the process. Selected cities include Ballarat (Australia), Rawalpindi (Pakistan), Varanasi, Ajmer-Pushkar and Hyderabad (in India, through a cooperation with the World Bank). Last but not least, all these initiatives in China and in other pioneer countries will become part of a comprehensive report to UNESCO's General Conference, which has asked at the adoption of the new Recommendation to be informed of the countries and cities that have been working with this new instrument, its usefulness and the first results.

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