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WORLD MONUMENTS FUND ANNOUNCES 2010 WATCH LIST, INCLUDING DOZENS OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES AT RISK IN 47 COUNTRIES

NEED FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION AND SUSTAINABLE STEWARDSHIP ARE COMMON THEMES

For Immediate Release—New York, NY, October 6, 2009... **Bonnie Burnham, President of the World Monuments Fund** (WMF), today announced the **2010 World Monuments Watch**. For more than 40 years, WMF, a nonprofit organization, has worked to preserve cultural heritage across the globe. The 2010 Watch includes 93 sites now at risk, representing 47 countries. These include 9 sites from the United States and 15 dating from the 20th century. The Watch is WMF's flagship advocacy program, and it calls international attention to threatened cultural heritage.

Ranging from the famous (**Machu Picchu, Peru**) and remote (**Phajoding, a monastery high in the mountains of Bhutan**), to the unexpected (**Merritt Parkway, Connecticut, U.S.**) and little-known (**desert castles of ancient Khorezm, Uzbekistan**), the 2010 Watch tells compelling stories of human aspiration, imagination, and adaptation. The need for collective action and sustainable stewardship are common themes running through the 2010 list, and the 93 sites vividly illustrate the ever-more pressing need to create a balance between heritage concerns and the social, economic, and environmental interests of communities around the world.

“The 2010 Watch makes it clear that cultural heritage efforts in the 21st century must recognize the critical importance of sustainable stewardship, and that we must work closely with local partners to create viable and appropriate opportunities to advance this,” said Ms. Burnham. “The sites on the 2010 Watch list make a dramatic case for the need to bring together a variety of sectors—economic, environmental, heritage preservation, and social—when we are making plans that will affect us all. Greater cooperation among these sectors would benefit humanity today, while ensuring our place as stewards of the Earth for the next generation.”

Comprising products of individual imaginations, testaments to faith, and masterpieces of civil engineering, among other types of creations, the sites on the 2010 Watch are irreplaceable monuments to

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human culture. They are found in every type of environment, from urban centers and small towns to barren plains and riverside caves, and they are threatened by war, natural disasters, urban sprawl, and neglect. They range from the prehistoric to the contemporary, and include schools, libraries, municipal buildings, places of worship, roadways, aqueducts, row houses, bridges, gateways, parks, follies, cultural landscapes, archaeological remains, historic city centers, castles, private houses, forts, tombs, and ancient petroglyphs and cave art.

Erica Avrami, WMF's Research and Education Director, noted, "The World Monuments Watch has evolved since its inception 14 years ago. With a greater number of urban centers and cultural landscapes, this year's Watch reflects a growing understanding that heritage cannot be preserved in isolation, but rather must be addressed as part of a broad physical and social context. Not all sites on the Watch are in imminent danger. Many face challenges on the horizon, providing the opportunity to engage in dialogue and decision-making now, so as to avoid problems in the future. Heritage conservation can be an effective tool for community development, economic growth, and sustainable land use."

2010 Watch Sites—Highlights

In **Kyoto, Japan**, traditional townhouses called *machiya*, dating as far back as the early 1600s, integrated urban living with commerce. Merchants and craftspeople combined their homes and livelihoods under a single roof, and the Kyoto *machiya* are considered the model of their type throughout Japan. These houses are being torn down and replaced with new, denser construction, diminishing the architectural and cultural history of the Kyoto cityscape and traditional way of life. In other examples of urban development, a new underground train line through Barcelona will run precariously close to the foundations of **Antoni Gaudi's Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família in Barcelona**, and the **Suq al-Qaysariya in Bahrain**, one of the few remaining traditional suqs—or marketplaces—in the Gulf region, may be razed in favor of a modern, upscale mall.

The intersection of urban issues and preservation concerns takes a variety of forms and underscores the need for integrated planning and management. For example, the once-elaborate, turn-of-the-century **Gingerbread Houses of Port-au-Prince, Haiti**, have fallen into decay following the political strife and poverty now besieging the country. However, their conservation would present a vital opportunity to create jobs and generate revenue. In another example, in **Sevilla, Spain**, a proposed commercial tower outside the already protected historic city center would forever alter an iconic landscape and the character of the city. Such sites demonstrate the fact that, with increasing urbanization across the globe, stakeholders in heritage preservation and urban development must come together to ensure that our shared history and cultural legacy are not lost as building proceeds.

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Such changing conditions are highlighted in the 2010 Watch by sites that embody both the continuity and conflict between past and present lifestyles and their effects on the environment. **The cultural landscape of Hadley, Massachusetts**, for example, is a rare survivor of 17th-century British agricultural traditions, boasting a 350-year history of continuous farming on land now zoned for development. Other sites are affected by the changing nature of local cultures. The **vernacular architecture of the Kazakh Steppe**, comprising necropolises and mausoleums dating to the 18th century, enabled the nomadic tribes living on the steppe to remember their ancestors and physically mark their lands. However, the Soviet nationalization of those lands, with the subsequent development of new towns and settlements, forever altered the nomadic way of life, and these structures and associated traditions were abandoned. The **16th-century rice terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras** likewise underscore the challenge of conserving a once-dynamic environment that has lost both its primary function for agricultural productivity and the people who have traditionally maintained it. Most dramatically, 50,000 **ancient petroglyphs in Pakistan's Northern Areas** will be flooded by the construction of the Diamer-Basha Dam, which will provide much-needed infrastructure to remote communities nearby. While impossible to save, this rock-art chronicle of 10,000 years of history may be preserved for future generations through careful documentation. By calling attention to these realities, WMF hopes to compel innovative approaches that encompass the changing conditions of both the community and the historic landscape.

Ensuring sustainable lifestyles and environments entails simultaneously promoting and managing growth so as to protect community values and quality of life. Tourism, for example, benefits local communities by bringing economic opportunities, and it benefits tourists—and international understanding—by exposing them to new cultures. But unmanaged visitorship can also harm fragile sites and interfere with traditional daily practices. One 2010 Watch site—**Taos Pueblo in New Mexico**—has been continuously inhabited for 1,000 years, and its residents and governing council are directly engaged in preserving their structures and their way of life. However, increasing numbers of tourists visit the Pueblo every year, curious about its history and customs, endangering the site's living heritage. Similarly, **Phajoding, a monastery in Bhutan**, has for centuries been a regional center for a spiritual tradition of solitary meditation. Now, as more trekkers than ever before visit Phajoding to experience its tranquility, they are exerting more pressure on the monks' meditation and the monastery's buildings. Even sites long abandoned, such as **Chankillo, Peru**, which may be the earliest-known astronomical observatory in the Americas, require careful planning to ensure sustainable tourism development.

As with past Watch lists, the 2010 Watch highlights the plight of modern architecture. Often overlooked because it isn't "old," such architecture faces special problems stemming from experimental materials and innovative designs. Modern buildings on the 2010 Watch include Frank Lloyd Wright's iconic

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Taliesin and Taliesin West, in the U.S., and the now-abandoned **Sanatorium Joseph Lemaire, in Belgium**. The surreal, fantastic landscape of **Las Pozas, in Xilitla, Mexico**, a series of canals, pools, and architectural follies constructed in the mid-20th century, is crumbling and being engulfed by the dense, humid jungle that surrounds it. Without immediate intervention, the concrete and steel ensemble will soon be overtaken by nature.

The 2010 Watch also includes sites affected by conflict and disaster. The entire country of Iraq was placed on the 2006 and 2008 Watch lists; the 2010 list includes the **al-Hadba' Minaret, in Mosul**, one of the few original elements in the medieval Nur al-Din complex and a monument of great symbolic importance to the Iraqis. Watch listing should draw much-needed technical assistance to the “hunchback”—so-called for its precarious slant—and reiterate the World Monuments Fund’s support for the conservation of Iraq’s heritage. Two important sites **in New Orleans, St. Louis Cemetery no. 2 and the Phillis Wheatley Elementary School**, face continuing challenges from Hurricane Katrina. The **Dutch Fort in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka**, and the **Carlisle Memorial Methodist Church in Belfast, Northern Ireland**, illustrate some of the ways in which heritage conservation can bring together fractured communities.

World Monuments Watch

Launched in 1996 and issued every two years, the World Monuments Watch calls international attention to cultural heritage sites around the world that are threatened by neglect, vandalism, conflict, or disaster. The 2010 Watch continues this tradition of identifying endangered sites, while also encompassing those with compelling issues or progressive approaches that can inform the field at large.

Watch listing provides an opportunity for sites and their nominators to raise public awareness, foster local participation, advance innovation and collaboration, and demonstrate effective solutions. The process also serves as a vehicle for requesting WMF assistance for select projects.

The list is assembled by an international panel of experts in archaeology, architecture, art history, and preservation (*see accompanying list of 2010 panel members*). For many historic sites, inclusion on the Watch is the best, and sometimes the only, hope for survival.

Since the program’s inception, more than 630 sites in 125 countries and territories have been included on eight Watch lists. Nearly half the sites featured on the Watch lists through 2008, representing 79 countries, have received WMF support totaling \$50 million. These WMF funds have in turn leveraged an additional \$150 million in assistance from other sources, demonstrating the effectiveness of the Watch program.

Success stories from the 2008 World Monuments Watch include Scott’s Hut, Antarctica; Falmouth Historic Town, Jamaica; Pella Macedonia Tombs, Greece; Capitanes Generales Palace, Guatemal

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Mavisbank House, United Kingdom; and Florida Southern College, U.S.A. All have been protected.

A very recent success story is Tomo Port Town, in Fukuyama, Japan, which has also been protected. Watch-listed in 2002 and 2004, this small Meiji-era seaport on Japan's Inland Sea was threatened by the construction of a landfill and bridge that would have radically altered its waterfront and destroyed its historic character. The Watch listings helped to put pressure on the local government. The preservation of Tomo was then elevated to an international issue after a visit by WMF staff members with local officials and an on-site press conference drew broad attention. Dozens of institutions and organizations rallied to Tomo's cause, and after a seven-year battle, Japanese courts have ruled that the bridge cannot be built.

One of the World Monuments Fund's most effective tools, the World Monuments Watch is emblematic of the organization's commitment to inspiring heritage stewardship, forging partnerships, and advancing conservation. In sponsoring the Watch program, WMF seeks to confront urgent challenges, highlight emerging issues and opportunities in the field, foster community engagement, and build capacities and constituencies for sustaining heritage protection in the long-term.

World Monuments Fund

The World Monuments Fund is the leading independent organization devoted to saving the world's most treasured places. For over 40 years, working in more than 90 countries, its highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to preserve important architectural and cultural-heritage sites around the globe. Through partnerships with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF inspires an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations. Headquartered in New York City, WMF has offices and affiliates worldwide. For additional information: www.wmf.org

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