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# World Heritage

# 16 GA

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## UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

### SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Paris, UNESCO Headquarters  
24 – 25 October 2007

**Item 11 of the Provisional Agenda: Report on the development of a revised  
Recommendation on the conservation of Historic Urban Landscapes**

***Report on the development of a revised Recommendation on the  
conservation of Historic Urban Landscapes***

#### SUMMARY

At its 29th session the World Heritage Committee recommended “that the General Conference of UNESCO adopt a new Recommendation to complement and update the existing ones on the subject of conservation of historic urban landscapes, with special reference to the need to link contemporary architecture to the urban historic context (Decision **29 COM 5D**).

Following the Committee’s decision, the 15th *General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention* adopted the “Declaration on the conservation of Historic Urban Landscapes” (HUL) in October 2005 (Resolution **15 GA 7**).

This document has been prepared to inform the General Assembly on progress made in the development of a revised UNESCO Recommendation on the conservation of historic urban landscapes.

**Draft Resolution: 16 GA 11, see point IV**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. A corpus of standard setting documents<sup>1</sup>, including charters and recommendations, exists on the subject of historic cities and their broader setting, which have been useful to guide policies and practices worldwide, with good results. However, conditions have changed and historic cities are now subject to development pressures and challenges that were not fully understood at the time of adoption of the last UNESCO Recommendation on urban sites more than thirty years ago, in 1976 (UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas).
2. With the current size and foreseen increase of the world's population living in urban areas, supplemented by insufficient policies to recognize and facilitate sustainable use of heritage assets, pressures on historic cities will continue to rise, making historic urban landscape conservation one of the most daunting tasks of our time. As a direct consequence, the time allocated at World Heritage Committee sessions to debating the impact of contemporary development in or adjacent to World Heritage designated cities has increased dramatically since the 1990s, with issues ranging from traffic and tourism pressures, to high-rise constructions and inner city functional changes.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

3. During its 27th session (UNESCO, 2003), the World Heritage Committee called for the organization of a symposium to discuss how to properly regulate the needs for modernization of historic urban environments, while at the same time preserving the values embedded in inherited townscapes, in particular of cities inscribed on the World Heritage List. In response, the World Heritage Centre in cooperation with ICOMOS and the City of Vienna organized the international conference 'World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture – Managing the Historic Urban Landscape' which took place in Vienna, Austria, from 12 to 14 May 2005. At this conference a first outline of principles and guidelines was adopted, the so-called "Vienna Memorandum", which promoted an integrated approach to contemporary architecture, urban development and integrity of the inherited landscape.
4. The World Heritage Committee at its 29th session (Durban, 2005) welcomed this document as a necessary additional tool for discussing and assessing contemporary architectural interventions, including high-rise constructions, in World Heritage cities and their wider setting. The World Heritage Committee furthermore recommended "that the General Conference of UNESCO adopt a new Recommendation to complement and update the existing ones on the subject of conservation of historic urban landscapes, with special reference to the need to link contemporary architecture to the urban historic context" (Decision **29 COM 5D**).

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<sup>1</sup> In particular the 1964 "International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites" (Venice Charter), the 1968 "UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Preservation of Cultural Property endangered by Public or Private works", the 1976 "UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas", the 1982 ICOMOS-IFLA "International Charter for Historic Gardens" (Florence Charter), the 1987 ICOMOS "Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas" (Washington Charter), the 1994 Nara Document on Authenticity, as well as the HABITAT II Conference and Agenda 21, which was ratified by Member States in Istanbul (Turkey) in June 1996.

5. Following the Committee's decision, the Vienna Memorandum formed the basis for the "Declaration on the Conservation of Historic Urban Landscapes" (HUL) which was adopted by the 15th *General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention* (UNESCO, 2005) (Resolution **15 GA 7**).
6. Subsequently, the World Heritage Centre has started a process of reviewing the existing standard-setting documents, in particular the 'UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas' (Nairobi, 26 November 1976). To determine if there was a need for an update that included the notion of historic urban landscape, the World Heritage Centre organized a one-day Expert Planning Meeting at UNESCO Headquarters, on 25 September 2006, to facilitate this evaluation and to determine a plan of action for follow-up activities should a new standard-setting document be required. The Expert Group consisted of 15 international experts from different geo-cultural regions, professional backgrounds, and international organizations and research institutions.
7. The main evaluations coming out of this meeting included key issues that have profoundly changed the discipline and practice of urban heritage conservation, among which:
  - The importance of landscape, as a stratification of previous and current urban dynamics, with an interplay between the natural and built environment (previously handled by 'zoning');
  - The role of contemporary architecture (previously "contextualization of new buildings");
  - The economics and changing role of cities, with an emphasis on the non-local processes such as tourism and urban development, with outside actors of change.
8. New dynamics in architecture and urban development, including global/non-local processes, have brought about new challenges to urban heritage conservation and management, as specially experienced by the World Heritage Committee at its annual sessions, which require new approaches and critical review of the standards and guidelines set three decades ago.

### **III. PROPOSAL TO PREPARE A REVISED RECOMMENDATION ON THE CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC URBAN LANDSCAPES**

9. Following the review of the relevant UNESCO Recommendations and the Vienna Memorandum (cf. Annex I), which led to the conclusion that fundamental changes in concept and perception of heritage have occurred during the past 30 years, this Expert Group supported the drafting of a new (or revised) standard-setting document.
10. The process established to facilitate the development of this revised recommendation includes the organization of major consultation meetings during 2008 and 2009 in the various geo-cultural regions of the world to raise awareness and receive political support, expert input, review results of other seminars and conferences on the subject organized by different organizations and universities, and commission renowned experts to write fundamental texts on issues pertinent to the safeguarding of historic urban landscapes. This activity will be coordinated with the Advisory Bodies of the *World Heritage Convention*, ICOMOS and ICCROM. In particular expert meetings on buffer zones and the design of modern architecture in historic context (both planned in 2008), as well as the finalization of management guidelines for Cultural Landscapes, will provide important input for the drafting of a text on Historic Urban Landscapes that will commence in 2010.

11. An updated report will be submitted to the 180th session of the Executive Board (Spring 2009) to facilitate the adoption of a Resolution requesting the Director-General to bring forward a revised recommendation on the conservation of historic urban landscapes. The final draft text would then be presented to the Executive Board in spring 2011, for adoption by the General Conference at its 36th session (2011). It was emphasized that the proposed standard-setting document would not be specific to World Heritage cities, but broadened to all historic cities.

#### **IV. DRAFT RESOLUTION**

##### **Draft Resolution: 16 GA 11**

*The General Assembly,*

1. *Having examined Document WHC-07/16.GA/11*
2. *Welcomes the information provided on the development of a revised Recommendation of the conservation of historic urban landscapes;*
3. *Invites the Director-General of UNESCO to inform the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, at its seventeenth session (2009), on the further activities undertaken and progress made with regard to this initiative*

### Comparative analysis of key Charters and Recommendations

	1968	1976	1987	2005
	RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING THE PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY ENDANGERED BY PUBLIC OR PRIVATE WORKS	NAIROBI RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING THE SAFEGUARDING AND CONTEMPORARY ROLE OF HISTORIC AREAS	WASHINGTON CHARTER FOR THE CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC TOWNS AND URBAN AREAS	VIENNA MEMORANDUM ON WORLD HERITAGE AND CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE – MANAGING THE HISTORIC URBAN LANDSCAPE
DEFINITIONS	<p>a) Immovable: Archeological, historic and scientific sites including groups of traditional structures, <u>historic quarters</u> in urban or rural built up area and ethnological structures</p> <p>b) Movable: (not relevant here)</p>	<p><u>Historic and architectural areas</u>: group of buildings, structures and open spaces in an urban or rural environment, the cohesion and value of which are recognised from the archaeological, architectural, prehistoric, historic, aesthetic or sociocultural point of view.</p> <p>Environment: Natural or man-made setting which influences the static or dynamic way these areas are <u>perceived</u> or which is <u>directly linked</u> to them in space or social, economic or cultural ties.</p>	<p><u>Historic urban areas</u>, large and small, including cities, towns and historic centres or quarters together with their <u>natural and man-made environments</u>.</p>	<p><u>Historic urban landscape</u> goes beyond the notions of historic centres, ensembles, surroundings to include the <u>broader territorial and landscape context</u>.</p> <p>Composed of character-defining elements: land use and patterns, spatial organisation, visual relationships, topography and soils, vegetation and all elements of the technical infrastructures.</p>
GENERAL PRINCIPLES	<p>a) Preservation of the entire site or structure from the effects of private or public works</p> <p>b) <u>Salvage or rescue</u> of the property if the area is to be transformed, including preservation and removal of the property</p>	<p>a) Historic areas and its <u>surroundings</u> to be considered in their totality as a coherent whole whose balance and specific nature depend on the parts of which it is composed.</p> <p>b) Elements to be preserved include human activities, buildings, spatial organisation and their surroundings</p>	<p>a) Conservation should be integral part of <u>coherent policies</u> of economic and social development and of urban and regional planning.</p> <p>b) Qualities to be preserved include urban patterns, relationships between buildings and open spaces, formal appearance of buildings, relationship with surrounding setting and functions.</p>	<p>a) <u>Continuous change</u> acknowledged as part of city's tradition: response to development dynamics should facilitate changes and growth while respecting inherited townscape and its landscape as well as historic city's authenticity and integrity.</p> <p>b) Enhancing quality of life and production efficiency help strengthening identity and social cohesion.</p>
IDENTIFIED THREATS	<p>a) Urban expansion and renewal projects removing structures <u>around scheduled monuments</u>.</p> <p>b) Injudicious modifications to <u>individual buildings</u></p> <p>c) Dams, highways, bridges, cleaning and levelling of land, mining, quarrying, etc...</p>	<p>a) Newly developed areas that could ruin the environment and character of <u>adjoining historic areas</u></p> <p>b) <u>Disfigurement of historic areas</u> caused by infrastructures, pollution and environmental damage</p> <p>c) Speculation which compromises the interests of the community as a whole.</p>	<p>a) <u>Physical degradation and destruction</u> caused by urban development that follows industrialisation.</p> <p>b) Uncontrolled Traffic and parking, construction of motorways inside historic towns, natural disasters, pollution and vibration.</p>	<p>Socio-economic changes and growth that would not respect historic cities authenticity and integrity as well as their inherited townscape and landscape.</p>
PROPOSED POLICY AND RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	<p>a) Enact and maintain legislative measures necessary to ensure the <u>preservation or salvage</u> of endangered cultural properties</p> <p>b) Ensure adequate <u>public budgets</u> for such preservation or salvage</p> <p>c) Encourage such preservation thru favourable tax rates, grants, loans, etc...</p> <p>d) Entrust responsibility for the preservation to appropriate official bodies at national and local levels.</p> <p>e) Provide advice to the population and develop educational programmes</p>	<p>a) Prepare detailed surveys of historic areas and their surroundings including architectural, social, economic, cultural and technical data.</p> <p>b) Establish appropriate plans and documents defining the areas and items to be protected, standards to be observed, conditions governing new constructions, etc...</p> <p>c) Draw up <u>priorities for the allocation of public funds</u></p> <p>d) Protection and restoration should be accompanied by <u>social and economic revitalization policy</u> in order to avoid any brake in the social fabric</p>	<p>a) Conservation plans must address all relevant factors including history, architecture, sociology and economics and should ensure <u>harmonious relationship</u> between the historic urban area and the town as a whole.</p> <p>b) New functions and activities should be compatible with the character of the historic area.</p> <p>c) Special educational and training programmes should be established.</p>	<p>a) Planning process in historic urban landscapes requires a thorough formulation of <u>opportunities and risks</u> in order to guarantee a well-balanced development.</p> <p>b) <u>Contemporary architecture</u> should be complementary to the values of the historic urban landscape and should not compromise the historic nature of the city.</p> <p>c) <u>Economic developments</u> should be bound to the goals of long term heritage preservation.</p>

