

GLOBAL HERITAGE STONE PROJECT AND PERSPECTIVES FOR BRAZILIAN INVOLVEMENT

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ABSTRACT: In late 2007, within the International Association of Engineering Geology and the Environment (IAEG), Commission 10- Building Stones and Ornamental Rocks (C-10), some stone specialists started a discussion about building stone sources around the world considering their importance for the history of humanity and the lack of satisfactory geological information and documentation of them. The next step was the establishment of a committee, in 2008, at a meeting of IAEG C-10 during the 33rd International Geological Congress (IGC), in Oslo. This year, during the 34th IGC in Brisbane, the project will become the responsibility of Heritage Stone Task Group (HSTG) under the further sponsorship of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) with an international Board of Management.

The Task Group will be an international collaborative group that aims to create an internationally recognized category or designation for natural stone resources that have achieved widespread utilization in human culture including artistic and architectural masterpieces, heritage construction and other culturally important applications. The value of this initiative is: 1) the augmentation of the professional understanding of natural stone amongst professional workers including geologists, engineers, architects and stone/building conservationists; 2) economic benefits, due to the focus on the natural stone source as a commercial building product, sculptural/decorative material and even as a tourism opportunity; 3) enhancement of the positive attributes of stone in terms of small business, regional development and third world development.

The initial focus of the Task Group is produce approved citations that identify, recognize and name a specified dimension stone as a "Global Heritage Stone Resource" (GHSR), based on several critical characteristics. These include: 1) historic use of the stone source (over 50 years is recommended); 2) utilization of the stone in landmark stone constructions, historical buildings etc.; 3) wide geographical use of the stone use ; 4) potential benefits arising from GHSR designation. Ongoing quarrying is specifically encouraged even though designated stones will have heritage significance. The official work of HSTG can be followed at www.globalheritagestone.org.

In order that Brazil provides a contribution to the HSTG effort it is proposed here that the following Brazilian stone sources could be candidates for nomination as a "Global Heritage Stone Resource". All regions or stone types proposed agree with the four initial eligibility criteria and are representative of Brazilian geological diversity. The potential sites and stones are 1) Ouro Preto region (soapstones and quartzites for sculpture and masonry applications); 2) Granite Quadrangle in State of Minas Gerais (stones such as Kinawa migmatite and charnockites such as Verde Candeias and Verde Lavras types); Papagaios region (slates and related stones for roofing); 3) Cachoeiro de Itapemirim (white marbles); 4) Ouro-lândia (calcrete); 5) Traditional product from regions in São Paulo State: Preto Piracaia (granodiorite), Vermelho Bragança (syenogranite), Azul Fantástico (granitic protomylonite), Vermelho Capão Bonito (syenogranite).

Naturally, considering the territorial dimensions and geological diversity of Brazil, many additional stone types will be considered in the future. This abstract initiates discussion of the Global Heritage Stone Project and invites all interested researchers to prepare draft citations from Brazil.

KEYWORDS: building stone, ornamental stones, international designation, Brazilian stone resource.