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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 3A of the Provisional Agenda: Reflection on the elections of the members of the World Heritage Committee and distribution of seats ensuring an equitable representation of the different regions and cultures of the World

INF.3A Extract of the Reflection Document (WHC-07/31.COM/17) on the election of members of the World Heritage Committee, presented during the 31st session of the World Heritage Committee (Christchurch, 2007)

Proposals on the election of the Committee members

A. METHOD OF CALCULATING THE ELECTION RESULTS

1. There are two possible methods of calculating the results of the election: with the current required majority, or with the highest number of votes (“plurality”):

Option A.1 Required majority (Maintaining the current method as defined in Rule 14.8 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly)

2. As indicated in the provision of Rule 14.8 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly of the States Parties of the *Convention* :

“Those States obtaining in the first ballot the required majority shall be elected, unless the number of States obtaining that majority is greater than the number of seats to be filled. In that case, the States obtaining the greatest number of votes, up to the number of seats to be filled, shall be declared elected. If the number of States obtaining the majority required is less than the number of seats to be filled, there shall be a second ballot. If the number of States obtaining the majority required is still less than the number of seats to be filled there shall be a third and, if necessary a fourth ballot, to fill the remaining seats. For the third and fourth ballots, the voting shall be restricted to the States obtaining the greatest number of votes in the previous ballot, up to a number twice that of the seats remaining to be filled.”

Option A.2 Plurality

3. In the case of **plurality**, the election should consist, in principle, of only **one round**, as are elected to the World Heritage Committee those candidates who obtain the **highest number of votes** up to the number of seats to be filled. If two or more candidates obtain the same number of votes, and as a result, there are still more candidates than seats to be filled, there shall be a second ballot restricted to those candidates. If in this second ballot, two or more candidates obtain the same number of votes; the Chairperson of the General Assembly shall decide the candidate to be considered elected by drawing lots.
4. As 57% of the States Parties having sent a written comment considered that having one single round of voting based on the highest number of votes would be an interesting idea to explore (see paragraph 11 above), a change in the system of majority could be envisaged.
5. Any change should be reflected within the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly of States Parties to the *World Heritage Convention* by the amendment of the Rule 14.

B. METHODS TO ENSURE AN EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION OF THE DIFFERENT REGIONS OF THE WORLD

6. Based on the above comments received by States Parties and precedent existing in the Organization, three main options can be proposed for the consideration of the World Heritage Committee:

OPTION B.1: Maintaining the current system of election of the members of the World Heritage Committee

OPTION B.2: Using a predefined distribution of seats among the regions, using the electoral grouping system in use for the election of the members of UNESCO's Executive Board, in proportion to the number of States Parties to the *Convention* in each of these Groups

OPTION B.3: Using a predefined distribution of seats among the regions, using the electoral grouping system in use for the election of the members of UNESCO's Executive Board, in proportion to the number of States Parties to the *Convention* in each of these Groups, with at least three seats attributed to each Group.

7. These three options are presented thereafter :

OPTION B.1: Maintaining the current system of election of the members of the World Heritage Committee

8. The current system of election of members of the World Heritage Committee is defined in the Rule 14 of the Rules of procedure of the General Assembly of States parties to the *World Heritage Convention*. Its characteristics are:

- The principle of "*an equitable representation of the different regions and cultures of the world*" as stipulated in the Article 8.2 of the *World Heritage Convention*
- No electoral groups
- Qualified majority (more than half of States Parties present and voting)
- In practice, several election rounds usually take place, allowing some "political" adjustments.

9. At the request of New Zealand (Decision **7 EXT.COM 15**), many improvements were brought to the organization of the election at the 15th General Assembly of States parties (UNESCO, October 2005):

- The elections took place **in a separate room** from the Plenary so the **debates were not disturbed**;
- The polling station was **equipped with all voting facilities** (four ballot boxes);
- A better organization with a **pre-scheduled timetable** for the election rounds.

10. In the current system, consultation among States Parties takes place between two rounds of voting, in order to ensure an equitable representation of the different regions of the world in the Committee. As a result, some States Parties usually withdraw their candidature to the election as Committee member to the benefit of another State Party of the same region.

OPTION B.2: Using a predefined distribution of seats among the regions, using the electoral grouping system in use for the election of the members of UNESCO's Executive Board, in proportion to the number of States Parties to the *Convention* in each of these Groups

11. This option is based on the system used for electing members of the Executive Board as well as members of the Intergovernmental Committee for the 2003 Convention. Its main rationale is to predefine the number of seats allocated to each Group in

proportion to the number of States Parties to the *Convention* in each of these Groups. The definition of “Groups” is that used for the election of members of the Executive Board, hereafter called “electoral Groups”.

12. This option should be considered with two possible sub-options, depending on whether the seat reserved for a State Party with no property inscribed on the World Heritage List falls under the geographical representation or not.
13. The two following proposals present the calculations based on 21 Members of the Committee, and based on 20 Members of the Committee + 1 Reserved seat.

Option B.2.1: Calculations based on 21 Members of the Committee

14. For the election of the 21 Members of the World Heritage Committee, a ratio has been calculated in proportion to the number of States Parties to the *Convention* for each Group (see distribution and calculations in Annex 1).
15. According to these calculations, the distribution of the seats among the six electoral Groups would be today as follows:
 - Group I: Western Europe and North America 27 States Parties 3 seats
 - Group II: Eastern and South-eastern Europe 25 States Parties 3 seats
 - Group III: Latin America and the Caribbean 32 States Parties 4 seats
 - Group IV: Asia and the Pacific 38 States Parties 4 seats
 - Group V(a): Africa 43 States Parties 5 seats
 - Group V(b): Arab States 18 States Parties 2 seats

16. This option would have the main advantage of allowing that the **negotiations within each electoral Group take place prior to the elections**. As each electoral Group knows exactly the number of seats it is renewing, it is possible to have a situation whereby each Group presents a number of candidates equal to the number of seats to be filled (“clean slate”). In such case, it could be envisaged that the candidates are considered elected without having recourse to a formal vote.
17. The disadvantage of this option is that the distribution of seats within each electoral Group will have to be adjusted according to the future ratifications/signatures.
18. These changes should be reflected within the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly of States Parties to the *World Heritage Convention* by the amendment of the Rule 14.

Option B.2.2: Calculations based on 20 Members of the Committee + 1 Reserved seat

19. According to the Rule 14.1 of Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, the Committee has till now reserved **one seat** for a State Party who has no property on the World Heritage List. It could be argued by Committee Members that this reserved seat should be excluded from the electoral Groups.
20. In this case, the ratio would be: $184:20 = 9,20$ and the distribution of the 20 seats among electoral groups of membership would be as follows:

- Group I:	Western Europe and North America	27 States Parties	3 seats
- Group II	Eastern and South-eastern Europe	25 States Parties	3 seats
- Group III	Latin America and the Caribbean	32 States Parties	3 seats
- Group IV	Asia and the Pacific	38 States Parties	4 seats
- Group V(a)	Africa	43 States Parties	5 seats
- Group V(b)	Arab States	18 States Parties	2 seats

21. This option has the same advantages of the ones stipulated in Option B.2.1 but the distribution of seats is a disadvantage for the Latin American and Caribbean Region (3 seats instead of 4 seats).
22. As the Committee could decide to have more than one reserved seat as Rule 14.1 states “a certain number of seats”, it is proposed to amend this Rule of procedure to definitively fix the number of reserved seat to ONE reserved seat only.
23. Other options could be envisaged, such as a combination of Options B.2.1 and B.3 (only 2 electoral Groups (in the present circumstances) would be expected to “give up” one seat in favour of electoral Group Vb, and one seat would be reserved for a State Party having no property on the World Heritage List). But this would require a preliminary round of discussion.

OPTION B.3: Using a predefined distribution of seats among the regions, using the electoral grouping system in use for the election of the members of UNESCO's Executive Board, in proportion to the number of States Parties in each of these Groups, with at least three seats attributed to each Group.

24. This option is also based on the system used for electing members of the Executive Board as well as members of the Intergovernmental Committee for the 2003 Convention. Its main rationale is to predefine the number of seats allocated to each Group in proportion to the number of States Parties to the *Convention* in each of these Groups.
25. Based on the election of the members of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the election of Members of the Committee would be conducted on the basis of the electoral Groups of UNESCO but **with at least three seats** attributed to each Group.
26. This option contributes to ensure a better “equitable representation of the different regions of the world” than the current system as it guarantees a minimum of three seats per electoral Group. It has in addition the advantage to follow the same model of another UNESCO Convention in the field of Culture (the 2003 Convention).
27. This option represents an advantage for the Arab States (3 seats instead of 2 seats), it is to other regions' disadvantage since there are three electoral Groups which can be expected to have one seat less (Groups III, IV and Va) as all of them have more than 3 seats. From where this “additional” seat is to come would have to be decided by the Committee.
28. These changes should be reflected within the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly of States Parties to the *World Heritage Convention* by the amendment of Rule 14.

Distribution of the 184 States Parties within the six electoral groups

Group	I	II	III	IV	V (a)	V (b)	TOTAL
1.	Andorra	Albania	Antigua and Barbuda	Afghanistan	Angola	Algeria	
2.	Austria	Armenia	Argentina	Australia	Benin	Bahrain	
3.	Belgium	Azerbaijan	Barbados	Bangladesh	Botswana	Egypt	
4.	Canada	Belarus	Belize	Bhutan	Burkina Faso	Iraq	
5.	Cyprus	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bolivia	Cambodia	Burundi	Jordan	
6.	Denmark	Bulgaria	Brazil	China	Cameroon	Kuwait	
7.	Finland	Croatia	Chile	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Cape Verde	Lebanon	
8.	France	Czech Republic	Colombia	Fiji	Central African Republic	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	
9.	Germany	Estonia	Costa Rica	India	Chad	Mauritania	
10.	Greece	Georgia	Cuba	Indonesia	Comoros	Morocco	
11.	Iceland	Holy See ¹	Dominica	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Congo	Oman	
12.	Ireland	Hungary	Dominican Republic	Japan	Côte d'Ivoire	Qatar	
13.	Israel	Latvia	Ecuador	Kazakhstan	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Saudi Arabia	
14.	Italy	Lithuania	El Salvador	Kiribati	Eritrea	Sudan	
15.	Luxembourg	Montenegro	Grenada	Kyrgyzstan	Ethiopia	Syrian Arab Republic	
16.	Malta	Poland	Guatemala	Lao's People Democratic Republic	Gabon	Tunisia	
17.	Monaco	Republic of Moldova	Guyana	Malaysia	Gambia	United Arab Emirates	
18.	Netherlands	Romania	Haiti	Maldives	Ghana	Yemen	
19.	Norway	Russian Federation	Honduras	Marshall Islands	Guinea		
20.	Portugal	Serbia	Jamaica	Micronesia (Federated States of)	Guinea-Bissau		
21.	San Marino	Slovakia	Mexico	Mongolia	Kenya		
22.	Spain	Slovenia	Nicaragua	Myanmar	Lesotho		
23.	Sweden	Tajikistan	Panama	Nepal	Liberia		
24.	Switzerland	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Paraguay	New-Zealand	Madagascar		
25.	Turkey	Ukraine	Peru	Niue	Malawi		

Group	I	II	III	IV	V (a)	V (b)	TOTAL
26.	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Uzbekistan	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Pakistan	Mali		
27.	United States of America		Saint Lucia	Palau	Mauritius		
28.			Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Papua New Guinea	Mozambique		
29.			Suriname	Philippines	Namibia		
30.			Trinidad and Tobago	Republic of Korea	Niger		
31.			Uruguay	Samoa	Nigeria		
32.			Venezuela	Solomon Islands	Rwanda		
33.				Sri Lanka	Sao Tome and Principe		
34.				Thailand	Senegal		
35.				Tonga	Seychelles		
36.				Turkmenistan	Sierra Leone		
37.				Vanuatu	South Africa		
38.				Viet Nam	Swaziland		
39.					Uganda		
40.					United Republic of Tanzania		
41.					Togo		
42.					Zambia		
43.					Zimbabwe		
Total	27	26	32	38	43	18	184
Ratio : 184: 21= 8,76	27 : 8,76= 3,08	26 : 8,76= 2,9	32 :8,76= 3,6	38 :8,76= 4,33	43 : 8,76= 4,9	18 :8,71= 2,05	
Seats	3	3	4	4	5	2	21

¹ The Holy See is not a Member State of UNESCO.