

Distribution limited

WHC-06/30.COM/8D
Paris, 3 July 2006
Original: English/French

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Thirtieth Session

Vilnius, Lithuania
9-16 July 2006

Item 8 of the Provisional Agenda: Establishment of the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger

8D Revision of Criteria of Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List according to the *Operational Guidelines* (2005)

SUMMARY

At its Seventh Extraordinary Session (UNESCO, 2004) the Committee approved a revision to the *Operational Guidelines*, including revised criteria numbering for properties inscribed for natural values (Decision **7 EXT.COM 4A**). In the revised *Guidelines*, natural criteria were renumbered as (vii)-(x) as part of a unified group of 10 natural and cultural criteria. As the Committee did not plan for two different sets of criteria, to be applied before and after 2005, the revised criteria numbering will be applied to all properties, as outlined in this document.

Prior to the revision of the numbering, the Committee is requested to approve a "housekeeping measure", to correct the number of the natural criterion applied to geological properties before 1994. A circular letter on this subject was sent to States Parties concerned in April 2006 for their agreement and is discussed in this document.

The Committee is asked to adopt two draft decisions:

Draft Decision : 30 COM 8D.1, see point II

Draft Decision : 30 COM 8D.2, see point IV

I Change of criteria numbering for Natural and Mixed properties inscribed for geological values before 1994

1. At its 16th session (Santa Fe, 1992), the World Heritage Committee adopted a revision to the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* which included a redefinition of natural criteria (i) and (ii).¹ Based on the recommendations of IUCN, expert groups, and the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee, the Committee decided to separate geological processes from biological evolution as it was then expressed in natural criterion (ii). With the entry into force of these revised *Guidelines* in 1994, the phrase "significant ongoing geological processes" moved from Natural criterion (ii) to Natural criterion (i).

2. The following table makes clear the difference between the Natural criteria applied before and after this change:

<u>Definition of Natural criteria, March 1992</u>	<u>Definition of Natural criteria, February 1994</u>
<p>36. A natural heritage property - as defined above - which is submitted for inclusion in the World Heritage List will be considered to be of outstanding universal value for the purposes of the convention when the Committee finds that it meets one or more of the following criteria and fulfills the conditions of integrity set out below. Sites nominated should therefore :</p> <p>(a) (i) be outstanding examples representing the <u>major stages of the earth's evolutionary history</u>; or</p> <p>(ii) be outstanding examples representing <u>significant ongoing geological processes</u>, biological evolution and man's interaction with his natural environment; as distinct from the periods of the earth's development, this focuses upon ongoing processes in the development of communities of plants and animals, landforms and marine areas and fresh water bodies; or</p> <p>(iii) contain <u>superlative natural phenomena, formations or features</u>, for instance, outstanding examples of the most important ecosystems, areas of exceptional natural beauty or exceptional combinations of natural and cultural elements; or</p> <p>(iv) contain <u>the most important and significant natural habitats where threatened species of animals or plants of outstanding universal value</u> from the point of view of science or conservation still survive.</p>	<p>44. A natural heritage property - as defined above - which is submitted for inclusion in the World Heritage List will be considered to be of outstanding universal value for the purposes of the Convention when the Committee finds that it meets one or more of the following criteria and fulfills the conditions of integrity set out below. Sites nominated should therefore:</p> <p>(a) (i) be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, <u>significant on-going geological processes</u> in the development of land forms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features; or</p> <p>(ii) be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals; or</p> <p>(iii) contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance; or</p> <p>(iv) contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation;</p>

3. No change was made at the time to the criteria numbering of properties already inscribed on the List. Thus properties inscribed before 1994 for geological values were no longer represented by the appropriate criterion.

4. Sixty-five properties were inscribed under Natural criterion (ii) before 1994. Of these, according to a recent desk study² by the World Heritage Centre, reviewed by IUCN, 19 properties were inscribed for geological values.

¹ The revision to the natural heritage criteria was a result of discussions between 1988 and 1991, recalled in working document WHC-92/CONF.002/10 (1992) (see <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/1992/whc-92-conf002-10e.pdf>). At its 15th session in 1991, the Bureau recommended that "individual criteria ... separately represent geological, biological, ecological and aesthetic criteria".

² This desk study was based on IUCN evaluations, decisions of the World Heritage Committee, and other evidence considered by the Committee at the time of inscription.

5. At its Seventh Extraordinary Session (Paris, December 2004) the Committee approved a revision to the *Operational Guidelines*, including revised criteria numbering for properties inscribed for natural values (Decision 7 EXT.COM 4A). In the revised *Guidelines*, natural criteria have been renumbered as (vii)-(x) as part of a unified group of 10 natural and cultural criteria.

6. The new criteria numbering will be applied to all World Heritage properties, whether or not properties were inscribed before or after the new *Guidelines* entered into force.³

7. IUCN and the World Heritage Centre believe that, in order to avoid confusion and to ensure that the World Heritage values are clearly and appropriately reflected in the management of properties, prior to the implementation of the revised criteria in print and on the web, the anomaly of the 19 properties inscribed for geological criteria before 1994 should be corrected.

8. Furthermore, this change has already been requested by several States Parties.

9. A list of the 19 properties that would be affected by this change is attached as Annex I. This proposal is not a reassessment of the values for which the property was inscribed. The status of the property on the World Heritage List is unchanged by this action. Properties inscribed for geological values will remain inscribed for geological values: only the number of the criterion attached to this value will change.

10. A Circular Letter on this subject (No. 4 of 2006) dated 5 April 2006⁴ was sent to the 16 States Parties concerned for comment and approval. As of the publication of this working document, all States Parties have now responded. Following the receipt of a letter from one State Party and a further review by IUCN, a change was made to one of the properties in the tables.

11. Furthermore, Australia has requested additional time to allow the authorities to consult its stakeholders at the two World Heritage properties affected. As the acceptance of the revised Statements of Significance by Canada and the United States of America (see Document WHC-06/30.COM/11A.1) is dependent on the approval of the criteria changes proposed in the decision below (**Decision 30 COM 8D.1**), it is proposed that the change of criteria numbering for the two Australian properties for which full agreement has not yet been reached be postponed. Consequently, two sites have been removed from the tables below.

II. Draft Decision : 30 COM 8D.1

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC-06/30.COM/8D,*
2. *Noting the change to criteria numbering of properties inscribed for geological values by its 16th session (Santa Fe, 1992);*
3. *Further noting the agreement of the concerned States Parties to the proposed changes as outlined in Tables 1, 2 and 3 of Annex I of Document WHC-06/30.COM/8D;*
4. *Decides to approve the criteria numbering as presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3 of Annex I of Document WHC-06/30.COM/8D.1.*

³ The *Operational Guidelines* did not envisage two separate sets of criteria, or two separate definitions of criteria, which would be necessary if the revised criteria were only to be applied to properties inscribed after the revised *Guidelines* entered into force. Consequently the revised criteria numbering will be applied to all properties.

⁴ Available on the web at <http://whc.unesco.org/circs/circ06-04e.pdf>

The three tables below, assembled with the assistance and agreement of IUCN, list in date order the different types of changes that will need to be made to the 19 sites inscribed before 1994 for geological values:

Table 1. Properties for which natural criterion (i) should be added;

Table 2. Properties for which natural criterion (ii) should be replaced with natural criterion (i); and

Table 3. Properties for which natural criterion (ii) should be deleted.

The three tables show the existing criteria, the proposed change, and the criteria as interpreted under the revised *Operational Guidelines* (2005).

Table 1. 4 Properties inscribed for both geological and ecological values under natural criterion N (ii). Natural criterion (i) is proposed to be added

Date Inscribed	State Party	World Heritage property	Original criteria	Proposed revised criteria (2002)	Unified criteria (2005)
1979	United Republic of Tanzania	Ngorongoro Conservation Area	N (ii) (iii) (iv)	N (i) (ii) (iii) (iv)	(vii) (viii) (ix) (x)
1979-1992-1994	Canada/ United States of America	Kluane/Wrangell-St. Elias/Glacier Bay/Tatshenshini-Alsek	N (ii) (iii) (iv)	N (i) (ii) (iii) (iv)	(vii) (viii) (ix) (x)
1979-2000	Croatia	Plitvice Lakes National Park	N (ii) (iii)	N (i) (ii) (iii)	(vii) (viii) (ix)
1983	Ecuador	Sangay National Park	N (ii) (iii) (iv)	N (i) (ii) (iii) (iv)	(vii) (viii) (ix) (x)

Table 2: 11 Properties inscribed only for geological values under natural criterion N (ii) before 1994. It is proposed to replace criterion N (ii) with criterion N (i)

Date Inscribed	State Party	World Heritage property	Original criteria	Proposed revised criteria (2002)	Unified criteria (2005)
1978	Canada	Nahanni National Park	N (ii) (iii)	N (i) (iii)	(vii) (viii)
1979	Democratic Rep. of the Congo	Virunga National Park	N (ii) (iii) (iv)	N (i) (iii) (iv)	(vii) (viii) (x)
1980-2005	Serbia and Montenegro	Durmitor National Park	N (ii) (iii) (iv)	N (i) (iii) (iv)	(vii) (viii) (x)
1981	Argentina	Los Glaciares	N (ii) (iii)	N (i) (iii)	(vii) (viii)
1982	Algeria	Tassili n'Ajjer	N (ii) (iii) C (i) (iii)	N (i) (iii) C (i) (iii)	(i) (iii) (vii) (viii)
1983	France	Cape Girolata, Cape Porto, Scandola Nature Reserve and the Piana Calanches in Corsica	N (ii) (iii) (iv)	N (i) (iii) (iv)	(vii) (viii) (x)
1985	Peru	Huascarán National Park	N (ii) (iii)	N (i) (iii)	(vii) (viii)
1986	Slovenia	Skocjan Caves	N (ii) (iii)	N (i) (iii)	(vii) (viii)
1987	United States of America	Hawaii Volcanoes National Park	N (ii)	N (i)	(viii)
1989	Zambia/Zimbabwe	Mosi-oa-Tunya / Victoria Falls	N (ii) (iii)	N (i) (iii)	(vii) (viii)
1990-1993	New Zealand	Tongariro National Park	N (ii) (iii) C (vi)	N (i) (iii) C (vi)	(vi) (vii) (viii)

Table 3: Properties already inscribed under natural criterion (i) as an example of major stages of the earth's evolutionary history and for geological values only under natural criterion (ii). *It is proposed to delete criterion N (ii).*

Date Inscribed	State Party	World Heritage property	Original criteria	Proposed revised criteria (2002)	Unified criteria (2005)
1984-1990	Canada	Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks	N (i) (ii) (iii)	N (i) (iii)	(vii) (viii)
1984	United States of America	Yosemite National Park	N (i) (ii) (iii)	N (i) (iii)	(vii) (viii)

Table 4. Properties inscribed under natural criteria (ii) for which the State Party has requested further time to consult the stakeholders concerned. *No change in criteria numbering is requested of the Committee at this time.*

Date Inscribed	State Party	World Heritage property	Original criteria	Proposed revised criteria (2002)	Unified criteria (2005)
1987-1994	Australia	Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park	N (ii) (iii) C (v) (vi)		(v) (vi) (vii) (ix)
1992	Australia	Fraser Island	N (ii) (iii)		(vii) (ix)

III Renumbering of criteria of Natural World Heritage properties, following Decision 7 EXT.COM 4A, approving the revision of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, with effect from 1 February 2005.

Background

12. The proposal to merge or unify the cultural and natural criteria has been discussed almost continuously since 1996. In all discussions, implicit has been the assumption that any decision to merge the criteria apply to all properties on the World Heritage List, and not only to properties inscribed after a certain date.

13. One of the earliest expert meetings on this subject, was held in March 1996, at the invitation of the French Ministry for the Environment, at the Parc National de la Vanoise (France) to discuss the *Evaluation of general principles and criteria for nominations of natural World Heritage sites*.⁵ The experts recommended that the Committee consider developing "one set of criteria, incorporating existing natural and cultural heritage criteria and promoting a unified identity for all World Heritage sites as the outstanding heritage of humankind."⁶

14. Following the report of this meeting, the Committee at its 20th session in December 1996 decided that a joint meeting of cultural and natural heritage experts should discuss, *inter alia*, the question of a unified set of criteria. Following this decision, a World Heritage Global Strategy Natural and Cultural Heritage Expert Meeting at held at Amsterdam, 25 to 29 March 1998.⁷ The Expert of France informed the participants that the unification of the criteria represented

the first step in developing a comprehensive World Heritage Global Strategy for cultural and natural heritage and recognizing the continuum and complexity of interactions between culture and nature for World Heritage. He recalled that at Vanoise, it was thought that the four categories of World Heritage (cultural, natural, mixed, cultural landscapes) were dividing the definition of World Heritage. He commented that the suggested ensemble of the natural and cultural heritage criteria could provide a single identity for all World Heritage sites. He underlined that this suggestion had been intended to ensure that both IUCN and ICOMOS could use the same criteria for evaluation. With reference to the application of the natural criteria he referred to the need for a continuous rather than a 'snapshot approach'.⁸

15. The following year at its 21st session (Marrakesh, 1999), the Committee requested that the Expert Meeting on the Revision of the *Operational Guidelines* review the subject of a unified set of criteria. This meeting (Canterbury, UK, 10-14 April 2000) also gave a favourable opinion to the principle of a unified set of criteria for the World Heritage List.⁹

16. The revised *Operational Guidelines*, approved by the Committee at its 7th Extraordinary Session (UNESCO, 2004), thus followed the recommendations of a long series of expert meetings. It entered into

⁵ Report of the Expert Meeting on *Evaluation of general principles and criteria for nominations of natural World Heritage sites* (Parc national de la Vanoise, France, 22-24 mars 1996), WHC-96/CONF.201/INF.8. Available on the web at <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/1996/whc-96-conf202-inf9e.pdf>.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4

⁷ Report of the World Heritage Global Strategy Natural and Cultural Heritage Expert Meeting, 25 to 29 March 1998, Theatre Institute, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. WHC-98/CONF.203/INF.7. <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/1998/whc-98-conf203-inf7e.pdf>

⁸ *Ibid.*, para 2.2,

⁹ Report of the International Expert Meeting on the Revision of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (Canterbury, UK, 10-14 April 2000). WHC-2000/CONF.202/9. <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2000/whc-00-conf202-9e.pdf>

force, in all aspects on 2 February 2005, on the understanding that the provisions on the format of nominations will apply to nominations to be examined starting from 2007.¹⁰

IV. Draft Decision : 30 COM 8D.2

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC-06/30.COM/8D.1,*
2. *Recalling its decision to unify into one set of criteria the six cultural and four natural criteria in paragraph 77 of the Operational Guidelines (2005);*
3. *Noting the changes already made to the numbering of geological criteria by its decision 30 COM 8D.1;*
4. *Requests the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies to include the revised criteria numbering in its publications.*

¹⁰ Decision 7 EXT.COM 4A