

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE
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Analysis of the evolution of nominations : Commentary of ICOMOS

At point V. A, paragraphs 11 and 12 of the report of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee (Paris, June 3-5, 1985), it recalled the necessity "to ensure on the one hand the coherence of actions to be undertaken with respect to inscriptions secured and on the other hand the effective protection and management of properties inscribed."

Consequently, the NGOs concerned are to give priority to :

- 1) the properties inscribed longest on the World Heritage List
- 2) the properties whose inscription on this List was accompanied by specific recommendations for protection and management.

On this subject, ICOMOS calls attention to the following points of the Convention and the Operational Guidelines :

- Convention, Article 6, points 1 and 2 :

1. "Whilst fully respecting the sovereignty of the States on whose territory the cultural and natural heritage mentioned in Articles 1 and 2 is situated, and without prejudice to property rights provided by national legislation, the States Parties to this Convention recognize that such heritage constitutes a world heritage for whose protection it is the duty of the international community as a whole to co-operate.
2. The States parties undertake, in accordance with the provisions of this Convention, to give their help in the identification, protection, conservation and preservation of the cultural and natural heritage referred to in paragraphs 2 and 4 of Article 11 if the States on whose territory it is situated so request."

- Operational Guidelines, Point E, paragraphs 28 to 30 :

28. When the Secretariat receives such information from a source other than the State Party concerned, it will, as far as possible, verify the source and the contents of the information in consultation with the State Party concerned and request its comments. The Secretariat will inform the Chairman of the Committee of the results of its investigations and the Chairman will decide whether the information is to be acted upon. If the Chairman decides that the information is not to be acted upon, no action will be taken.

29. In all cases except those on which the Chairman decided that no further action should be taken, the Secretariat will request the competent advisory organization(s), (ICOMOS, IUCN or ICCROM), to forward comments on the information received.

30. The information received, together with the comments of the State Party and the advisory organization (s), will be brought to the attention of the Bureau of the Committee. The Bureau may take one of the following steps :

- a) it may decide that the property has not seriously deteriorated and that no further action should be taken ;
- b) when the Bureau considers that the property has seriously deteriorated, but not to the extent that its restoration is impossible, it may recommend to the Committee that the property be maintained on the List, provided that the State Party takes the necessary measures to restore the property within a reasonable period of time. The Bureau may also recommend that technical co-operation be provided under the World Heritage Fund for work connected with the restoration of the property, if the State Party so requests ;
- c) when there is evidence that the property has deteriorated to the point where it has irretrievably lost those characteristics which determined its inclusion in the List, the Bureau may recommend that the Committee delete the property from the List ; before any such recommendation is submitted to the Committee, the Secretariat will inform the State Party concerned of the Bureau's recommendation ; any comments which the State Party may make with respect to the recommendation of the Bureau will be brought to the attention of the Committee, together with the Bureau's recommendation ;
- d) when the information available is not sufficient to enable the Bureau to take one of the measures described in a), b) or c) above, the Bureau may recommend to the Committee that the Secretariat be authorized to take the necessary action to ascertain , in consultation with the State Party concerned, the present condition of the property, the dangers to the property and the feasibility of adequately restoring the property, and to report to the Bureau on the results of its action ; such measures may include the sending of a fact-finding mission or the consultation of specialists. In cases where emergency action is required, the Bureau may itself authorize the financing from the World Heritage Fund of the emergency assistance that is required.

In order to undertake more coherent action with respect to properties already inscribed, it appears necessary that in all cases where doubts remain after the constitution of nomination file of a property,

- on the definition of the property ,
- or on its conservation ,
- or on its management ,

a mission of inquiry prior to inscription may be carried out, financed either by the World Heritage Fund or some other body.

In order to assure more coherent management of inscribed properties, it is desirable that expert missions or consultations of experts be instituted regularly :

- 10 years after the inscription of a cultural property on the World Heritage List;
- in all emergency cases defined by the Committee or the Bureau.

In reference to paragraph 16 of the Bureau report, ICOMOS considers that the limitation of the number of annual nominations presents the following inconveniences :

- (i) the arbitrary limitation to 20 or 25 properties obviously will favour those States parties having important administrative structures that permitted them to constitute complete files during the first months of the year;
- (ii) the limitation to 2 properties a year will favour the States parties whose cultural heritage is small (for example on account of the country's size);
- (iii) Only a temporary interruption voluntarily agreed to in the presentation of new nominations by countries already having a high number of properties inscribed on the List could be accepted, on the condition that it did not have a demobilizing effect and that it did not, over a short period, compromise the coherence of action undertaken.