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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION
OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

BUREAU OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Eighteenth session

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, Room X (Fontenoy)

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Item 5.1. of the Provisional agenda: State of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List:

addendum 1: Progress report on the implementation of the decisions of the World Heritage Committee regarding the methodology of systematic monitoring.

1. SUMMARY INTRODUCTION

Following the recommendations of the expert meeting on the methodology of systematic monitoring (Cambridge, 1-4 November 1993) and the decisions of the World Heritage Committee at its seventeenth session in December 1993, the Secretariat proceeded, in consultation with the advisory bodies and individual experts, with the further development of the framework and methodology of systematic monitoring of the state of conservation of World Heritage sites.

This progress report presents a proposal which integrates two complementary elements, both of which are indispensable for a credible and successful monitoring and reporting system.

The first is the systematic and repeated observation of the conditions of a site and its periodic reporting -with external advice- to the World Heritage Committee. These activities are generally being understood to be the prime responsibility of the States Parties and the agency with management authority.

The second element is the Committee's strategy towards systematic monitoring which would be characterized by a regional approach and the provision of external advice and assistance to the States Parties in putting management and monitoring structures in place and in preparing the periodic state of conservation reports.

Such an integral monitoring and reporting system would have an immediate and long-term impact on actions and decisions taken on all levels:

World Heritage site: Improved site management, advanced planning, reduction of emergency and ad-hoc interventions.

State Party: Improved World Heritage policies, advanced planning, improved site management.

Region: Regional cooperation, regional World Heritage policies and activities better targeted to the specific needs of the region.

Committee/Secretariat: Better understanding of the conditions of the sites and of the needs on the site, national and regional levels. Improved policy and decision making.

The proposed monitoring structure implies a cooperative effort between the site-manager, the States Parties and the World Heritage Committee, with two objectives in mind: improved site-management and conservation, and a more effective regional, national and site specific World Heritage cooperation.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The immediate background to these proposals is the World Heritage Committee session in Cartagena and the expert meeting in Cambridge. To set the proposals in context, however, it is useful to go all the way back to the World Heritage Convention and the Operational Guidelines themselves.

2.2 Article 4 of the Convention states:

"Each State Party to this Convention recognizes that the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage referred to in Articles 1 and 2 and situated on its territory, belong, primarily to that State. It will do all it can to this end, to the utmost of its own resources and, where appropriate, with any international assistance and co-operation, in particular, financial, artistic, scientific and technical, which it may be able to obtain."

Article 27.2 states:

"They [the States Parties] shall undertake to keep the public broadly informed of the dangers threatening this heritage and of activities carried on in pursuance of this Convention."

2.3 Article 29 of the Convention states:

"1. The States Parties to this Convention shall, in the reports which they submit to the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on dates and in a manner to be determined by it, give information on the legislative and administrative provisions which they have adopted and other action which they have taken for the application of this Convention, together with details of the experience acquired in this field.

2. These reports shall be brought to the attention of the World Heritage Committee."

It is also worth noting that the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention require the State Party to inform the Committee "of their intention to undertake or authorize in an area protected under the Convention major restorations or new constructions which may affect the World Heritage value of the property" (par. 58) and a state of conservation report to accompany all requests for technical assistance (par. 94.e).

2.4 By adhering to the Convention the States Parties have thus accepted the obligation to report to the Committee on the implementation of the Convention in general and on the conditions of and threats to the sites in particular.

2.5 Following the sixteenth session of the Committee where "The Committee noted that the monitoring of the state of conservation of World Heritage sites will receive greater emphasis than the identification and designation of sites in the future work of the Convention", the Operational Guidelines also define the role of the Committee in monitoring. Paragraph 3 states that the Committee "has four essential functions." The second of these is to "monitor the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List" (ibid).

Other references to monitoring in the Operational Guidelines relate to the List of World Heritage in

Danger. Paragraph 81 reads: "The Committee shall review at regular intervals the state of property on the List of World Heritage in Danger. This review shall include such monitoring procedures and expert missions as might be determined necessary by the Committee."

- 2.6 Taken together with the calls for assessments of nominated sites before inscription and before inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, the Operational Guidelines thus indicate what might be termed reactive quasi-judicial monitoring, the assessment of sites by external experts against objective criteria with a view to procedural action as a consequence.
- 2.7 In practice, as shown widely in the papers of the World Heritage Bureau and of the Committee, there has been much monitoring and reporting of sites on the World Heritage List. Since the mid 1980's there has also been a continuing feeling that a more systematic and less reactive system should be introduced. The expert meeting in Cambridge in November 1993 was conceived in order to carry this work forward.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The Cambridge meeting focused on the difference between monitoring, the systematic repeated observation of a site at regular intervals, and reporting, the compilation of summary reports of those observations together with proposals for remedying problems identified. See WHC-93/CONF.002/INF5 for fuller definitions of the terms used. It considered the importance of involving different agencies at different levels in the monitoring process and stressed the need to obtain and up-date information on a systematic basis. Underlying this discussion there was a commonly held view amongst the participants that monitoring should lead to better management of the sites and should enable the achievement or non-achievement of management aims to be recorded.
- 3.2 Before bringing forward proposals for advancing this work, it may be worth briefly considering the underlying assumption about systematic observation. This implies that in respect of each World Heritage Site it will be possible to establish indicators in the form of statistical data which can be measured at regular intervals in order to observe the health of a site and the quality of its management. These

indicators will need to be specific to a site or type of site, but the expectation seems to be general that they can be found.

- 3.3 Consideration of the evidence and practical experience in monitoring sites suggest that this is a false hope. Factual data about the name, ownership, location and extent of sites need to be recorded, but say nothing about their state of conservation. In the case of natural sites the number of species is highly important. An important decline in number would be significant, but would come at the end of a process of poor management, increasing pollution, natural disaster or other threat. Other data held by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) is selective and descriptive and is not in the form of statistical indicators.
- 3.4 In the case of cultural sites the problem is greater in that many of the objective indicators which might be chosen -the rate of erosion of a stone surface, for example- present problems of measurement as well as of selection. It would be wrong, however, to over-stress the differences between the types of sites; in both cases objectivity is not easily achievable by statistical means.
- 3.5 This apparently negative point has been stressed for several related reasons. It explains the aspiration for a methodology which is consistent and objective, and at the same time it explains why previous attempts to devise questionnaires and centralized approaches have been opposed by experts and have not been fruitful. It also points to the difficulties faced by any external observer who wishes to measure change over time. It underlines the need for any account of a site to be both descriptive and to be based on an informed judgement, preferably on the part of someone closely familiar with the site.
- 3.6 In the light of these considerations it is possible to set out some criteria for a system of monitoring and reporting.

4. REQUIREMENTS FOR MONITORING PROCEDURES

- 4.1 Documentation should be prepared on a consistent basis, not because sites are the same or can use the same indicators, but simply for ease in compiling, storing, accessing and handling information.

- 4.2 Within the operation of the World Heritage Convention, the process of describing a site should take the same form from its nomination for inscription onwards.
- 4.3 Information about a site and an expert view of its condition and changes over time should be reported regularly through the World Heritage Centre to the World Heritage Committee and stored with the papers relating to each site in a way which makes it readily accessible to the Committee and to other interested parties. It is essential that the site managers be involved in the process of monitoring, and that there be a participation by professionals or an agency independent of the national organization with direct management responsibility in order to ensure the credibility and objectivity of the reporting.
- 4.4 At the level of the individual site, however, monitoring should be a normal part of the management process, keeping track of expenditure, works of maintenance and repair, staffing changes, external threats and so on. It should be carried out by those with the greatest relevant knowledge, those with direct management responsibility for the site. In larger sites, notably but not exclusively historic towns, this management approach will need to be incorporated into the work of a number of agencies.
- 4.5 At the level of the State Party, information which results from monitoring should be used to generate a report on the way in which it is meeting its obligations under the World Heritage Convention and an indication of the strength of its heritage management systems. The systems devised to establish and oversee monitoring should also provide a way of ensuring co-ordination and co-operation between the various agencies responsible for World Heritage sites.
- 4.6 At the level of the Committee and the Centre, a properly functioning monitoring and reporting system should provide the evidence that the Convention is fully respected by States Parties. It should provide the basis on which the resources of the Fund and other kinds of assistance can be directed. In time, it should reduce the need for exercise in reactive monitoring in response to specific problems and reports (but see paragraph 6.16 below). It is therefore important to produce a system which leads to a gradual improvement in the management and state of conservation of the sites.

- 4.7 At the level of the Centre, the system should improve information and communication with the sites and the State Parties. It should enable the Centre and other World Heritage partners to make the best use of their ability to assess, advise and train, as well as to enhance their information base.
- 4.8 In order to optimize the impact and efficiency of monitoring and the results thereof, a national or regional approach to monitoring should be applied by the Centre. For each programme of monitoring, appropriate partners should be identified for involvement. Such programmes could be initiated with workshops for the partners and other participants in the monitoring activity with the objectives of establishing the framework, defining needs for training in the methods of management and monitoring, and identifying professional resources in the region.

5. THE BASIS OF THE PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Under the Convention it is the States Parties which accept obligations towards the World Heritage sites and obligations to prepare reports for the Committee. The State Party, therefore, is crucial to, and should be at the centre of, the world-wide monitoring and reporting system which it is intended to introduce.
- 5.2 This is not to say that the State Party at the level of central government or national institution should carry out the task in isolation. On the contrary, it should already be clear that involvement at the site level is imperative if monitoring worth the name is to take place. To provide authority and credibility, another necessary element for reporting is an independent element, working alongside the site authorities and the state parties. This might come from an individual or organization with relevant experience from within or outside the country. Regional cooperation can also provide a useful mechanism for establishing systems and providing an independent element: these proposals draw heavily on the experiment in Latin America co-ordinated by the UNDP/UNESCO Regional Project. What is vital, however, is that there should be a reporting relationship between the State Party and the Committee underlying any other relationship or form or organization involved in the monitoring. These proposals will only be made to work effectively if States Parties accept the obligation to produce regular reports and introduce arrangements for doing so.

- 5.3 A pro-active strategy from the World Heritage Committee towards the States Parties and the sites is equally indispensable. The experience of the Latin American monitoring programme has shown that an external involvement in monitoring is fully acceptable to most of the States Parties if this is based upon a continuous cooperation between an external partner -in this case a UNESCO project- and the States Parties and the site managers. Essential elements of a monitoring strategy should be: regional cooperation, the provision of information, advice and assistance in setting up adequate management and monitoring structures, and involvement in the preparation of credible state of conservation reports.

A regional approach will optimize the impact and efficiency of monitoring and will enable the Committee to define regional strategies for World Heritage activities.

- 5.4 The basis of these proposals can be described as follows:

The States Parties' Responsibility

- a) Monitoring, the continuous observation of the conditions of the site, is (to be) incorporated in the day-to-day management of the site, resulting in annual reports to be prepared by the site manager or management authority.
- b) 5-yearly state of conservation reports will be prepared by the States Parties with the involvement of the site-manager/management authority and an external partner, preferably in the context of the regional monitoring programmes that will be set up by the Secretariat.
- c) The State Party will present the 5-year reports to the Secretariat.
- d) The Secretariat will collect the 5-year reports, verify their contents and prepare with the help of its decentralized regional structure Regional State of the World Heritage Reports for presentation to the World Heritage Committee. The first of these reports will be presented to the World Heritage Committee at its eighteenth session: the State of the cultural World Heritage in Latin America and the Caribbean, which will be the result of the UNDP/UNESCO Latin American Monitoring Programme. Regional monitoring programmes will be launched in the coming years for Asia, Africa, Europe and the Arab States.

Once the monitoring system is properly launched, the Committee would review every year the report on one specific region.

- e) On the basis of these reports, the World Heritage Committee will, if appropriate, make specific recommendations to the State Party on actions to be taken. Decision-making regarding regional or national World Heritage policies and activities and regarding requests for technical cooperation will equally be based on those reports.

The Pro-active Monitoring Strategy

- f) Parallel to inviting the States Parties to put monitoring and reporting systems in place, the Committee instructs the Secretariat to initiate regional monitoring programmes.
- g) The Secretariat establishes a workplan for worldwide and regional monitoring programmes and identifies the most appropriate partner(s) for monitoring in each of the regions, who will serve as the regional focal point for monitoring.
- h) In the context of these regional programmes, the Centre establishes contacts with States Parties, site-managers and other possible participants and defines jointly with them the most appropriate regional monitoring strategy. If necessary, regional seminars will be held to initiate the monitoring process.
- i) Upon request and in line with the decisions of the World Heritage Committee, the Centre provides assistance and external advice to the States Parties and the site-manager on management practices and collaborates in the preparation of the 5-year state of conservation reports.

6. DETAILED PROPOSALS

Nomination Form

- 6.1 Since the beginning of the process for a potential World Heritage site is the compilation of a nomination form, it seems appropriate to begin detailed proposals with that form. Annex I lists the headings under which it is proposed to group the questions on the form and the questions themselves. The aim is to produce a logical series of groupings for the questions, to seek for more precision in replies than the current form, and to give much more weight to management

considerations. The notes to the form should emphasize the need to provide specific information and to annex important documents such as management plans. In this way the question of World Heritage site nomination should from the beginning be brought close to the management process. Site managers should always help to complete it.

- 6.2 Approval is sought for the Nomination form outlined in Annex I with the understanding that explanatory notes will be prepared to accompany the nomination forms.

"Baseline" Information

- 6.3 Once completed, the nomination form should also serve as the first "monitoring report" on each World Heritage site. It should be regarded as the basic source of data. For that reason, if the Centre or the advisory bodies have significant questions to raise about a nomination, it is recommended that they are answered by way of a specific amendment or revision of the nomination form. No site should be recommended by the advisory bodies for inscription until they are satisfied with the contents of the form.
- 6.4 The Secretariat will make the necessary arrangements for the adequate storage and management of the nomination file, state of conservation reports and other relevant material, forwarding copies to the appropriate advisory bodies and making full use of the information/documentation services of WCMC/IUCN, ICOMOS and ICCROM, and others. Particularly where cultural sites are concerned, there is a need for considerable further work to develop systems for storing, handling and networking information.
- 6.5 Approval is sought for these proposals for using and storing the baseline informations.

Monitoring

- 6.6 Once a site has been inscribed, monitoring should be the responsibility of those in day-to-day charge of the site. This should be built in to the planning and budgeting process. Each year, at the start of the planning round, the information in the nomination form should be reviewed. Much of the information will not change from year to year and only significant changes need to be noted.

- 6.7 On certain matters, however, a brief written statement should be prepared each year for the use of site managers and information of the State Party.

These are:

- 6.7.1 Present state of conservation (Ref. 3d in the form)
- 6.7.2 Agreed plans relating to the property (Ref. 4f in the form)
- 6.7.3 External Factors Affecting the Site (Ref. 5a-f in the form).
- 6.8 In the light of the report described in the previous paragraph, annual budgets and plans for maintenance, conservation and management should be prepared or rolled forward.
- 6.9 Approval is sought for this formula for regular monitoring, and of the proposal that State Parties should be invited to ensure that such arrangements are in place.

Monitoring and Reporting Strategy

- 6.10 The Secretariat develops proposals for regional monitoring programmes for approval by the Committee for each of which the most appropriate partner(s) should be identified. These regional programmes should aim at establishing a communication and collaboration between the States Parties, the sites and the Secretariat, promoting regional cooperation, providing information, advice and assistance in setting up adequate management and monitoring structures, assisting in the preparation of credible five-year reports (as described in the following section) and preparing regional state of conservation reports for presentation to the World Heritage Committee.
- 6.11 Approval is sought for this regional monitoring and reporting strategy.

Regular Reporting

- 6.12 It is proposed that every five years the information in the nomination form should be carefully reviewed, and a written report should be sent by the State Party

to the World Heritage Centre. The State Party should be responsible for ensuring the reports are prepared. Site managers should also be involved in the preparation, but there should always also be an independent element, i.e. the involvement of a qualified agency or individual from outside the organization responsible for managing the site, e.g: in the context of the regional programmes that will be set up by the Secretariat (see paragraph 6.10).

- 6.13 In addition to providing up-to-date information, each report should include a schedule of recommended action to deal with problems or threats identified, together with an identified agency for taking the action and an indication as to whether the agency concerned has accepted responsibility for, and the practicality of, the action concerned. These recommendations may involve the State Party, the Bureau and the Committee, as well as agencies more directly involved. In forwarding the reports, the State Party should comment on each recommendation.
- 6.14 In cases where a request for technical assistance is made to the Centre, such a report should always be prepared and annexed to the request (Operational Guidelines, paragraph 94.(b)). In the case of sites which are already inscribed on the list, it is proposed that within five years reports based on the revised nomination form be prepared and submitted.
- 6.15 Approval is sought for these proposals for the compilation, submission and handling of regular monitoring reports.

Reactive Monitoring

- 6.16 In the case of sites which are threatened or damaged by natural disasters or unforeseen dangers, or where for whatever reason there is perceived to be a major problem or concern, it will remain necessary to undertake special missions of investigative analysis and recommendations. Such cases will continue to be handled as they arise. It is, however, to be hoped that as a system of systematic monitoring and reporting is introduced, the need for such missions will gradually decline.
- 6.17 Properties in the List of World Heritage in Danger will, in accordance with the Operational Guidelines paragraphs 75-82, be systematically monitored on a regular basis so as to assess whether additional

measures are required to conserve the property, whether the property should be deleted from the List of World Heritage in Danger if the property is no longer under threat, or whether to consider deletion of the property from the World Heritage List.

Training

- 6.18 It will be clear from what has been said above that it would be wrong to conceive of monitoring as a subject for separate training. A site which is well-managed will be well-monitored and it would be contrary to the spirit and intention of these proposals to specify training based simply around the proposals set out in this paper.
- 6.19 Two training approaches to these proposals seem to be appropriate:
- 6.19.1 Discussion of the proposals once adopted as an item on the agenda of existing meetings, seminars and training activities, both national and regional.
 - 6.19.2 Regional workshops on the management and monitoring of World Heritage sites for site managers directly involved.

Resource Requirement

- 6.20 Systematic monitoring by management staff will not impose an additional requirement on managers. Experience suggests that an independent contribution to a five-yearly monitoring report should take of the order of 10 person days (in the range 5-15 days depending on the complexity of the site). In exceptional cases and within the limits of the available resources, assistance may be provided to this effect.

7. PROPOSED ACTIONS 1994-1995

The Bureau is requested to consider the proposals as presented in this document and to formulate recommendations thereon.

The Bureau is requested to endorse the following workplan for the remainder of 1994 and for 1995:

- July-October 1994: initiate discussions of the amended proposals with World Heritage site managers and representatives of States Parties at the occasion of regional/national seminars.
- December 1994: report on the outcome of these consultations and presentation of the proposals for consideration and decision-making to the Committee at its eighteenth session. The Secretariat will attempt to present a draft text on monitoring for inclusion in the Operational Guidelines as well as a revised nomination form.
- Early 1995: inform the States Parties of the decisions of the Committee and invite them to put monitoring structures in place. Implement the decisions of the Committee.
- Bureau Meeting mid-1995: first evaluation of the application of the new monitoring procedures.

WORLD HERITAGE LIST NOMINATION FORM

To be completed on A4 paper
with maps and plans to a maximum of A3

1. Identification of the Property

- a. Country
- b. State, Province or Region
- c. Name of Property
- d. Category of Property (e.g. historic town, medieval cathedral, tropical forest)
- e. Exact location on map and indication of geographical coordinates
- f. Maps and/or plans showing boundary of area proposed for inscription and of any buffer zone
- g. Area of site proposed for inscription (ha.) and proposed buffer zone (ha.) if any (natural sites only).

2. Justification for Inscription

- a. Statement of signification
- b. Comparative analysis (including state of conservation of similar sites)
- c. Criteria under which inscription is proposed (and justification for inscription under these criteria).

3. Description

- a. Description of Property
- b. History and development
- c. Form and date of most recent records of site
- d. Present state of conservation
- e. Authenticity/integrity

4. Management

- a. Ownership
- b. Legal status
- c. Protective measures and means of implementing them
- d. Agency/agencies with management authority
- e. Level at which management is exercised (e.g., on site, regionally) and name and address of responsible person for contact purposes
- f. Agreed plans related to property (e.g., regional, local plan, conservation plan, tourism development plan)
- g. Sources and levels of finance
- h. Sources of expertise and training in conservation and management techniques
- i. Visitor facilities and statistics

- j. Site management plan and statement of objectives (copy to be annexed)
- k. Staffing levels (professional, technical, maintenance).

5. Factors Affecting the Site

- a. Development Pressures (e.g., encroachment, adaptation, agriculture)
- b. Environmental Pressures (e.g., pollution, climate change)
- c. Natural disasters and preparedness (earthquakes, floods, fires, etc.)
- d. Visitor/tourism pressures
- e. Number of inhabitants within site, buffer zone
- f. Other

6. Monitoring

- a. Key indicators for measuring state of conservation
- b. Administrative arrangements for monitoring property
- c. Results of previous reporting exercises.

7. Documentation

- a. Photographs, slides, and, where available, film
- b. Copies of site management plans and extracts of other plans relevant to the site
- c. Bibliography
- d. Address where inventory, records and archives are held.