

Honghe Recommendations on the Sustainable Development of Terraced Cultural landscapes

We, the representatives from UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM, local communities, and experts from other international organizations concerned, as well as from related countries of Asia:

Recalling the Decision by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee at its 37th session (Decision 37 COM 8B.24) that “consideration is given to arranging an international workshop on the management of extensive terraced landscapes so that the work done on putting in place sustainable management of the Hani Honghe terraces might be shared with other properties in Asia that face similar challenges”;

Expressing our appreciation to the State Administration of Cultural Heritage of the People’s Republic of China and the People’s Government of Yunnan Province for hosting this workshop, and to ICOMOS China, Yunnan Provincial Bureau of Cultural Heritage, Honghe Hani and Yi People’s Autonomous Prefecture and Yuanyang County Government, for all their contributions to the success of this event, and to the Hani people for their warm hospitality and for their custodianship of the unique cultural landscape that is their home;

Based on the site visit and workshop discussion:

Considering

That the terraced cultural landscape is a special type of agricultural ecosystem that maintains the delicate balance between man and nature.

That the terraced cultural landscape is the result of particular local farming methods and associated practices derived through centuries of selection and refinement based on people's relationship with the unique natural environment.

That these farming and associated practices, including the protection of crop species, cultivation methods and the natural environment, have been cast into knowledge systems, folk beliefs and customs and passed down from one generation to another as cultural traditions.

Recognizing that the terraced cultural landscape embodies the human response in adapting to, utilizing and maintaining a harmonious co-existence with nature; and that it reflects the creativity, endurance and willpower of human-kind, which sets a profound exemplar for today's protection of both the cultural and natural diversities and sustainable development.

Affirming that protecting the terraced cultural landscape means not only retaining its physical form, but also safeguarding the traditional knowledge systems that underpin its structure.

Acknowledging that the protection of terraced cultural landscapes is faced with environmental threats, and in the context of globalization, socio-cultural and economic challenges such as:

- The introduction of modern tools and technology for agricultural production and the use of high-yield crop varieties can substantially reduce labour intensity but may at the same time threaten a sustainable way of land use and the maintenance of the ecosystem;
- Changes in lifestyle may lead to the exodus of young people to the urban areas with the subsequent loss of labour to the farmland, which may subsequently impact on cultural identity with a change to knowledge systems, folk beliefs and customs;
- Uncontrolled tourism and unregulated infrastructural development may put pressure onto local ecosystems and adversely affect traditional culture.

For the sustainable development of terraced cultural landscapes and continuation of the unique local cultural traditions;

We recommend that:

1. People-oriented inclusive sustainable development should be pursued by respecting the right of local people for development and the leading of a dignified life, with their living conditions effectively improved through the upgrading of infrastructure and the level of education and health care; by respecting the local communities' right of involvement in decision-making processes, and by supporting their leading role in the sustainable development of terraced cultural landscapes;
2. The traditional agricultural economy with its local characteristics should be protected and developed to improve the life of the local population. The income of local farmers should be increased by

encouraging the establishment of commercial systems in the interest of local populations, by facilitating the sales and by enhancing the added value of their agricultural products, as well as attracting young people to return to their farm land;

3. Knowledge systems, folk beliefs and customs should be respected. Mechanisms for passing on intangible heritage should be established to enhance and guide local communities' cultural activities, safeguard local traditions, value community identity and sustain cultural ecology;
4. Natural and cultural environments should be protected by sustainable eco-tourism management, based on, amongst others, a carrying capacity study, the criteria for the introduction of tourist facilities, and the feeding back of revenue generated from tourism both into the conservation of the landscape and to the local population;
5. Capacity building at all levels should be strengthened through academic exchange, as well as the training of staff, on conservation, monitoring, management, research, presentation publicity and education;
6. Exchanges and cooperation amongst Asian countries should be encouraged in order to share expertise, to address challenges with concerted efforts, and to achieve sustainable conservation, management and development of terraced cultural landscapes.

Issued by all the participants of the International Workshop on the Sustainable Development of the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces, in Honghe, Yuannan, China, on October 31, 2014