

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, GENDER, ENTERTAINMENT AND SPORT

**UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES TO SUSTAIN THE INSCRIPTION OF THE BLUE AND JOHN CROW MOUNTAINS WORLD HERITAGE SITE**

**INTRODUCTION**

- 1.0 Members are asked to note the following information regarding activities to sustain the inscription of the Blue and John Crow Mountains to the UNESCO World Heritage List by the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport.

**BACKGROUND**

- 2.0 The 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention) was developed from the merging of two separate movements: the first focusing on the preservation of cultural sites, and the other dealing with the conservation of nature. Jamaica ratified this convention on June 14, 1983 and currently has a 4-year mandate to serve on the 21-member World Heritage Committee, which ends at the end of the 41<sup>st</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee in 2017.
- 2.1 State Parties to the World Heritage Convention agree to identify and nominate properties in their national territory to be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List. When a State Party nominates a property, it gives details of the outstanding universal value, (value that goes way beyond national borders to global significance) integrity and authenticity of a site.
- 2.2 The Blue and John Crow Mountains was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List on July 3, 2015, because of significant representation as a rich and outstanding habitat for numerous endemic species and the cultural heritage of the Windward Maroons.
- 2.3 The cultural heritage of the Blue and John Crow Mountains centers on the sacred Nanny Town site, trails, rivers, caves, sacred burial sites and the rich Windward Maroon traditions and practices. The natural heritage focuses on elements such as the cloud forests located at the Blue Mountain Peak, endemic species such as the Giant swallowtail butterfly and the largest contiguous block of natural forest remaining in Jamaica.

**INSCRIPTION PROCESS**

- 2.0 The nomination process for the Blue and John Crow Mountains' inscription to the World Heritage List began in 2005, with first submission to the UNESCO-World Heritage Centre in February 2009. In September 2010, the site was evaluated by the International Advisory Bodies of the World Heritage Committee specifically the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

## **INSCRIPTION PROCESS (cont'd)**

- 3.1 Based on the reports of the Advisory Bodies it was determined at the 35th Session of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) in June 2011, that the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park (BJCMNP) nomination was to be deferred.
- 3.2 This deferral was to afford the Jamaica time to ensure the accommodation of the very important Maroon sites in the submission. These sites have a significant impact on the cultural integrity of the World Heritage Site as a mixed site. Additionally, the Maroon communities form a very integral part of the management, promotion and protection of the site.
- 3.3 It is important to note that at no time was the proposal for inscription rejected. In fact, the IUCN and the ICOMOS, the technical arms of the WHC were from the outset impressed with Jamaica's choice for nomination. This deferral within the context of the WHC represented a vote of confidence in Jamaica's choice in nominating this site.
- 3.4 The process has been led through the combined effort of agencies and NGOs, in particular the Jamaica National Heritage Trust, Forestry Department, National Environment and Planning Agency, Institute of Jamaica-African Caribbean, Institute of Jamaica /Jamaica Memory Bank, Natural History Museum of Jamaica, University of the West Indies and Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust- managers of the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park. These agencies all form part of the Co-management agreement in managing the World Heritage Site.
- 3.5 The Ministry responsible for Culture, working through the Jamaica National Heritage Trust, administered the revamping of the nomination dossier for the site with the production of revised dossier and submission on January 30, 2014. After an intensive evaluation and lobbying process, the site was inscribed at the 39<sup>th</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee on July 3, 2015, making it Jamaica's first World Heritage Site and the Caribbean's first mixed site for significant cultural and natural heritage.
- 3.6 The benefits accrued to a country on inscription include the following:-
  - The inscription of a World Heritage Site (WHS) guarantees international protection of site for present and future generations;
  - Attracts international technical and funding assistance in managing a World Heritage Property;
  - Provides prestige for countries, particularly with respect to tourism. This is especially relevant for SIDS which are heavily reliant on tourism, and must seek ways to diversify and create competitive tourism products and services. The Purposeful Cultural Tourist is among those who tend to visit World Heritage Site (WHS), and they are said to stay longer and spend more at World Heritage Sites; and
  - World Heritage Sites (WHS) is also an important benchmark on Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (captured under the review of a country's natural and cultural resources).

## INITIATIVES TO DATE

- 4.0 The Ministry has institutionalized the functional capacity to coordinate and execute its overarching responsibilities concerning the World Heritage Convention and other related UNESCO Cultural Conventions. International instruments include the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. The ratification of this Convention was approved by Cabinet in 2011
- 4.1 MCGES has collaborated with the relevant entities to launch a public education/awareness campaign regarding the world heritage inscription and the benefits to be derived, the need to protect the site through better farming practices, and how to mitigate against environmental hazards such as fires and issues surrounding climate change. Funding was provided through UNESCO in the amount of USD20,000. The public education campaign included the following:
- Media campaign utilizing radio, television and print media with the Jamaica Information Service as key partner;
  - Posters and Brochures distributed in schools, communities, ministries and agencies;
  - Installing gateway signs to the World Heritage Site in Papine and Port Antonio;
  - Launch of World Heritage Site in Moore Town with installation of commemorative sign;
  - Commemorative hike and sign placed on Blue Mountain Peak as a World Heritage Site;
  - Hosted first World Heritage education workshop held in Caribbean region;
  - First celebration of World Heritage Day;
  - Awareness raising in *World Heritage Review* magazine – worldwide distribution; and
  - World Heritage Economics Workshop was undertaken to engage stakeholders living in the 30 communities around the world heritage site.
- 4.2 Establishment of greater engagement of partner Ministries such as Tourism, Water and Mining, Science and Technology among others, in maintaining the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Blue and John Crow Mountains, as too its integrity and authenticity, especially in considerations that maintain the integrity of boundaries of the site, such as mining concerns.

## PROJECTIONS

- 5.0 They are as follows:
- Continued public awareness initiatives in schools, communities and the wider Jamaican public;
  - Continue to carry out mandate on the World Heritage Committee with the direction of gaining a seat on UNESCO's governing Executive Body in 2018;
  - Follow up World Heritage Economics Workshop to assist cultural entrepreneurs;
  - Finalizing ground-truthing and boundary marking for the World heritage site;

- Facilitate archeological surveys and excavations;
- Hosting of first regional World Heritage and climate change workshop – UNESCO funded at approximately USD40,000;
- Continue Jamaica’s obligations on the World Heritage Convention as the owner of a World Heritage site in particular the preparation of Jamaica’s first periodic report, due December 1, 2016; and
- JNHT has been instructed to reinstitute the World Heritage Unit and in conjunction with the Ministry, to immediately commence the necessary work for the inscription of Jamaica’s next world heritage site, proposed to be the Sunken City of Port Royal.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.0 In addition to budgetary support from the Government of Jamaica (GoJ), the inscription of the Blue and John Crow Mountains was undertaken through funding support from the Tourism Enhancement Fund in the amounts of \$5.3M and \$4.67M as well as funding from the Jamaica National Heritage Trust in the amount of \$0.5M and the Ministry contributed \$1.1M. Funding for the public awareness campaign was provided by the UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office of the Caribbean in the amount of USD20,000.

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Honourable Olivia Grange C.D., M.P.

Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport

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