



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

World Heritage

32 COM

Distribution Limited

WHC-08/32.COM/7.1
Paris, 22 May 2008
Original: English/French

**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Thirty-second session

Quebec City, Canada
2 – 10 July 2008

**Item 7.1 of the Provisional Agenda: Presentation of the Results of the
International Expert Meeting on World Heritage and Buffer Zones**

SUMMARY

The International Expert Meeting on World Heritage and Buffer Zones (11-14 March 2008, Davos, Switzerland) organized jointly by the Swiss and Israeli authorities in collaboration with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre provided a rich reflection on the relationship between World Heritage properties and their buffer zones, as well as on integrity and legal issues of World Heritage conservation.

This document contains the main conclusions and recommendations of the meeting. The proceedings are under preparation for publication (hard copy and on-line).

Draft Decision: 32 COM 7.1, see Point II.

I. Report of the International Expert Meeting on World Heritage and Buffer Zones

A Introduction

1. The participants of the International Expert Meeting on World Heritage and Buffer Zones which took place from 11 to 14 March 2008 in Davos, Switzerland, appreciated the support of the Swiss authorities, in particular the Swiss Federal Office of Culture, the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment and the Canton of Graubünden and the sponsoring Israeli authorities for the financial support for organizing and hosting this important event in collaboration with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.
2. The meeting was attended by 35 participants and experts from 16 countries, as well as by Representatives of IUCN, ICOMOS, ICCROM, the Ramsar Convention, and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.
3. The meeting provided a venue for rich debate, strengthened by the reflection of a significant range of case studies from World Heritage properties, the inputs of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and written contributions by the MAB programme. The World Heritage Centre, IUCN, ICCROM and ICOMOS presented position statements that will be included in the proceedings of the Expert Meeting. The meeting agreed on a series of conclusions and recommendations provided in this document which will be included in the proceedings, and are summarised below.

B Summary of key points arising from the meeting

4. The meeting identified a need for greater clarity on the relationship between World Heritage properties and their buffer zones. The expert meeting agreed that a World Heritage property is the area that contains outstanding universal value (OUV), and buffer zones provide additional protection for the outstanding universal value and integrity of a property, but that buffer zones do not themselves include outstanding universal value;
5. Further, although a buffer zone should not be regarded as part of the inscribed World Heritage property, their boundaries are formally registered at the time of inscription (or at the time of modifications noted by the World Heritage Committee) as an integral component of the State Party commitment to the protection and management of the property;
6. The meeting also found that while every World Heritage property needed protection and management arrangements, not every property would have a buffer zone, as buffer zones are only one means to achieve protection and management. As outlined in the *Operational Guidelines*, there are also legal, regulatory and other methods available. Buffer zones should be integrated with any other such methods;
7. Buffer zone boundaries, and activities within buffer zones, may be considered as part of evaluation, state of conservation and reporting processes;
8. The meeting found that the basic characteristics of buffer zones were common to natural, cultural and mixed properties. How buffer zones might be implemented for any particular property would vary. Capacity building and guidance should be enhanced to assist States Parties to establish and implement buffer zones. A priority in this regard should be given to properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger;

9. The meeting recognised that buffer zones provide an important mechanism to share the benefits of World Heritage designation with local communities and stakeholders and enhance sustainable use, and that this should attract greater emphasis;
10. The meeting recommended a number of follow-up actions be taken, including:
 - a. Further definition of concepts and terms, including:
 - An *area protected under the Convention*. Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines* clearly includes the property, but the paragraph is unclear about whether an 'area protected under the Convention' includes any buffer zone;
 - The meeting recognised that actions may take place well beyond the boundaries of a property and any buffer zone that might nonetheless have a significant influence upon the outstanding universal value and integrity of a World Heritage property. The meeting considered that in addition to the property and any buffer zone, the concept of an *area of influence* may also be useful to describe a wider zone, in which activities may take place that could have an impact upon the outstanding universal value and integrity of a property. This is a concept useful for management purposes, rather than an area recorded under the Convention;
 - The term *setting* is used in the cultural field and may have broader relevance that requires further discussion. The meeting considered that where setting is a part of, or integral to, the outstanding universal value of a property, then it should be part of the inscribed property. Where setting may assist in the appreciation of outstanding universal value, but is not itself of outstanding universal value, then it is desirable that it be incorporated in any buffer zone or otherwise protected;
 - b. Capacity building. States Parties should be provided with adequate assistance to establish and implement buffer zones, with priority given to properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Guidance currently exists, and there may be potential for this to be further developed or supplemented.
 - c. Revisions to the text of the *Operational Guidelines* are included in Section E of this report.

C Recommendations

11. The participants addressed the following recommendations to the World Heritage Committee, States Parties to the *World Heritage Convention*, the Advisory Bodies and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, as appropriate:
 - a. The meeting recommended that States Parties prepare nominations that include both the World Heritage property and any necessary World Heritage buffer zone(s) for consideration by the World Heritage Committee at the time of inscription;
 - b. The meeting agreed the following key points of principle:
 - That the inscribed World Heritage property possesses the outstanding universal value;
 - Any World Heritage buffer zone does not include outstanding universal value but provides additional protection for the outstanding universal value and integrity of the property;
 - Only values within the boundaries of the nominated World Heritage property should be assessed in relation to whether a World Heritage nomination meets the relevant criteria within the *Operational Guidelines*. The features and values of the buffer zones are therefore not included in this assessment, but may be relevant to

- the assessment of whether a nomination meets requirements for integrity, authenticity, protection and management in the *Operational Guidelines*;
- World Heritage Buffer Zones are established, where required, in relation to paragraphs 103-106 of the *Operational Guidelines* and are not regarded as part of the inscribed World Heritage property. However their effectiveness in protecting the outstanding universal value is assessed as part of the evaluation of a nomination and their boundaries are formally registered at the time of inscription (or at the time of modifications noted by the World Heritage Committee) as an integral component of the State Party commitment to the protection and management of the property (*Operational Guidelines* Paragraph 155);
 - Major modifications to a World Heritage buffer zone subsequent to acceptance and recording should be approved by the World Heritage Committee (*Operational Guidelines* Paragraph 107);
 - Many World Heritage properties have internal management zones within their boundaries. For clarity, such internal management zones are not, and to prevent confusion should not be referred to as, World Heritage buffer zones;
 - There is a range of potential threats to the outstanding universal value and integrity of World Heritage properties which require mechanisms other than buffer zones to be addressed.
- c. The meeting noted that buffer zones were able to be more effective in countries that already recognize this concept in legislation. Recalling Article 5 of the *World Heritage Convention*, the meeting recommended that World Heritage properties and buffer zones be taken into account, as appropriate, in the legal systems of States Parties;
- d. The meeting **recommended** the following steps be noted in relation to the tasks required in establishing a buffer zone, although the order of them could vary:
- Analysis of the characteristics and outstanding universal value of the property and integrity define the external issues;
 - Delineation of buffer zone(s), as appropriate;
 - Analysis of the potential positive opportunities of the zone;
 - Consideration of national law and local legislation/regulations relevant to the implementation of the buffer zone;
 - Ensuring effective implementation and mechanisms in relation to the functions of the buffer zones.
- e. The meeting recommended that the following standards be considered by the World Heritage Committee in relation to the establishment and amendment of World Heritage buffer zones by States Parties:
- The relationship between the function, extent, protection, and management of any World Heritage buffer zone and the World Heritage property needs to be made clear by the State Party when it requests inscription (or extension/modification) of a property;
 - The State Party should demonstrate that there is an effective integrated approach to protection of the outstanding universal value and integrity/authenticity of the World Heritage property, within its boundaries and through measures in any buffer zone;
 - Management responsibility will vary depending on the specific situation of the site. The State Party should demonstrate adequate institutional commitment and coordination arrangements between the management authority for the World Heritage property and those responsible for implementing measures to protect and/or realize benefits from sustainable use within any World Heritage buffer zone.

- f. In line with paragraph 123 of the *Operational Guidelines* and the new “fifth C” of Community within the Budapest Declaration on World Heritage (2002/2007), the meeting recommended that the function of World Heritage buffer zones in supporting communities required a much greater emphasis and a change in mindset within the World Heritage system. The role of buffer zones in supporting cultural and natural heritage through encouraging positive measures which enhance the value and provide benefits for local communities requires greater emphasis by States Parties in nominations, the Advisory Bodies in their evaluations, and the World Heritage Committee in its decisions. In particular it was noted that World Heritage buffer zones had an important role in delivering the requirements set out in *Operational Guidelines* Paragraph 119 concerning sustainable use. The governance of buffer zones provides an important opportunity to give appropriate recognition of local people;
- g. The meeting noted that World Heritage buffer zones need to respond to new and emerging threats or opportunities. Reporting on these issues is already able to be covered under the existing procedures of the World Heritage Committee including state of conservation reporting, boundary modifications and Periodic Reporting and its follow-up;
- h. The meeting also noted that major modifications to World Heritage buffer zones subsequent to inscription (as defined in Paragraph 107 of the *Operational Guidelines*) should continue to be approved by the World Heritage Committee;
- i. The meeting recommended in relation to modifications to World Heritage buffer zones:
- That the process that exists for considering changes to boundaries to World Heritage buffer zones as minor modifications (paragraph 163 – 164 of the *Operational Guidelines*) should be used for extensions and enhancements of the effectiveness of buffer zones. Revisions which have a potential significant impact on the outstanding universal value and integrity of the World Heritage property fall outside the scope of the minor modification process;
 - Noting that recommendations for creation of or changes to buffer zones often stem from Reactive Monitoring processes, States Parties should be requested to fully implement decisions of the World Heritage Committee in relation to the creation or modification of buffer zones. The World Heritage Centre, with input from the Advisory Bodies, should strengthen its monitoring of the implementing of such decisions;
- j. The meeting recommended that there should be a greater consideration of the potential for synergy between World Heritage buffer zones and other conservation instruments that provide alternative and complementary protection for heritage, consistent with paragraph 102 of the *Operational Guidelines*. This could include the relationships with UNESCO and other Conventions, programmes and initiatives;
- k. The meeting recommended that the World Heritage Committee prioritize support for creation and monitoring of effective World Heritage buffer zone measures for properties included in the List of World Heritage in Danger where this would provide better protection to those properties; any buffer zones should be appropriately recognised in the state of conservation processes for properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger;
- l. The meeting recommended that capacity building on the management of World Heritage properties and World Heritage buffer zones be strengthened. There is a lack of awareness of provisions and requirements for buffer zones as well as many aspects of nomination, protection, management and monitoring within the *World*

Heritage Convention. Guidance on World Heritage buffer zones should be integrated into resource manuals prepared by the Advisory Bodies (e.g. for nominations and management), the training curricula for the World Heritage and related courses and workshops, supplemented by material prepared by the States Parties and others. Capacity building on buffer zones should be targeted at a range of audiences including local communities;

- m. The meeting recommended that IUCN and ICOMOS reflect on the incorporation of evaluation of buffer zone (and other wider provisions) as a consistent factor in their evaluation reports to the World Heritage Committee on nominations to the World Heritage List. The meeting considered that this could be part of a more harmonized approach to the preparation of evaluation reports, which could be based on the subheadings on Protection and Management set out in section II.F of the *Operational Guidelines*;
- n. The meeting welcomed the proposal to prepare a report on buffer zones (and other external measures to protect the outstanding universal value and integrity of the World Heritage properties) in the World Heritage Papers series based on the proposals of the meeting, and recommended effective dissemination of the findings.

D Lexicon

- 12. **World Heritage property:** A property inscribed on the World Heritage List which has outstanding universal value and meets the conditions of authenticity and integrity. The World Heritage property includes within its borders all of the attributes that are recognized as being of outstanding universal value.
- 13. **Protective measures** (refer II.F of the *Operational Guidelines*) are measures that protect the outstanding universal value of the property by spatial measures such as boundaries and zones as well as other non-spatial measures such as legislative, regulatory, contractual, planning, institutional and/or traditional measures. Both spatial and non-spatial measures should be integrated into the management system and process to ensure the sustainability of the World Heritage property.
- 14. **Buffer zones** are clearly delineated area(s) outside a World Heritage property and adjacent to its boundaries which contribute to the protection, management, integrity, authenticity and sustainability of the outstanding universal value of the property. Although any World Heritage buffer zones are not regarded as part of the inscribed World Heritage property, their boundaries and relevant management approaches should be evaluated, approved and formally recorded at the time they are proposed by a State Party. Where buffer zones are defined, they should be seen as an integral component of the State Party's commitment to the protection and management of the World Heritage property. The functions of the buffer zone should reflect the different types and levels of protection needed to protect the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage property.
- 15. An **area protected under the Convention.** Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines* clearly includes the property, and can be interpreted as also referring to a buffer zone. Buffer zones are areas protected under the *Convention* that provide additional protection for the outstanding universal value and integrity of a property. They are monitored by the World Heritage Committee in relation to their contribution to the effective protection and management of the outstanding universal value of the property.
- 16. The meeting recognised that actions may take place well beyond the boundaries of a property and any buffer zone that might nonetheless have a significant influence upon the outstanding universal value and integrity of a property. The concept of an **area of influence** may also be useful to describe a wider zone, in which activities may take place

that could have an impact upon the outstanding universal value and integrity of a property.

17. The term **setting** is mainly used in the cultural heritage field and may have broader relevance that requires further discussion. The meeting considered that where setting is a part of, or integral to, the outstanding universal value of a property, then it should be part of the inscribed property. Where setting may assist in the appreciation of the outstanding universal value, but is not itself of outstanding universal value, then it is desirable that it be incorporated in any buffer zone or otherwise protected.

E Possible revisions to the text of the *Operational Guidelines*

18. The meeting noted key points, and recommendations, highlight areas for possible change to the *Operational Guidelines*. The following additional points were made in relation to either possible amendments to the *Operational Guidelines* in relation to buffer zones, or the provision of further guidance to complement the *Operational Guidelines*. These revisions to the *Operational Guidelines* should be elaborated into text so that they can be made at the next available opportunity:
 - a. The *Operational Guidelines* should be amended to incorporate the above **summary** of key points (section B), and **recommendations** (section D);
 - b. The introductory paragraphs to Subsection II.F of the *Operational Guidelines* on Protection and Management (Paragraphs 96 and 97) should make clear the importance of **integration** between the different protection and management requirements for World Heritage properties outlined in the subsequent subsections (legislative, regulatory and contractual measures for protection, boundaries for effective protection, buffer zones, management systems, sustainable use);
 - c. An explanation of the different **attributes of authenticity** listed in paragraph **82** should be developed, and could become an addition to the existing Annex 4 of the *Operational Guidelines* on authenticity;
 - d. **Supplementary guidance** should be provided, in the *Operational Guidelines* and elsewhere, to explain the expectations for the integrity of natural properties as set out in paragraphs **92-95**. Complementary examples should be provided for the six cultural criteria;
 - e. The words “of the outstanding universal value and authenticity and integrity” should be added after “proper conservation” in paragraph **103** of the *Operational Guidelines*;
 - f. A cross-reference or footnote should be added to paragraph **107** of the *Operational Guidelines* to refer to paragraphs 163-165 (which set out the procedures for minor and major boundary modifications). Suggested wording: “Modifications to boundaries of buffer zones are considered through the processes set out in paragraphs 163-165”;
 - g. In paragraph **148**, a point (g) should be added to request the Advisory Bodies to consider the effectiveness of buffer zone arrangements including their legal status as part of the evaluation of nominations. There should also be further consideration of amendments to the guidance provided in Annex 5 and Annex 6 of the *Operational Guidelines* to ensure that buffer zones are considered in nomination and evaluation processes;
 - h. In paragraph **173** on monitoring, a point (d) should be added to note that reactive monitoring reports should consider specifically the effectiveness of buffer zones

and/or other protective measures outside the boundaries of the World Heritage property;

- i. In paragraph **201** related to Periodic Reporting, a point (d) should be added to request States Parties carry out assessments of buffer zones and other protective measures as appropriate;
- j. The World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies were requested to reflect on other issues raised by the meeting that could also be given effect through a screening process of the *Operational Guidelines* to ensure **consistent** references to buffer zones, and recommend amendments as appropriate to the World Heritage Committee. In incorporating references to buffer zones, care is needed to not narrow down protective options, and consideration should also be given to other measures that provide wider protection to World Heritage properties.

II. Draft Decision

Draft Decision 32 COM 7.1

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC-08/32.COM/7.1*
2. *Recalling Decision **30 COM 9** adopted at its 30th session (Vilnius, 2006) and thanking the States Parties of Israel and Switzerland for jointly hosting the International Expert Meeting on World Heritage and Buffer Zones (Davos, Switzerland, 11-14 March 2008) in cooperation with the World Heritage Centre;*
3. *Notes the detailed report provided by the expert meeting which reflects on a wide range of issues relevant to World Heritage and buffer zones and further notes the publication under preparation for the World Heritage paper series;*
4. *Adopts the conclusions and recommendations aimed at enhancing the protection of outstanding universal value and integrity of World Heritage properties;*
5. *Requests the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to integrate the relevant paragraphs for revisions to the Operational Guidelines for consideration by the World Heritage Committee at its 33rd session in 2009;*
6. *Further requests States Parties, Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre, to take into account all the other conclusions and recommendations contained in the detailed report of the Meeting.*