

Introduction

Over history, Macao has been an important gateway through which western civilization entered China; for hundreds of years this piece of land has nurtured a symbiosis of cultural exchange, shaping the unique identity of Macao.

The successful inscription of “The Historic Centre of Macao” on the World Heritage List brings benefits and opportunities for the local society: sustainable cultural tourism shall continue to yield economic benefits as well as contribute to more concentrated efforts on the conservation of cultural heritage. International recognition will further raise community awareness and foster an appreciation of heritage values, thus providing a positive influence on future urban redevelopment programs that will evolve in line with heritage conservation.

With China’s accession to the World Trade Organisation, the country has moved another step forward, further enriching its long history of contact with other cultures. The story of Macao and the cultural values embodied within this World Heritage site may serve as a reference for embracing this developmental trend. Through continued promotion and public education, locals have expanded their knowledge and deepened their understanding of Macao’s role in Chinese and world history. The sense of ownership and pride in the city’s heritage reflects a recognition of Macao’s origins, its civilization and the context that has nurtured this development.

Macao’s nomination for inscription on the World Heritage List runs hand-in-hand with the implementation of the “one country, two

systems” principle and is a result of its success. Thanks to the full support of the Central Government, and the tremendous endeavours of the Macao S.A.R. Government and citizens, “The Historic Centre of Macao” has been included in this prestigious group of sites. This information kit is intended to serve as a resource for agencies and individuals in both public and private sectors in Macao, to provide further information on both the process and the details of Macao’s World Heritage inscription.

Opening with the background to UNESCO World Heritage, the origins of the World Heritage List and its significance, there is then an introduction to “The Historic Centre of Macao”. The following section deals with Macao’s bid, including an overview of the process for inscription, Macao’s outstanding

universal value, the basis for inscription and related activities to build awareness amongst the community.

Listing as UNESCO World Heritage marks the completion of the arduous process of application and places Macao squarely amongst the ranks of the world’s most outstanding heritage sites. It is crucial to remember that listing is underpinned by ongoing work to enhance local and international awareness of Macao’s heritage significance.

The local community, as past and present guardians of Macao’s cultural heritage, has made this city a symbol of tolerance and peaceful coexistence of cultures. As guardians of a part of the UNESCO World Heritage, let us work together to continue cherishing this precious legacy.