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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL  
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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL  
AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Twenty-third session  
Marrakesh, Morocco  
29 November – 4 December 1999

**Item 13 of the Provisional Agenda: Revision of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention***

## SUMMARY

The twenty-third ordinary session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee held at UNESCO Headquarters (5-10 July 1999) examined a Working Document concerning revisions to Section I and Paragraph 65 of the *Operational Guidelines*. The Bureau subsequently made a number of specific recommendations for decision by the twenty-third session of the World Heritage Committee (see Paragraphs VIII.1 to VIII.11 of the Bureau report WHC-99/CONF.209/4).

This document includes the following sections:

- I. REVISIONS TO SECTION I OF THE *OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES*  
(see also WHC-99/CONF.209/INF.12)
- II. REVISIONS TO PARAGRAPH 65 OF THE *OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES*
- III. REVISIONS TO PARAGRAPH 68 OF THE *OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES*
- IV. REVISIONS TO PARAGRAPHS 113-116 OF THE *OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES*

**Decisions required by the Committee are indicated in bold in the boxes presented in each section of this document.**

## **I. REVISIONS TO SECTION I OF THE *OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES***

### **I.1 Deliberations by the twenty-third session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee, July 1999**

At the twenty-third session of the Bureau, the Chairperson recalled that the proposed changes to Section I of the *Operational Guidelines* derive from the Global Strategy expert meeting held in Amsterdam (The Netherlands) in March 1998 - one in a series of Global Strategy expert meetings - as well as the work on technical issues undertaken by the Consultative Body of the World Heritage Committee in 1998. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the draft revisions to Section I of the *Operational Guidelines* attempt to amalgamate the six cultural and four natural criteria into a single set of criteria and to develop conditions of integrity (incorporating the concept of authenticity) for both cultural and natural properties. The Committee at its twenty-second session did not have time to fully consider this proposal and requested that the Centre review the work together with the Advisory Bodies. This matter was discussed at the meeting of the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies (February 1999). Subsequently, IUCN, ICOMOS and ICCROM provided further reflections which were presented to the Bureau (see also Annexes I and II of WHC-99/CONF.209/INF.12).

At the Bureau session, IUCN highlighted the following points:

- (1) IUCN supported the integration of the natural and cultural criteria into a single set as a means to reflect the nature/culture continuum, favoured minimal change to the text of the criteria and believed that reference to “human interaction with the environment” should be located in one of the cultural criteria, as this would be consistent with Article I of the Convention;
- (2) A timely decision would be welcomed to achieve clarity and certainty;
- (3) Once a decision is made, user-friendly Operational Guidelines should be prepared without frequent change;
- (4) IUCN strongly supported the Global Strategy which focuses on improving the balance and representativity of the World Heritage List. However, IUCN stressed that the Global Strategy was only one element of what should be an overall strategy for World Heritage. Such a strategy would have to focus on effective management of sites already on the List and how these sites can be better used as models to demonstrate how people, nature and culture can more effectively co-exist in the next century; and
- (5) IUCN noted that the current aim of the Global Strategy is not being achieved and that each year the imbalance, between regions and natural and cultural sites is growing. Concrete actions have to be taken to accomplish a balanced World Heritage List.

ICCROM, speaking also on behalf of ICOMOS, noted that the proposed changes need careful consideration and require an analysis in the regional cultural context as was noted in the *Nara Document on Authenticity*. Both ICOMOS and ICCROM took part in the discussions in Amsterdam and noted that the merging of the criteria was only the beginning of a process. While agreeing that the momentum should not be lost, they however suggested to defer any changes until after the General Assembly of ICOMOS to allow full reflection on the matter of authenticity (the *Nara Document*).

Whereas some Delegates agreed with the position of ICCROM and ICOMOS, others urged that the matter of the integration of the criteria be considered as soon as possible.

The Observer of the United Kingdom, speaking as a frequent user of the *Operational Guidelines*, highlighted the need for an integrated approach and a thorough revision and reorganization of the *Operational Guidelines*. The United Kingdom would be happy to consider hosting an expert meeting on this matter. This offer was gratefully accepted by the Bureau. The Delegate of Benin reiterated that in this meeting, a balanced representation of cultures, regions and disciplines should be ensured. The Chairperson emphasized that within the World Heritage Fund budget, no allocation was foreseen for such a meeting.

The Director of the Centre observed that it would be difficult to organize this meeting before the end of this year. It was also suggested that such a meeting should take place after the African Expert Meeting on Authenticity and Integrity scheduled for March 2000, that was recommended by the African Cultural Landscape Meeting (see WHC-99/CONF.209/INF.13). Regional reviews of the matter of authenticity could also be envisaged prior to the meeting in the United Kingdom.

## **I.2 Recommendations by the twenty-third session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee, July 1999**

Subsequently, the twenty-third session of the Bureau decided:

- (1) To request the Centre to present a proposal for the unified set of criteria to the twenty-third session of the World Heritage Committee.
- (2) To welcome the invitation by the Observer from the United Kingdom to host an international expert meeting to consolidate the proposals to revise the Operational Guidelines. The Bureau requested the Centre to assist the authorities of the United Kingdom with the organization of such an event in early 2000, following the planned African meeting and to ensure a balanced representation from all cultures of the world,
- (3) The Bureau encouraged ICOMOS to present the *Nara Document on Authenticity*, and a summary of subsequent discussions concerning authenticity, to the ICOMOS General Assembly in October 1999 and invited ICOMOS to report to the twenty-third session of the World Heritage Committee on discussions concerning authenticity that took place at the ICOMOS General Assembly.
- (4) The Bureau recommended to the twenty-third session of the Committee that it invite ICOMOS and ICCROM to co-operate in efforts to ensure further discussion and dissemination of information on the subject of authenticity (particularly as it relates to the conservation of World Heritage properties) to cultural heritage management professionals.

### I.3 Decisions required by the twenty-third session of the World Heritage Committee

(1) Centre to present a proposal for the unified set of criteria to the twenty-third session of the World Heritage Committee

The Centre's proposal, prepared in July 1999 in full consultation with the Advisory Bodies (ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN), for the unified set of criteria is presented in Annex III of WHC-99/CONF.209/INF.12.

The integration of the natural and cultural criteria into a single set has been proposed **with minimal change to the actual text of the criteria** as a way of improving the presentation and clarity of Section I of the *Operational Guidelines* and to better reflect the nature/culture continuum expressed at many World Heritage properties around the world.

At a meeting between the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre on 29 September 1999, the following comments were made on this subject:

#### Comments from ICCROM

"... we strongly feel that while the Bureau's decision of July 1999 suggested the possibility of a "fast track" for unifying the criteria, that any alterations touching authenticity/integrity must await both the ICOMOS review of the Nara Document in Mexico in October 99, and clear indications of the full assimilation and acceptance by the conservation field of the related principles. ICCROM feels that the criteria can be modified within the Operational Guidelines without touching existing provisions for authenticity/integrity" (letter dated 28 September 1999).

#### Comments from ICOMOS

The representative of ICOMOS stated that ICOMOS requests that no changes be made to Section I of the *Operational Guidelines* prior to the expert meeting to be held in the United Kingdom.

#### Comments from IUCN

1. IUCN has provided comments on this subject many times.
2. IUCN continues to support the idea of an integrated set of criteria.
3. IUCN sees the need to "get on with it". IUCN is thus concerned about further delays in integrating the criteria, but recognizes the offer from the United Kingdom to hold an expert meeting.
4. IUCN supports the strong messages from the Bureau that the *Operational Guidelines* be user-friendly with minimal change.
5. IUCN is of the view that reference to "Human interaction with the environment" should not be included in new criterion (vii) (existing natural heritage criterion (i)) as this will create confusion. IUCN believes that it is more appropriate to include such a reference in one of the criteria relevant to cultural landscapes (i.e. existing cultural heritage criteria (iii), (iv) or (v)).

6. IUCN believes that integrity of natural sites is an issue that requires more attention, especially in the context of permissible uses at World Heritage properties.

**Decision required:**

**The Committee may wish to request the Centre to prepare revisions to Section I of the *Operational Guidelines* taking note of the outcomes of the expert meeting to be held in the United Kingdom in 2000 (see (2) below) for review by the twenty-fourth session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee in 2000.**

- (2) International expert meeting to consolidate the proposals to revise the *Operational Guidelines*, United Kingdom, 2000

In early September 1999 the World Heritage Centre met with a representative of English Heritage (United Kingdom) and ICCROM to discuss the goals, objectives, scope and expected outputs of the expert meeting to consolidate the proposals to revise the *Operational Guidelines*. The representative of English Heritage informed the Centre that UK£15,000 had been allocated for the expert meeting which is expected to take place in April 2000 in Canterbury. A detailed proposal on the contents of this meeting will be provided to the Committee members during its session in Marrakesh.

The Bureau requested that the expert meeting take place following the meeting on authenticity and integrity in the African context to be held in 2000 (see WHC-99/CONF.209/8) and that there be a balanced representation from all cultures of the world at the meeting.

**Decision required:**

**The Committee may wish to take note of the status of the preparations for the expert meeting to be held in the United Kingdom in 2000 to consolidate the proposals to revise the *Operational Guidelines*.**

**Furthermore, the Committee may wish to allocate US\$15,000 from Chapter I of the World Heritage Fund in 2000 for the organization of the expert meeting. These funds would supplement the resources already committed by the Government of the United Kingdom and would be used to ensure a balanced representation at the meeting from all regions of the world.**

- (3) Presentation by ICOMOS of the *Nara Document on Authenticity*, and a summary of subsequent discussions concerning authenticity, to the ICOMOS General Assembly

The twenty-third session of the Bureau invited ICOMOS to report to the twenty-third session of the World Heritage Committee on discussions concerning authenticity that took place at the ICOMOS General Assembly in October 1999.

**Decision required:**

**The Committee may wish to invite the representative of ICOMOS to report to the twenty-third session of the World Heritage Committee on discussions concerning authenticity that took place at the ICOMOS General Assembly in October 1999.**

(4) Authenticity

The Bureau recommended to the twenty-third session of the Committee that it invite ICOMOS and ICCROM to co-operate in efforts to ensure further discussion and dissemination of information on the subject of authenticity (particularly as it relates to the conservation of World Heritage properties) to cultural heritage management professionals.

**Decision required:**

**The Committee may wish to invite ICOMOS and ICCROM to co-operate in efforts to ensure further discussion and dissemination of information on the subject of authenticity (particularly as it relates to the conservation of World Heritage properties) to cultural heritage management professionals.**

**II. REVISIONS TO PARAGRAPH 65 OF THE *OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES*****II.1 Deliberations by the twenty-third session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee, July 1999**

At the twenty-third session of the Bureau, the Delegates discussed at length a revision to Paragraph 65 that was originally proposed by Italy to the World Heritage Committee at its twenty-second session. A number of Delegates supported the proposal that evaluations of nominations be sent to the States Parties concerned prior to the Bureau session, as this would give equal chances to all States Parties to review these in a timely fashion. Some Delegates, however feared that this could create confusion with additional information from States Parties to be evaluated just before the session, and underlined that the decision about the nominations lies with the Bureau and the Committee. To avoid this, the Observer of Belgium suggested to add an additional sentence to the text proposed.

**II.2 Recommendations by the twenty-third session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee, July 1999**

At the twenty-third session of the Bureau, a small working group led by the former Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee, Professor Francioni, was convened and proposed additional text to be included in Paragraph 65 of the *Operational Guidelines*. Subsequently, the Bureau recommended the proposed text to the twenty-third session of the World Heritage Committee for adoption (see decision required below).

### II.3 Decision required by the twenty-third session of the World Heritage Committee

**Decision required:**

The Committee may wish to add the following text to Paragraph 65 of the *Operational Guidelines*:

«During April/May

The Secretariat receives the evaluations of the Advisory Bodies and ensures that States members of the Committee, as well as the States Parties concerned, receive them six weeks in advance of the Bureau session with available documentation. All additional information or documentation shall be sent to the Secretariat as soon as possible, and depending on its nature and complexity, may be examined at the extraordinary session of the Bureau preceding the Committee session in order to give the Advisory Bodies sufficient time to carefully examine this information.»

### III. REVISIONS TO PARAGRAPH 68 OF THE *OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES*

#### III.1 Deliberations by the twenty-third session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee, July 1999

At the twenty-third session of the Bureau, the Observer of Australia suggested that the Bureau recommends a similar amendment (to that relating to nominations referred to in Section II above) concerning reactive monitoring. He proposed to insert in Paragraph 68 of the *Operational Guidelines* new text (see decision required below).

#### III.2 Recommendations by the twenty-third session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee

The Bureau decided to transmit this proposal to the World Heritage Committee at its twenty-third session for consideration.

#### III.3 Decision required by the twenty-third session of the World Heritage Committee

**Decision required:**

The Committee may wish to consider the following revision to Paragraph 68 of the *Operational Guidelines* (new text in bold):

«68. Reactive monitoring ... under threat. **The relevant section of the working document on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties shall be sent to the State Party concerned at the same time as this document is distributed to the members of the Bureau and the Committee. To this end ...**»

#### **IV. REVISIONS TO PARAGRAPHS 113 - 116 OF THE *OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES***

##### **IV.1 Deliberations by the twenty-third session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee, July 1999**

At the twenty-third session of the Bureau, general issues concerning the allocation of the limited funds for International Assistance and recommendations for the revision of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* related to the priority in granting international assistance (paragraphs 113-116) were discussed under the agenda item on International Assistance (see Paragraphs VII.1 – VII.19 of the Bureau report WHC-99/CONF.209/4).

##### **IV.2 Recommendations by the twenty-third session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee**

The Bureau therefore requested the Centre to propose specific revisions to Paragraphs 113-116 of the *Operational Guidelines* related to international assistance on the basis of the concerns expressed during the discussion by the Bureau at its twenty-third session, for decision by the Committee at its twenty-third session (see Paragraph VII.18 of the Bureau report WHC-99/CONF.209/4).

The World Heritage Centre has not prepared proposed revisions to Paragraphs 113-116 of the *Operational Guidelines* pending the outcome of the evaluation of International Assistance being performed by the UNESCO Central Evaluation Unit (see WHC-99/CONF.209/16).

##### **IV.3 Decision required by the twenty-third session of the World Heritage Committee**

**Decision required:**

**The Committee may wish to request that the Centre prepare revisions to Paragraphs 113-116 of the *Operational Guidelines* on the basis of the concerns expressed during the discussion by the Bureau at its twenty-third session and the outcomes of the evaluation of International Assistance being performed by the UNESCO Central Evaluation Unit (see WHC-99/CONF.209/16) for examination by the twenty-fourth session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee in 2000.**