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WORLD HERITAGE, TOURISM AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS: FROM SITES TO SYSTEMS

UNESCO's 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and its provisions to allow heritage sites to be labelled as 'World Heritage' are increasingly adopted by the governments of developing countries as a means to attract tourism and pursue their individual development agendas. However, the relationship of World Heritage Sites with international mass tourism and its negative impacts, coupled with conflicts between the national and international conservation needs and objectives of many developing countries (particularly within sub-Saharan Africa) questions whether the World Heritage Convention is currently being applied in the most developmentally beneficial way. These notions are explored and the potential value of the World Heritage Convention to the pursuit of the international development aims enshrined in the Millennium Declaration and its Millennium Development Goals highlighted. It is suggested that the World Heritage system could foster greater development if it focussed more on the conservation and tourism systems of developing countries as opposed to the single sites which it recognises as globally significant. This paper presents some of the theoretical outcomes of the author's Master thesis: *To List or Not to List? Evaluating the Development Potential of the World Heritage Convention in the Republic of Zambia*.