Heritage sites to be used as venue to educate young generation

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), plans to use the World Heritage Sites of Pakistan as venue for educating young generation and teaching them about this long human history.

“These sites are wonderful venue for school visits and teaching the youngsters about history of different cultures and this is what UNESCO says about world heritage,” said Irina Bokova, Director General UNESCO during her recent visit to Taxila.

The people of Pakistan should feel proud particularly the local people to have such unique and interesting sites, they have to continue protecting and preserving their heritage and also continue with the archaeological findings, she said in an interview with APP. In a message to people of Pakistan, Ms Bokova said, this is the side that shows the influences. There is no unique culture in the world and even there is no culture that is isolated. There exists a message about respect, dialogue and passing it on to the next generations.

“It is very important to preserve the authenticity and we want to use our sites as venues to teach our young generation. Pakistan has extraordinary heritage inscribed on UNESCOs list which is all about contribution of different civilizations”.

“The uniqueness of the Taxila site is in different layers of cultures and civilizations as we see the influences of Buddhism, Hinduism and Greek culture also, everything in a perspective, I believe this is so much needed today to talk about dialogue among cultures about the contribution of all these different civilizations that are here,” she expressed her thoughts about the World Heritage Site of Taxila.

“I am impressed by the diligent attitude of Pakistani people and authorities towards preservation of Gandhara culture and such interesting and unique sites. I have seen exposition of Gandhara culture in paris, when it came there and visited five years ago and exposed this one of the important museum but here I have seen much more and one feels happy to be here,” Ms Bokova remarked.

About UNESCO’s plans for promotion and protection of these sites, she said there is no culture which is isolated and it is important to preserve the authenticity of any culture. For this reason, she said, We want to preserve the archaeological sites to educate the young generation about the historical value of this region through dialogue on culture.

Taxila, one of the six World Heritage sites of Pakistan, is inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1980 that comprises a vast complex of archaeological heritage, the site includes a Mesolithic
cave, 4 settlement sites, a number of Buddhist monasteries of various periods and Muslim Mosques of the medieval period as well as presence of the Buddhist Stupa and monasteries at Taxila from 1st to 5th Century A.D.

To redress the issue of growing wild vegetation (bio-deterioration) at the sites of Sirkup and Sirsukh, Bhirmound, Dharmarajika and Giri causing deterioration to the structure, UNESCO Islamabad is working closely with the Department of Archaeology Punjab and Comsats Institute of Information Technology (CIIT) through capacity building and awareness raising of the staff on conservation methods against bio-deterioration for the protection of the sites. The Museum carries the reflections connected to the chronology of Taxila, life of Gautam Buddha, glimpses of the artifacts, Buddha sculpture s and historical belongings of the Buddhists made up of lead, silver and gold that date back to 3rd Century B.C.


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UNESCO DG visits Taxila, Lok Virsa

UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova during her two-day state visit to Pakistan reached Taxila and Lok Virsa Islamabad along with Federal Minister of Education Muhammad Baleegur Rehman and UNESCO Country Director/Representative Kozue Kay Nagata.

Punjab Archaeology Director Dr Saleemul Haq and Taxila Museum Curator Abdul Nasir received the state guest in Taxila on Friday. Abdul Nasir gave the director general a guided tour of the museum. The director general inquired about the specifics of the sculptures and other objects dating back to the Gandhara period.

She also spent some time at the Museum Rest House which used to be the residence of Sir John Marshal, director general of Archaeological Survey of India during 1902-1922, where she was briefed on the development activities on the site and the museum.

“The people of Pakistan must be proud of its heritage. Taxila is a unique site showing so many layers of civilizations in this country, starting with prehistoric heritage and moving to the Greeks, and then to the Buddhist and Islamic cultures. This is a wellspring of creativity, an open book for tolerance, mutual understanding and dialogue, both within the country and abroad,” she said.

Later, the delegation led by the director general was driven to visit the remains of Sirkap site. Speaking to the Museum authorities and the media, she said that Taxila Site and the museum had a great potential to attract national and international visitors so that they could enjoy the
first-hand experience of being at the unique historical sites of antiquities and human settlements of the Gandhara Buddhist heritage.

She appreciated the efforts made by the federal and provincial governments in the restoration and preservation of the historical artefacts and sites in Taxila. While taking to the media, she stressed the need for involving the community, especially youth, in the preservation and protection of their cultural heritage.