



UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE
WORLD, CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Ninth Ordinary Session

Paris, 2-6 December 1985

Item 8 of the Provisional Agenda: Elaboration of guidelines for the identification and nomination of mixed cultural and natural properties and rural landscapes

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the 8th session of the World Heritage Committee (Buenos-Aires, Argentina, 29 October-2 November 1984), the Rapporteur, Mr. L. Chabason, brought up the question of mixed cultural/natural properties and particularly of rural landscapes, which met criterion (iii) for natural sites as "exceptional combinations of natural and cultural elements". The Committee had requested IUCN to consult with ICOMOS and the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) to organise a task force on this subject. The meeting of this task force was held in Paris at the Headquarters of ICOMOS, at the invitation of its President, Mr. M. Parent, on 11 October 1985.
- 1.2 Preparatory work was organised by correspondence by IUCN. The task force was able therefore to base its work on a report by Mr. John Foster (Vice-Chairman of the IUCN Commission on National Parks and other Protected Areas) and written comments by Professor Ralph Slatyer (Australia - former Chairman of the World Heritage Committee); Mr. Adrian Phillips (United Kingdom - Countryside Commission, member of IUCN); Mr. Michel Parent (President of ICOMOS and former Chairman of the World Heritage Committee) and Mr. James Thorsell (Executive Secretary, IUCN Commission on National Parks and other Protected Areas).

...

28 NOV 1985

- 1.3 The task force requested that a presentation of the thoughts of the task force be compiled by the ICOMOS and World Heritage Secretariats and precede the guidelines drawn up at the meeting. This document gives a summary of these thoughts and recommendations as well as proposals for modifications in the "Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention" for eventual adoption by the Committee.

2. The World Heritage Convention

- 2.1 The task force recalled the definitions of cultural heritage and natural heritage as given in Articles 1 and 2 of the World Heritage Convention:

Article 1

For the purposes of this Convention, the following shall be considered as "cultural heritage":

monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

groups of buildings: groups of separate or connecting buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and of man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological points of view.

Article 2

For the purposes of this Convention, the following shall be considered as "natural heritage":

natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view;

geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation;

natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.

- 2.2 Article 1 identifies only two circumstances in which natural attributes can be taken into account in assessing whether a cultural

property is of world heritage significance. First it provides for 'groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of... their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value'. Secondly, it provides for '... the combined works of nature and of man... which are of outstanding universal value...'. Natural features which provide an important setting for a group of buildings can thus be taken into account in the assessment of a cultural property, as also can suitable natural features modified by man.

- 2.3 Article 2, on the other hand, makes no concession to cultural elements in assessing whether or not a natural property is of outstanding universal value and, strictly within the definition, it is only the natural features unmodified by human intervention which determine the acceptance of a natural property.
- 2.4 Up till the present time, the majority of nominations have been accepted by the World Heritage Committee on the basis of either their cultural value or their natural value, as States Parties had initially nominated properties which clearly met either the cultural or natural criteria.
- 2.5 Several properties, however, have been nominated for both their cultural and natural aspects, although the Convention does not consider such properties, it does not specifically exclude them either. Such nominations have been examined by both ICOMOS and IUCN and their separate evaluations have been considered by the World Heritage Bureau and the Committee.
- 2.6 Up till now, very few properties have been accepted by the Committee on a joint cultural/natural basis and for which separate evaluations have been prepared by ICOMOS and IUCN. Examples include: Kakadu National Park (Australia) and the Machu Picchu Historic Sanctuary (Peru).
- 2.7 A few properties which have been nominated on a joint cultural/natural basis have been accepted by the Committee for one aspect only. Examples include Yosemite National Park (United States of America) for which the State Party referred to its cultural aspects but which was accepted by the Committee for only its natural aspects. In this case, only an IUCN evaluation was prepared.
- 2.8 The task force recognised that this system of evaluation and subsequent approval of cultural/natural properties is somewhat arbitrary and strictly speaking does not follow the logic of the Convention. Indeed, ICOMOS can take account of certain natural aspects of cultural properties but sensu stricto the reverse is not the case and IUCN should assess natural properties purely on their natural attributes. Nevertheless, the task force recognised that the system has worked in practice and has a value. It therefore recommended that for a property nominated for listing where either culture or nature predominates, it would seem reasonable to maintain the present arrangement whereby the appropriate agency takes the lead and consults the other agency, on the understanding that there would be consultation when in doubt rather than not. For properties for which the cultural and natural values are distinct and appear equivalent, separate evaluations should be made by ICOMOS and IUCN.

3. Rural landscapes

3.1 The problem arises for nominations concerning rural landscapes. Mr. L. Chabason recalled that the Committee had urged all States Parties to nominate natural properties in order to obtain a better balance between culture and nature on the World Heritage List. France, on its part, when preparing its tentative list, had realised that there were few natural sites non-modified by man in the strict sense of the Convention and that 'nature' in France was highly anthropised. He noted that certain rural landscapes in France may have outstanding universal value and accordingly merited nomination to the World Heritage List. This type of exceptional landscape was also found in other regions of the world, for example:

- the terraced ricefields of Bali,
- the Florentine hills,
- the English Lake District.

Mr. L. Chabason recalled that the problem was therefore not limited to France.

3.2 The task force noted that indeed such landscapes did merit international recognition. Here the cultural and natural elements were combined and were not separate. Neither 'culture' nor 'nature' predominated. The task force agreed that while the Convention was unique in bringing culture and nature together, provision should be made for situations where the two were "married" together.

3.3 The task force highlighted the inconsistency which existed between the definitions of Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention and the criteria for inscription of natural and cultural properties respectively in paragraphs 21 and 24 of the "Guidelines". Indeed, while Article 1 (cultural heritage) referred to natural aspects of cultural heritage in two of its definitions, the criteria themselves made no allusion to these aspects. On the contrary, Article 2 (natural heritage) did not refer to cultural aspects of a natural property although criterion (iii) referred to "... areas of exceptional natural beauty or exceptional combinations of natural and cultural elements".

3.4 Furthermore, the task force took note of paragraph 15 of the "Guidelines" which invites States Parties to endeavour, as far as possible, "... to include in their submissions properties which derive their outstanding universal value from a particularly significant combination of cultural and natural features".

4. Recommendations

4.1 The task force recalled that the wording of Articles 1 and 2 was to be taken as immutable and not capable of alteration in any respect. On the other hand, the "Guidelines" could be modified to make provision for rural landscapes. The task force nevertheless was against introducing a third category of criteria for this type of landscape and proposed the following modifications:

a) Paragraph 15 of the "Guidelines"

This paragraph should be strengthened in order to better define the notion of a "particularly significant combination of cultural and natural features" to take account of nature modified by man.

b) Paragraph 21 of the "Guidelines" (cultural heritage): criterion (v)

In order to remedy the inconsistency noted between the definition of cultural heritage and the criteria of the "Guidelines", the task force proposed to expand criterion (v) of paragraph 21 by recalling the link between "traditional human settlements" and rural landscapes.

c) Paragraph 24 of the "Guidelines" (natural heritage): criterion (iii)

In spite of the inconsistency noted between the definition of natural heritage and this criterion, the task force preferred not to modify it but rather replace the word "combinations" by "associations". Also, the task force proposed that the last phrase of this criterion be taken to make an additional criterion for cultural heritage by reversing the adjectives "natural" and "cultural": in this way criterion (iii) was deliberately duplicated and found its mirror image in the cultural heritage, thus recognising that there were areas where both cultural and natural considerations inter-relate.

d) Addition of a paragraph after paragraph 25

The task force noted the types of problems already described by Mr. Chabason at the 8th session of the World Heritage Committee regarding rural landscapes:

- (i) evolution (equilibrium, transformation and regression) of these living landscapes. Indeed, the role of the Convention was not to "fix" such landscapes but rather to conserve their harmony and stability within a dynamic, evolutive framework;
- (ii) integrity of such landscapes which were rarely protected under national jurisdiction or had a management programme. In this connection, it was recalled that one of the eight categories of protected areas recognised by IUCN is the "protected landscape" for which there existed certain outstanding examples which could be recognised on a national level under the Convention.

In order to take account of these considerations, the task force deemed it necessary to add a paragraph in the "Guidelines" which would provide advice to States Parties on the identification, protection and management of rural landscapes.

- 4.2 The task force, being aware of the problems outlined in the preceding paragraph and wanting to avoid a proliferation of nominations of rural landscapes, recommended that the Committee exercise caution

and apply the criteria very strictly when deciding on the inscription of such properties.

- 4.3 As for the procedure for evaluating the nominations of rural landscapes, the task force recommended that IUCN and ICOMOS both consult IFLA in its field of competence. Indeed, IFLA had kindly proposed its services to IUCN and ICOMOS to assist in the evaluation of such properties. An evaluation prepared jointly by IUCN and ICOMOS should be subsequently submitted to the Bureau and the World Heritage Committee. The task force recalled that this process of consultation between NGO's might take some time and that, consequently, the evaluation document may not be prepared in time to be submitted to the members of the Bureau before their meeting, held usually at the beginning of June.
- 4.4 The task force also noted that the term "mixed property" is not used in the Convention and that it would be preferable not to use it when referring to rural landscapes.

5. Modifications to the "Guidelines"

Following the above discussions, the task force suggested the following modifications to the "Guidelines":

5.1 Paragraph 15 should read as follows:

In keeping with the spirit of the Convention, States Parties should as far as possible endeavour to include in their submissions properties which derive their outstanding universal value from a particularly significant association of cultural and natural features, including areas where man has modified the natural landscape.

5.2 Paragraph 21; criteria (v),(vi) and (vii) (cultural heritage) should read as follows:

(v) Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement and/or land use which has disappeared or become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change; or

(vi) be an example of exceptional associations of cultural and natural elements; or

(vii) be directly or tangibly associated with events or with ideas or beliefs of outstanding universal significance; (the Committee considers that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances or in conjunction with other criteria).

5.3 Paragraph 24, criterion (iii) (natural heritage) should read as follows:

(iii) contain superlative natural phenomena, formations or features, for instance, outstanding examples of the most important ecosystems, areas of exceptional natural beauty or exceptional associations of natural and cultural elements; or

5.4 Additional paragraph 26 (actual paragraph 26 becomes 27, etc.) is proposed as follows:

26. *The following advice is provided to States Parties on the nomination of properties displaying exceptional associations of cultural and natural elements under criteria (vi) and (iii) respectively of paragraphs 21 and 24:*

- a) *Such properties may wholly comprise man-made or man-modified landscapes or contain a mixture of such landscapes. They may demonstrate longstanding land-use patterns and practices which are in harmony with the landform and natural plant cover of the area. There may be small settlements and individual buildings provided that these are in scale and associated with the traditional land use and in keeping with the cultural traditions;*
- b) *Such properties should be adequate in area to provide representative examples of the land forms, land-uses and cultural traditions, and to ensure the maintenance of their integrity in the long term;*
- c) *Such properties may be in public or private ownership or a combination of both. The jurisdiction should be adequate to ensure that the scale and rate of change of developments or land management practice are kept to a level which will maintain the key characteristics of the landscape and avoid any reduction in overall quality;*
- d) *Such properties should benefit from an adequate and practicable mechanism for bringing the relevant institutions and individuals together to ensure the property is managed in a manner which will maintain its overall integrity.*