

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

UK National Commission for UNESCO Supports Government Proposal of Expert Meeting to Discuss Treatment of Scientific World Heritage Sites

London, UK – 13 June 2007. The UK National Commission for UNESCO is supportive of the positive proposal by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to host an international expert meeting to examine the treatment of scientific sites, following the withdrawal of the UK 2006 nomination, Darwin at Downe, from the 31st session of the World Heritage Committee.

The UK National Commission is disappointed at the withdrawal which was officially submitted yesterday. However, it understands the concerns raised and welcomes DCMS' constructive proposal of funding and hosting an international expert meeting on behalf of UNESCO to examine the issues of representing science on the World Heritage List. The outcome of this meeting will contribute positively to the development of guidelines and criteria for treatment of sites with scientific interest on the List.

Darwin at Downe, situated in the London Borough of Bromley, comprises Charles Darwin's house, experimental garden and the countryside immediately around his property used for Darwin's scientific investigations for forty years after his round-the-world voyage of HMS Beagle in the 1830s. At Downe, Darwin developed and demonstrated his theory of evolution through the study of plants and animals in natural settings and under human management.

The UK National Commission offers its assistance to DCMS in organising the proposed expert meeting, and looks forward to contributing to the World Heritage discussions in the UK and internationally.

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For further information, please ring the UK National Commission for UNESCO on +44 (0)20 7766 3491.

Notes to Editors:

- ***The UK National Commission for UNESCO is an independent body set up by HM Government to act as the national coordinator for UNESCO's activities and policies in the UK; and as a focal point for UNESCO HQ, HM Government and UK Civil Society. For more information, visit www.unesco.org.uk.***

- **The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** is a Specialized Agency of the UN. It seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. This is embodied in an international treaty called the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO in 1972.
- **The concept of World Heritage Sites** is at the core of the World Heritage Convention, adopted by UNESCO in 1972, to which 180 nations belong. Through the Convention, UNESCO seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of the cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. The Convention required the establishment of the World Heritage List, under the management of an inter-governmental World Heritage Committee as a means of recognising that some places, both natural and cultural, are of sufficient importance to be the responsibility of the international community as a whole. The UK ratified the Convention in 1984.