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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
Room XI

Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda: Assessment report of the Advisory Bodies' activities

SUMMARY

At its 31st session (Christchurch, 2007), the Committee requested the World Heritage Centre to prepare an assessment report of the activities of the Advisory Bodies to be presented to the 16th session of the General Assembly (UNESCO, 2007).

Draft Resolution: 16 GA 6, see Point IV

I. THE ADVISORY BODIES

1. Article 8.3 of the *World Heritage Convention* (« the *Convention* ») stipulates that “a representative of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (Rome Centre), a representative of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and a representative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) (...) may attend the meetings of the Committee in an advisory capacity”.

A. Role of the Advisory Bodies

2. ICCROM (the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property) is an international intergovernmental organization with headquarters in Rome, Italy. Established by UNESCO in 1956, ICCROM's statutory functions are to carry out research, documentation, technical assistance, training and public awareness programmes to strengthen conservation of immovable and moveable cultural heritage.
3. ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites) is a professional non-governmental organization, founded in 1965, with headquarters in Paris, France. Its role is to promote and facilitate the application of theory, methodology and scientific techniques to the conservation of the architectural, urban and archaeological heritage. Its work is based on the principles of the 1964 International Charter on the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (the Venice Charter) and on those of other specific charters developed for the conservation of different types of heritage such as historical gardens, historical cities, vernacular heritage, etc...
4. IUCN – The World Conservation Union (formerly the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) was founded in 1948 and brings together national governments, NGOs, and scientists in a worldwide partnership. Its mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. IUCN has its headquarters in Gland, Switzerland.

B. Specific role of the Advisory Bodies in the framework of the *Convention*

5. The role of the Advisory Bodies in the framework of the *Convention* – laid down in Articles 8.3, 13.7 and 14.2 of the *Convention* and set out in paragraph 31 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (“the *Guidelines*”) - is the following:
 - a) advise on the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* in the field of their expertise;
 - b) assist the Secretariat, in the preparation of the Committee's documentation, the agenda of its meetings and the implementation of the Committee's decisions;
 - c) assist with the development and implementation of the Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List, the Global Training Strategy, Periodic Reporting, and the strengthening of the effective use of the World Heritage Fund;

- d) monitor the state of conservation of World Heritage properties and review requests for International Assistance;
 - e) in the case of ICOMOS and IUCN, evaluate properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List and present evaluation reports to the Committee; and
 - f) attend meetings of the World Heritage Committee and the Bureau in an advisory capacity.
6. The specific role of the Advisory Bodies – set out in paragraphs 33, 35 and 37 of the *Operational Guidelines* - in the framework of the *Convention* is the following:
- a) The specific role of ICCROM in relation to the *Convention* includes: being the priority partner in training for cultural heritage, monitoring the state of conservation of World Heritage cultural properties, reviewing requests for International Assistance submitted by States Parties, and providing input and support for capacity-building activities.
 - b) The specific role of ICOMOS in relation to the *Convention* includes: evaluating properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List, monitoring the state of conservation of World Heritage cultural properties, reviewing requests for International Assistance submitted by States Parties, and providing input and support for capacity-building activities.
 - c): The specific role of IUCN in relation to the *Convention* includes: evaluation of properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List, monitoring the state of conservation of World Heritage natural properties, reviewing requests for International Assistance submitted by States Parties, and providing input and support for capacity-building activities.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE ADVISORY BODIES

A. Activity reports of the Advisory Bodies in the framework of the *Convention*

- 7. In accordance with Committee Decision **29 COM 16.9** at its 29th session (Durban, 2005), the World Heritage Centre prepared – for its 30th session (Vilnius, 2006) – an information document (WHC-06/30.COM/INF.6B) presenting the summarized reports of the activities of the Advisory Bodies. To recall, it should be noted that the Advisory Bodies regularly provided such reports until 2001 when the Committee, in an attempt to reduce paperwork, asked that these reports not be submitted.
- 8. At its 31st session (Christchurch, 2007), an information document (WHC-07/31.COM/INF.5A) concerning the summarized reports of the activities was presented to the World Heritage Committee.
- 9. At the same session, the Committee requested the World Heritage Centre to prepare an assessment report of the activities of the Advisory Bodies to be presented to the 16th session of the General Assembly (UNESCO, 2007).

B. Detailed description of the activities of the Advisory Bodies

B.1 Contracts – Biennial budget

10. The three Advisory Bodies carry out their missions with UNESCO in the framework of the *Convention*, under contracts for which the budget is allocated by the Committee at each of its session.
11. The evolution of the budgets allocated to the Advisory Bodies for their advisory services is represented in the table hereunder:¹

	2002-2003	2004-2005	2006-2007
World Heritage Fund budget	8 100 000	7 248 070	6 656 836
ICOMOS	810,000	1,056,500	1,195,900
IUCN	840,000	908,870	1,046,000
ICCROM	213,350	224,600	246,250
TOTAL	1,863,350	2,189,970	2,488,150

12. This table indicates that the budget allocated to the Advisory Bodies has increased in the period mentioned. In 2006-2007, the amounts allocated to the Advisory Bodies represent 37% of the budget of the World Heritage Fund in comparison to 23 % of the 2002-2003 budget – whilst the budget for the World Heritage Fund itself has decreased. However, it should also be noted that this increase is not in proportion with the growth in the number of nominations and state of conservation reports of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and that, due to ever more complex processes and a growing range of other requests from the Committee to the Advisory Bodies, their support and advice cannot always be funded within the current budget allocations.

B.2 Evaluation of the nominations for inscription

13. In the framework of the *Convention*, ICOMOS and IUCN ensure the role of technical adviser at the highest possible level of expertise for the evaluation of cultural, natural and mixed properties proposed for inscription on the World Heritage List.
14. ICOMOS organizes expert missions to evaluate cultural or mixed properties. IUCN organizes expert missions to evaluate natural or mixed properties. Such missions cannot be undertaken for nominated properties located in States Parties where the security conditions are not met (e.g. Iraq).
15. Many dossiers are complex and complicated (climatic conditions which can defer the missions by several months) and the need to present documents to the Committee creates a strong pressure on staff and experts concerned. Hence, IUCN had requested on several occasions a change in the date limit for the submission of the evaluation of additional information. This request was taken into account during the 30th session of the Committee (Vilnius, 2006) – advancing the deadline for transmission and not reception – from 31 March to 28 February, but, in IUCN's view, this modification appears insufficient to carry out quality work.

¹ Sources: Decision **XVI.29** for the 2002-2003 approved budget; Decision **27 COM 11.1** for the 2004-2005 budget; Decision **29 COM 16** for the 2005-2006 budget

B.3 Monitoring of the state of conservation of inscribed properties

16. In the framework of the *Convention*, the three Advisory Bodies in close cooperation with the World Heritage Centre, ensure the monitoring of the state of conservation of the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger. The World Heritage Centre therefore, consults them regularly regarding problems or dangers that threaten the properties inscribed on the List or of properties on the Tentative Lists of States Parties.
17. These activities, requiring the participation of many responsible persons and high-level specialists, are increasingly complex and delicate.
18. It should be noted that in view of the increasing number of properties inscribed on the List (851 properties in July 2007) and the threats to which they are exposed, the monitoring activities are increasing rapidly and require more working hours.

B.4 International Assistance

19. The three Advisory Bodies are responsible for providing their advice regarding the requests for International Assistance from States Parties for the protection of World Heritage properties.
20. In the latest version of the *Operational Guidelines*², it is clearly foreseen – in paragraph 247 – that the completed requests for International Assistance be studied by the Secretariat assisted by the Advisory Bodies.
21. The role of the Advisory Bodies with regard to the evaluation of requests for International Assistance is specified in paragraphs 248, 249 and 250 of the *Operational Guidelines*:
 - a) All requests for international assistance for cultural heritage are evaluated by ICOMOS and ICCROM, except requests for less than USD 5.000.
 - b) All requests for international assistance for mixed heritage are evaluated by ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN, except requests for less than USD 5.000.
 - c) All requests for international assistance for natural heritage are evaluated by IUCN, except requests for less than USD 5.000.
22. At its 30th session (Vilnius, 2006), the Committee also decided (Decision **30 COM 14A**) that all requests for International Assistance of more than USD 5,000 would be evaluated by a panel composed of the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee, or one vice-chairperson, representatives of the World Heritage Centre Regional Desks and the Advisory Bodies; and that this panel would meet at least twice a year.
23. Furthermore, the Advisory Bodies were responsible for drafting the evaluation criteria for International Assistance requests that correspond to Annex 9 of the *Operational*

² Document WHC.05/2 of 2 February 2005 – *Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention* and Document WHC-07/31.COM/18B (Amendments adopted by the Committee by Decision **31 COM 18B**).

Guidelines. Annex 9 « Evaluation criteria of the Advisory Bodies for International Assistance Requests », proposed in Annex III of Document WHC-07/31.COM/18B, which was adopted by the Committee at its 31st session (Decision 31 COM 18B).

B.5. Other activities linked to the implementation of the *Convention*

24. Finally, the three Advisory Bodies contribute towards the work of the World Heritage Centre through *ad hoc* activities or advice – the extent of which is not clearly detailed in the *Operational Guidelines* – that the Committee or the World Heritage Centre might decide to entrust to them because of their expertise.
25. This type of activity includes the preparation of documents and thematic studies (among others, “The World Heritage List – Filling the gaps – An action Plan for the future” (ICOMOS), “Analysis of the World Heritage List and Tentative Lists and follow-up action plan” (IUCN), first Compendium on the “Outstanding Universal Value”, the Resource Manuals, etc...), participation in thematic meetings, as well as in statutory and administrative meetings of the World Heritage Centre, etc.
26. ICOMOS also collects, catalogues, indexes and disseminates documents and publications on the conservation and presentation of cultural properties and ensure the information and management of a bibliographical database. Furthermore, ICOMOS hosts a Documentation Centre, available for both the general public and professionals of the World Heritage community.
27. Concerning IUCN, it is worth noting that, in addition IUCN’s World Commission on Protected Areas, one of the six technical commissions of IUCN, provides voluntary technical input to IUCN’s work on World Heritage (work estimated at around USD 1,5 million per biennium).
28. ICCROM, as the main partner for training and capacity building concerning cultural heritage properties, takes the lead on the development of the Global Training Strategy. It also manages and coordinates training activities at the regional and national level for which funds have been allocated by the World Heritage Committee, and prepares training and resource materials for the benefit of State Parties in the implementation of the *Convention*. ICCROM has also, at the invitation of individual States Parties, implemented training activities for the benefit of the *World Heritage Convention* using external funding. ICCROM’s regular training activities also feature World Heritage issues as appropriate and many of the participants of those courses are associated in some way with the World Heritage system.

III. ASSESSMENT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ADVISORY BODIES

Institutional Memory

29. The Advisory Bodies have provided independent expert advice over the last 35 years and are key actors in the implementation of the *Convention* due to their expertise and their ability to provide an independent scientific assessment of the fundamental procedures concerning the implementation of the *Convention* (evaluation of proposals for inscription, preparation of state of conservation reports and other missions, various publications and manuals, reflection on the different procedures such as the Periodic Report Exercise, International Assistance, etc...). The international scope of each Advisory Body ensures that they are able to contribute a fundamental global perspective to the work of the *World Heritage Convention*, while their regional, national, and local networks allow them to ensure that the specificities of sites and their contexts

are well understood. This advice is crucial to maintaining the credibility of the *Convention*. This credibility has resulted in key decisions being taken to conserve World Heritage properties in all regions of the world.

Professionalisation of the services

30. As the quantity and complexity of the workload of the World Heritage system has continued to grow, the Advisory Bodies have also ensured that their professional judgment meets the standards as required by the World Heritage Committee. In order to codify their professional conduct, both IUCN and ICOMOS have adopted codes of conduct, which were presented to the Committee at its 31st session (Christchurch, 2007) in Annex 2 of Document WHC-07/31.COM/16. At the same time, ICCROM is guided by the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service, as is the World Heritage Centre. These codes and standards aim to avoid conflict of interest, and strengthen credibility, rigour, and the objectivity of the technical expertise provided by the Advisory Bodies. The Advisory Bodies are continually trying to improve their professional services to the Committee and remain open to guidance and views on how to best achieve this goal on points of performance that should be monitored. The increase in the quantity and complexity of the workload and the need for continued higher standards of professional performance are some of the reasons for which the budgets allocated to the Advisory Bodies have been increased on a regular basis.
31. In addition, IUCN commissioned an independent review by Dr Christina Cameron in 2005, carried out in consultation with a number of past and current Committee members and Chairpersons. The review concluded that IUCN's performance was strong and highlighted a number of actions to further strengthen its performance. Recommendations of this report are currently being implemented. ICOMOS is also currently commissioning a similar report for 2008.

Improvement of working relations with the World Heritage Centre

32. The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies are aware of the fact that they are interdependent. They realize that their symbiotic working relations can be further improved through similar measures in the implementation of joint reactive monitoring missions over the years. This would in fact encourage a better synergy between the different partners concerned, facilitate communication, reduce delays in reacting and improve information to Committee members.
33. The performance of the Advisory Bodies has been considered as part of the recent management audit of the World Heritage Centre, and a series of recommendations has been made, which is currently being considered, in line with discussions at the World Heritage Committee. For example, the need for clarification concerning the role of the World Heritage Centre with regard to the actors of the *Convention*, in particular with the Advisory Bodies, is noted in the management audit (Document WHC-07/31.COM/19A, Recommendation 4.1). Therefore, the division of roles and responsibilities between the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies should be more clearly defined, in particular for cooperation and assistance to States Parties and for the work on the state of conservation of properties. In recent years, the holding of two annual meetings between the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies has done much to improve information exchange between these partners as well as designate a better division of tasks. Proposals for further improvements will be brought forward for consideration at the next meeting of the World Heritage Committee (Quebec City, 2008).

IV. DRAFT RESOLUTION

Draft Resolution: 16 GA 6

The General Assembly,

1. *Having examined Document WHC-07/16.GA/6,*
2. *Requests the World Heritage Centre, in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies, to report at its 17th session in 2009, on the progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the 2007 Management Audit, in relation to the work and relationships with the Advisory Bodies.*