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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-seventh session
Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, Room XII
30 June – 5 July 2003

**Item 20A of the Provisional Agenda: Tools for the implementation of the 2002
World Heritage Strategic Objectives. Principles/Guidelines¹ for World Heritage**

**Concept paper on the future development of an international statement or
charter of conservation principles**

SUMMARY

This Concept Paper sets out the proposed parameters and methodology for the preparation of an international statement or charter of principles on conservation.

DRAFT DECISION

27 COM 20A

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. Notes the concept paper on the future development of an international statement or charter of conservation principles presented in document WHC-03/27.COM/20A; and,*
- 2. Requests the World Heritage Centre to continue developing the concept of an international statement or charter of principles on conservation in close consultation with the Advisory Bodies for presentation to the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee in 2004.*

¹ As amended by the Secretariat

I. BACKGROUND - THE ORIGIN OF THE IDEA

1. In her opening remarks at the **5th extraordinary session of the World Heritage Committee (Paris, 1 November 2001)**, Dr Christina Cameron (Canada) suggested the development of principles for World Heritage conservation or a World Heritage Charter for conservation. She commented that,

" ... the new Committee would make an important contribution to guide the implementation of the Convention throughout the world by developing principles for World Heritage conservation or a World Heritage Charter for conservation. Your deliberations will make an important contribution to World Heritage conservation in all regions of the world."

2. The idea was developed further and presented to the **25th session of the World Heritage Committee (Helsinki, December 2001)** in the context of a report on reform issues and a proposal for "The Way Forward" to include Principles, Programmes and Partnerships. The proposal made in Helsinki is annexed as Annex I to this Concept Paper.

3. During the discussion by the 25th session of the Committee, IUCN stated that:

" ... it is very important to clarify the objectives and target audience, particularly to ensure that it does not duplicate other exercises such as the process for revising the *Operational Guidelines*. IUCN considered that it would help to have a clear hierarchy in mind when considering Principles:

<u>First:</u>	A brief statement of heritage principles
<u>Second:</u>	<i>The Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention</i>
<u>Third:</u>	Detailed technical guidance."

4. The 25th session of the Committee requested the World Heritage Centre to:

" ... indicate the nature of the "Principles" document, its target and the time frame needed to develop and finalize it ..."

5. In April 2002, a progress report was presented to the 26th session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee (see WHC-02/CONF.201/8, pages 7 - 9 and WHC-02/CONF.202/2, paragraphs IX.4 - IX.8). The Bureau requested the Centre, working in co-operation with the Advisory Bodies, to refine the proposal on "Principles" and to develop a calendar and programme of work (IX.8).

II. PREPARATION OF THIS CONCEPT PAPER AND DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE AND THE ADVISORY BODIES

6. This concept paper was initially prepared in March 2003 for discussion with the Advisory Bodies at a meeting convened at the World Heritage Centre in April 2003.

7. At the meeting with the Advisory Bodies the following comments were made:
- the *World Heritage Convention* already includes a statement of principles in its Preamble;
 - the concept of an international charter goes beyond the mandate of the World Heritage Committee;
 - it was not clear "why" a statement of principles was required and what would be the "added value" in relation to the ensemble of existing charters or statements; and
 - intergovernmental agreement and adoption of an international charter would be very time-consuming and would be a drain on limited resources.
8. On the other hand, it was suggested that it might be beneficial for there to be a renewed statement of conservation principles for cultural and natural heritage given that the *World Heritage Convention* is now 30 years "old", that a lot of the context for conservation work has changed (with a greater emphasis on conservation as part of sustainable futures in the context of development) and a number of new international heritage conservation instruments have (UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage) or are being developed (Preliminary Draft Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage). A statement of conservation principles could serve as an "umbrella" statement for all of UNESCO's existing and new work to protect cultural and natural heritage.
9. Taking note of these comments and reservations, and being aware of the need to develop the proposal more fully, the concept paper is presented for the information of the Committee. It is considered that more thought and discussion is required on this subject prior to the development of a revised concept and proposal.

III. OBJECTIVE

10. Following the 30 years of experience in the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*, the objective is to produce a statement of professional best practice principles for the cycle of identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage.

Why an international statement or charter of principles on conservation?

Linking nature and culture

11. The *World Heritage Convention* is the only heritage conservation instrument that brings together conservation of the cultural and natural heritage. As a result there have been opportunities for more holistic approaches to site management, particularly with regard to the management of sites in the context of their physical environment and for linkages between protection of cultural and natural heritage. This synergy embodied within one Convention, has also led to developments in the concept of heritage (e.g. the recognition of World Heritage cultural landscapes). This is a unique

foundation on which to build an international statement or charter on conservation for both cultural and natural heritage.

A logical cycle of conservation

12. Furthermore, the *World Heritage Convention* is unique as an international instrument in that it clearly expresses a logical conservation cycle. This cycle is described in the Convention itself as involving "identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations" (Article 4) and is explained in greater detail in the draft revised *Operational Guidelines*. Just as we have seen with the success of the Burra Charter in Australia at a national level (and now translated for use in other countries, for example *Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China* and the *ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value* and for natural heritage in the *Australian Natural Heritage Charter*), it is the conservation process and cycle that has made the *World Heritage Convention* such an effective instrument for conservation.

Timeliness of the proposal to develop an international statement or charter of conservation principles

13. The proposal to develop an international statement or charter of conservation principles is timely given that other bodies are looking at integrated processes of heritage conservation (e.g. Council of Europe Draft European Charter on general principles for protection of the environment and sustainable development discussed at the Conference on Environment, Sustainable Development and Ethics, 14-15 April 2003 - Palais de l'Europe, - Strasbourg) and when UNESCO is looking to reinforce its work for the protection of cultural heritage. Production of this statement at this time would ensure that these principles of conservation based on best practice from the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*, would lead and influence other initiatives in this field for cultural and natural heritage.

14. Furthermore, the *World Heritage Convention* is now 30 years old. The context in which conservation is now taking place has changed with increasing global change - globalisation, environmental and climatic change. The *World Heritage Convention* is now part of a series of international cultural and environmental instruments including the Convention of Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (the Ramsar Convention), the Convention on Biological Diversity, CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (also known as CMS or the Bonn Convention).

15. There is also a new policy context following Rio (1992), Johannesburg (2002) and the United Nations Millenium Development Goals. Lastly, for World Heritage, the policy context has also changed following the development of a Global Strategy for a Credible, Balanced and Representative World Heritage List (1992), Periodic Reporting on the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* (1998), the Global Training Strategy (2001), etc. culminating in 2002 in the World Heritage Committee adopting Strategic Objectives :

1. Strengthen the Credibility of the World Heritage List;
2. Ensure the effective Conservation of World Heritage properties;
3. Promote the development of effective Capacity Building in States Parties;
4. Increase public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage through Communication.

IV. PROPOSED CONTENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL STATEMENT OR CHARTER OF CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES

16. The statement will include a clear distillation and update of principles already presented in existing charters and derived from best practice.

17. The statement should include coverage of the following:

- An holistic approach to the conservation of the diversity of cultural and natural heritage (tangible and intangible)
- The evolving concept of heritage
- A cyclical process of conservation (identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations)
- Giving heritage a function in the life of the community and integrating its protection into comprehensive planning programmes (Article 5 of the *World Heritage Convention*) in the context of social and economic development
- Sustainable use of heritage
- Consultation of the full range of stakeholders at all stages of the conservation cycle
- International co-operation to foster best practice and to develop capacity globally
- Common concern and responsibility of the international community for protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage
- The duty of the international community as a whole to co-operate to protect World Heritage

V. PROPOSED TARGET AUDIENCE

18. For it to be effective, the proposed international statement or charter of conservation principles, must reach a universal audience - intergovernmental, non-governmental, civil society, etc.

VI. PROCESS AND TIMEFRAME FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL STATEMENT OR CHARTER OF CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES

19. With reference to the comment made by IUCN at the 25th session of the Committee (see paragraph 3 above), it is now clear that:

June/July 2003	At its 27th session the Committee will examine and adopt revised <i>Operational Guidelines</i> .
2004	The 6th extraordinary session of the World Heritage Committee, requested "the World Heritage Centre, working in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies, to present to the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee in 2004 a budgeted proposal for the preparation of <u>guidance documents for the protection of World Heritage properties that would supplement the <i>Operational Guidelines</i></u> . These could include detailed guidance on the nomination and management of certain types of World Heritage properties, case studies of best practices, or guidance on other particular related issues" (Decision 6 EXT.COM 5.2 , paragraph 3).
In future years	Statement of conservation principles

(Annex I of WHC-01/CONF.208/5 presented to the 25th session of the World Heritage Committee
(Helsinki, December 2001))

WORLD HERITAGE CONSERVATION GUIDELINES

Principles for conservation of World Heritage Properties

The most commonly asked question from managers of newly-designated World Heritage property is the following:

“Now that our site has been designated as World Heritage, what special measures does the World Heritage Committee expect us to take to protect the site for all humanity?”

The *World Heritage Convention* is an international agreement dedicated to the **protection** of World Heritage properties. At the outset, implementation of the *Convention* naturally focussed on the identification of outstanding cultural and natural heritage places, to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. This identification activity has fostered significant international reflection on criteria for designation to the World Heritage List and a thematic framework to encourage nomination of properties from under and non-represented categories of heritage and in under-represented regions, now known as the World Heritage Global Strategy.

As the World Heritage movement matures, it is natural to shift focus from designation to on-going management of properties. Inscription and designation as World Heritage occurs at one specific point in time; protection is a continuous activity that precedes and follows designation. As part of the reform agenda for World Heritage, work is underway to revise the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. One of the revisions calls for an explicit statement of Outstanding Universal Values for each World Heritage property. This statement of values is intended to serve as the framework to support the site management processes. What the World Heritage movement still needs is a statement of principles that will guide the conservation activities undertaken to protect sites of Outstanding Universal Value.

Many international charters and documents exist, containing principles, standards and guidelines for the protection of various aspects of natural and cultural heritage. ICOMOS, ICCROM, IUCN and other professional organizations have adopted such charters over the years to guide heritage management activities. These include:

International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites
(The Venice Charter) (ICOMOS)

1982 The Florence Charter (Historic Gardens and Landscapes) (ICOMOS)

1987 Charter on the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas (ICOMOS)

1990 Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage
(ICOMOS)

- 1996 Charter for the Protection and Management of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (ICOMOS)
- 1999 International Charter on Cultural Tourism (ICOMOS)
- 1999 Principles for the Preservation of Historic Timber Structures (ICOMOS)
- 1999 Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage (ICOMOS)
- Guidelines on Management Planning for Ramsar Sites and Other Wetlands (RAMSAR)

Guidelines for Protected Area Managers (IUCN)

- 1999 Guidelines for Marine Protected Areas (IUCN)

In addition, many States Parties have developed national standards and practices. Dating from different time periods and prepared from specific viewpoints, this plethora of charters and documents contain overlaps, duplications, contradictions and internal inconsistencies. As such, no single standard-setting instrument exists that would help States Parties to answer questions about special protection measures for World Heritage properties.

The creation of a set of conservation principles – perhaps called the World Heritage Conservation Charter or Guidelines – would be based on best practices in existing charters and national policies. Such a Charter or Guidelines would help to clarify the World Heritage Committee's expectations for the ongoing management of World Heritage Sites and provide guidance to site managers who are entrusted with the management of these valued places.

Such a statement of best practice could be of immense importance not just for World Heritage properties but for holistic approaches to conservation generally.