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**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL
ORGANIZATION**

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

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

**Twenty-fifth session
Helsinki, Finland
11-16 December 2001**

**Item 12 of the Provisional Agenda : Progress report on the Information Management
Strategy: Statutory Documentation and Registration**

SUMMARY

This document contains a report of the Statutory Documentation and Registration activities undertaken by the World Heritage Centre in 2001.

The document also proposes orientations and a workplan to be implemented by the World Heritage Centre in 2002-2003.

Decision required: The Committee is requested to:

(i) note the report of the Statutory Documentation and Registration activities undertaken by the World Heritage Centre in 2001, and

(ii) approve the orientations and workplan to be implemented by the World Heritage Centre in 2002-2003.

INTRODUCTION

In previous years, the World Heritage Centre's work to manage and provide access to World Heritage documentation has been discussed by the World Heritage Committee as part of the agenda item on information and education activities (with funding being provided from Chapter V of the World Heritage Fund).

In 2001, a separate workplan, as an integral part of a broader World Heritage Information Management Programme (see WHC-01/CONF.208/16), has been elaborated with the aim being to reinforce the provision of service by the World Heritage Centre to the Committee and States Parties in the core areas of statutory documentation and maintenance of information concerning the World Heritage List (tentative lists, nominations etc.). Concomitantly, funding (US\$100,000 per year) is requested from Chapter I (and not Chapter V) of the World Heritage Fund – "Implementation of the Convention" (see WHC-01/CONF.208/18).

This document defines the objectives, accomplishments (2001) and workplan (2002 – 2003) for Documentation and Registration.

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure access, timely distribution and archiving of documents for World Heritage statutory meetings and other meetings to members of the World Heritage Committee and other States Parties, Advisory Bodies (ICOMOS, IUCN and ICCROM), staff of the World Heritage Centre and other partners as appropriate;
- Stimulate the establishment of sound baseline data for World Heritage sites;
- Ensure curatorial responsibility for registration and archiving of World Heritage nominations and tentative lists;
- Adapt World Heritage statutory documentation into other formats for wider distribution.

STATUTORY DOCUMENTATION

The core documentation activity has been to provide statutory meeting documents in hard copy and on line for the use of Committee members, other States Parties and the Advisory Bodies prior to the meeting at which they are to be used. The Centre also provides copies of these documents to the UNESCO Archives. Final reports of the statutory meetings are converted into a web format ("HTML") that can be searched by all Internet search engines.

Additionally, the Centre has provided special-purpose web pages for Committee activities, such as pages developed this year for the Revision to the *Operational Guidelines* (www.unesco.org/whc/opgu/) and WHIPCOE (www.unesco.org/whc/whipcoe/). In 2002, this activity will be moved to a new, more user-friendly web server. This move, along with other database and "statutory web" activities has been made possible by the establishment in 2001 of a new Internet server for World Heritage (web address: whc.unesco.org). The purchase of a high-speed, high-capacity scanner has also made possible much of the work outlined in the "data capture initiative" presented to the twenty-fourth session of the Committee in Cairns, Australia (WHC-2000/CONF.204/14).

Data Capture Initiative

In 2001 the World Heritage Centre completed work on a major initiative to make all working documents of all previous statutory meetings, 1977-2001 publically available on a web site

database : whc.unesco.org/req1.asp. The database is searchable by document number, words in the French or English title, year, session, and a small group of subject categories. In 2002 the Centre will add a second public database, containing limited data on all inscribed World Heritage sites, with links to evaluations by Advisory Bodies. Users with a password will also have access to the database of all nominations proposed since 1978. State of Conservation reports presented to the Committee, as well as decisions by the Committee, will be added in 2002-2003.

Communication

Two new electronic initiatives were begun in 2001 to improve communications with States Parties and Committee members. In September 2001, the complete record of all Circular Letters sent by the Centre since its creation in 1992 was put on the web at whc.unesco.org/circs/.

In October 2001 two new mailing lists for official States Parties delegations (wh-states@unesco.org) and wh-committee@unesco.org for Committee members (a subset of the larger wh-states mailing list) were announced (see Circular Letter CL/WHC.12/01). All addresses of delegations attending the twenty-fifth session of the Committee in Helsinki will be added to the [wh-states](mailto:wh-states@unesco.org) mailing list, and, as appropriate, to the [wh-committee](mailto:wh-committee@unesco.org) mailing list. Both lists are "read only" lists for information concerning document access, changes to meeting times, and other timely announcements. These mailing lists will not replace the traditional means of postal distribution of this information. For information about these mailing lists, write to wh-register@unesco.org.

In 2002 and 2003, it is proposed that these and other ways to improve communication with the members of the Committee and other States Parties are given priority by the World Heritage Centre.

Summary of Accomplishments in 2001

- All statutory meeting documents, 1977-2001, scanned and placed online
- Circular letters placed online
- Web pages (in English and French) established for Revision to *Operational Guidelines* and WHIPCOE
- Nomination dossiers of deferred and referred sites scanned, to be ultimately linked to WHL (World Heritage List) database.
- New electronic mailing lists established for States Parties and Committee members
- Final reports of Committee and Bureau made available in HTML format on public web site (continuing activity)
- 2001 statutory meeting documents provided on secure FTP site for access by Committee members (continuing activity from previous years)
- Proposed new text on nomination process and modifications to nomination format for revision to *Operational Guidelines*

Proposed Activities for 2002-2003

- 2002 statutory meeting documents to be placed on access-restricted, user-friendly web site on new server (continuing activity from previous years)
- 2001 meeting documents to be added to publicly accessible web database
- Final reports of Committee and Bureau made available in web-based format on public web site (continuing activity)
- All remaining Advisory Body evaluations (for sites not inscribed, deferred or referred) to be scanned

- State of Conservation Reports scanned and added to online database, for consultation by Committee members, Advisory Bodies and Centre staff

REGISTRATION

Registration consists of recording and tracking the submissions both of nominations to the World Heritage List and of additions and modifications to the Tentative Lists submitted by States Parties. This work includes the digitization of nomination dossiers, as PDF files. The work of digitizing older nominations was completed in 1998. Since then, the nomination dossiers of sites inscribed on the World Heritage List by the Committee each year, has consumed substantial amounts of time, as dossiers have increased in length and complexity. To streamline this work in 2001, a high-speed, high-capacity scanner was purchased.

During 2001 and specifically during the October meeting of the Drafting Group on the Revision of the *Operational Guidelines*, the Centre took the opportunity to make suggestions to improve both the nomination process and the format of nominations. Further information about these discussions may be found in working document WHC-01/CONF.208/6. These changes, if adopted, will help to standardize the way nominations are received.

Much of the Centre's core statutory data sets consist of information about World Heritage sites, generated primarily from nomination dossiers. This information in principle should provide the **baseline data**, against which a site can be measured ("benchmarked") over time. Until recently, this information, provided in an era when less attention was paid to the detail necessary to protect and manage sites, has been insufficient. The Centre is currently using several different methods to improve the baseline data on sites, through reactive monitoring reports, and the results from the periodic reporting exercise. In order to ensure that future nominations contain the necessary baseline information, a revised nomination process and modified nomination format has been developed and proposed for inclusion in the revised *Operational Guidelines*.

In 2002, using the new information architecture now being put in place on the Centre's server, it will be possible for Centre staff, Advisory Bodies and the States Parties concerned to track the progress of new nominations to the World Heritage List, thus helping to assure complete nomination dossiers.

Summary of Accomplishments in 2001

- Registration of nominations received for review by the Committee in 2004 as well as continuing registration of supplementary material for nominations pending for 2001, 2002, and 2003 (continuing activity).
- Registration of Tentative List submissions (continuing activity).
- Scanning of nominations inscribed on the World Heritage List by the 24th session of the World Heritage Committee (Cairns, 2001)

Proposed Activities for 2002-2003

- Registration of nominations received for review by the Committee in 2004 and 2005, as well as continuing registration of supplementary material for nominations pending for 2002 - 2005 (continuing activity)
- Using the new Information Management architecture (see description in WHC-01/CONF.208/16), provide restricted access to World Heritage List database and state of conservation decisions by the Committee allowing tracking of nominations.
- Registration of Tentative List submissions (continuing activity)

- Preparation of new CD-ROM set of nomination dossiers (1978-2000) for Advisory Bodies and relevant States Parties with approval by Committee
- Scanning of Nominations inscribed on the World Heritage List by the 25th session (Helsinki, 2001), 26th session (Budapest, 2002) and 27th session (2003) of the World Heritage Committee.