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

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

Paris, UNESCO Headquarters

23 - 28 October 2009

**Item 9 of the Provisional Agenda: The Future of the *World Heritage*
Convention**

SUMMARY

This document contains:

Decision: 33 COM 14A.2

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The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document *WHC-09/33.COM/14A*,
2. Recalling Decision 32 COM 10 adopted at its 32nd Session (Quebec City, 2008);
3. Notes that the *World Heritage Convention* is approaching universal ratification and its fortieth anniversary in 2012, and therefore that it is appropriate to reflect on the successes of the *Convention* and also how it can best evolve to meet the emerging challenges it faces while also increasing its relevance and engagement with communities around the world;
4. Expresses its appreciation to the States Parties of Australia, Brazil, Israel, Switzerland and the Netherlands and the UNESCO 'Aid to developing countries' Fund for supporting the Workshop to reflect on the Future of the *World Heritage Convention* (25-27 February 2009, UNESCO headquarters);
5. Recognizes the participation of State Party experts and representatives of the Advisory Bodies and non-governmental organizations in this Workshop, including through written submissions, in this valuable, inclusive and transparent ongoing process;
6. Welcomes the additional positive discussion that occurred on this matter at the Committee's 33rd session (Seville, 2009);
7. Notes in particular the good progress that was made in developing a Draft Vision for implementation of the *Convention*, which reflects and builds on the objectives of Credibility, Conservation, Capacity building, Communication and Communities;
8. Decides that this Draft Vision (Annex 1) and Document *WHC-09/33.COM/14A* should be presented to the General Assembly and the next session of the Committee as a basis for further discussion;
9. Notes that the submissions from State Parties and others to the February 2009 Workshop, and the background documents prepared for this workshop are available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/futureoftheconvention/> for the information of States Parties;
10. Decides that it would be useful to develop an overall strategic plan to guide the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* over the next decade, taking into consideration, inter alia, the objectives of the *Convention*, the principles expressed in the Budapest Declaration, the Global Strategy, and the concepts expressed in the Draft Vision, including those related to sustainable development;
11. Notes also that the Consultative Body continued consideration of possible elements of a future Action Plan, and decides that further discussion of the draft Action Plan (Annex 2) should occur at the 34th session of the Committee, in addition to making the draft Action Plan available to the General Assembly for its information;
12. Decides however that there are several high priority short to medium term activities that should be commenced immediately, as set out in the following paragraphs;
13. Requests the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, and with input from interested State Parties and external stakeholders, to jointly develop an inclusive plan of action to increase community awareness of the value of world heritage and engagement in the work of the *Convention*, including through the identification of

- best practice examples and a communication toolkit to assist States Parties in these activities at a national and local level;
14. Requests the World Heritage Centre to convene, with the support of interested States Parties, a process to explore and develop recommendations for consideration of the Committee at its 34th session on creative approaches, including through the Tentative List process, that might reduce the number of properties that experience significant problems;
 15. Further requests that this process also explores and develop recommendations on creative approaches that will assist States Parties and property managers in effectively responding to the range of problems that emerge for inscribed properties;
 16. Reiterates its encouragement to States Parties, with the support and cooperation of the Advisory Bodies and other States Parties, to develop and finalize Statements of Outstanding Universal Value for all World Heritage properties for which they are responsible, and notes the importance of ensuring that these Statements are subsequently assessed as expeditiously as possible;
 17. Requests the World Heritage Centre to undertake a feasibility study to further explore the concept and implications of holding two sessions of the Committee each year, in addition to exploring other options for more effectively and efficiently managing the increasing workload of the Committee, including by drawing on the experience of other multilateral conventions;
 18. Requests the Director of the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with States Parties, to investigate options for increasing financial support for the objectives of the *Convention*, including but not limited to, voluntary State Party contributions, fundraising, partnerships, Regional Centres, regional funds, bilateral and multilateral assistance, and increased UNESCO support for the Regular Budget, and
 19. Requests the chair of the Consultative Body to report to the General Assembly of States Parties on all of the above as part of his report on the reflection on the future of the *World Heritage Convention*.

Annex 1 of Decision 33 COM 14A.2

Draft Vision

The rich diversity and value of our shared cultural and natural inheritance is appreciated and protected by all humankind, and our cooperative efforts through the *World Heritage Convention* promote and increase understanding and respect between all the communities and cultures of the world

Through cooperation, we aim to achieve:

- Increased awareness and appreciation by communities and people around the world of the diversity and richness of our shared natural and cultural heritage.
- Local and international communities value and feel a connection with our unique world heritage and a greater appreciation of their national, regional and local heritage as an integral and positive contributor to their sustainable development.

- The relevance, credibility, appeal and understanding of world heritage is effectively communicated with and strongly supported by all communities.
- All communities engage with and participate in identifying, protecting, explaining and promoting their world and local heritage.
- The World Heritage List is universally recognized as a credible, balanced and representative list of the world's outstanding cultural and natural heritage places – all of which have clear and approved Statements of their OUV.
- The value of these world heritage places are protected, conserved, promoted and monitored by local and national governments for the benefit of current and future generations, with the support and assistance of the international community.
- All countries are strongly encouraged and assisted to fully comply with their national and international obligations under the *World Heritage Convention*, including through international cooperation, partnerships and capacity building.
- The World Heritage system continues to adapt to the needs of a constantly changing world, and makes a vital and integrated contribution to the achievement of UNESCO's broader objectives.
- The World Heritage system and processes are transparent, equitable, accountable and efficient, and proactively identify and resolve important policy issues and other challenges.

**Annex 2 of Decision 33 COM 14A.2
DRAFT ACTION PLAN**

Understanding and engagement:

What	When	How	Who
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore the possibilities of pilot projects on the relation between conservation and sustainable development - Investigate and report on the role of the <i>Convention</i> in relation to sustainable development - inventory of actions under the <i>Convention</i> related to sustainable development to date and develop lessons learned 	Short - medium term (now and WHC34)	Voluntary action; document; results considered under existing agenda item 7	One or more SPs WH C'tee
<p>To develop a strategy and action plan to ensure the <i>Convention</i>, and its signatory State Parties focuses on its public image at both global and site levels build external awareness of World Heritage objectives and work and the relationship with a wider range of heritage values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop communication plans - Develop community engagement strategies - Ensure management systems include involvement of the community in a proactive and cooperative way - Increase awareness of the key documents of the <i>Convention</i> 	Medium term (report to GA 2011)	GA to determine	GA
<p>Explore and Institute joint private-public sector awards and certification practices to identify best practices linked to clear and consistent indicators in e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - flagships, best and visible examples - conservation initiatives involving sustainable tourism at WH sites - training and capacity building for conservation - conservation of biological diversity - recognition of success in various areas (e.g quality of nomination; management plan etc.) <p>Such awards should be linked to the different monitoring mechanisms of the <i>Convention</i></p>	Medium term (report to WHC34 – 2010)	Centre document; considered under new agenda item	WH C'tee
Explore the possibilities opened by new Category 2 regional centers and by new regional funds for training and capacity building activities	Short term (now)	Voluntary action	SPs

Protection and Conservation:

What	When	How	Who
<p>Review and guide the prioritization of existing Tentative Lists and coordinate for the preparation of new ones in order to foster the strategic management/ development of nominations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consider new approaches as well as refinements to existing approaches 	<p>Long term (report to WHC35 – 2011)</p>	<p>Individual SPs, workshops; results considered under existing agenda item 8</p>	<p>WH C'tee, ABs</p>
<p>Provide a work program and adequate resources to develop Statements of Outstanding Universal Value for all properties as a matter of urgency</p>	<p>Medium term (Linked to PR cycle and report to WHC34 – 2010)</p>	<p>planning or budget reviewed by WG on finances</p>	<p>ABs, WH C'tee</p>
<p>Explain and distribute the Operational Guidelines widely (not just online) to the concerned stakeholders including property managers</p>	<p>Short term (now)</p>	<p>Use existing networks</p>	<p>Secretariat</p>
<p>Investigate more effective management of conservation processes through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a study of other standard-setting exercises (ISO and various national schemes), certification schemes (FSC, MSC and others), social and environmental standard-setting exercises (e.g. CSR) and monitoring and evaluation systems (WB, OECD, private sector) - identification of the idea; objective; principles; standards; criteria; indicators and procedure of evaluation and monitoring and its consequences - consider economic; regulation and enforcement; information and cooperation incentives - Encourage management effectiveness assessment processes - Work on WH and Biosphere Reserve joint pilot projects to establish means through which the two can result in better site based results. 	<p>Medium term (report to WHC34 – 2010)</p>	<p>Document; results considered under existing agenda item 7</p>	<p>SPs, ABs, WH C'tee</p>
<p>Provide an annotated list of existing guidance, identify gaps and develop guidance on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - conservation indicators - impact studies - acceptable change from threats such as mining, tourism, infrastructure development, and human and natural disasters 	<p>Long term (report to WHC35 – 2011)</p>	<p>document; results considered under existing agenda item 7</p>	<p>ABs, WH C'tee</p>

Connections:

What	When	How	Who
Cooperation between well represented and non/under-represented SPs for the preparation of new nominations and the management of existing properties	Short term (now)	Voluntary actions	One or more SPs
Build capacity / transfer skills through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - twinning - networks of World Heritage sites with common features - sharing experiences on management planning - identifying best practices - exchanging personnel - holding meetings for experts 	Short term (now)	Voluntary action	One or more SPs

Strategic management:

What	When	How	Who
Develop a new Global Strategy for future inscriptions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to develop strategies to slow the rate of inscriptions of well-represented themes and categories of heritage - to define and focus on under-represented themes, rather than regions or icons - to ensure a balanced, representative and credible world heritage list - to incorporate strategies for dealing with ongoing change 	Medium term (report to WHC34 – 2010)	Expert working group; results considered under existing agenda item 9	ABs, WH C'tee
Articulate clearer and more transparent approaches to implementation of the Operational Guidelines for making decisions on e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - decisions to inscribe, refer, defer or not inscribe - Negative Perception of Danger listing and how to repackage it in a positive light - delisting - whether and at what level management systems and legal frameworks are required to be in place prior to inscription - elaborating requirements for comparative analysis - Whether the ABs and the WH Centre in assessing the SoC of a site, are required to carry out detailed analyses of the management plans 	Medium term (report to WHC34 – 2010)	Document; results considered under existing agenda item 13	ABs, WH C'tee

Investigate means to increase participation in the implementation of the <i>Convention</i> other than through the electoral system, including but not limited to increasing the strategic/policy setting role of the General Assembly	At GA discretion	At GA discretion	GA
Develop approaches to improve the quality of decision making within the Committee, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prioritization of agenda items - time management strategies - potential for simplification of processes increasing meeting frequency or duration - alternating meetings on state of conservation and inscriptions - introducing a sub-committee structure - re-examining state of conservation reporting mechanisms - the calendar of activities - deadlines for the implementation of the <i>Convention</i> - Investigate the use of secret ballots as a more routine mode of decision-making within the Committee Review the recommendations of the Audit Report of the World Heritage Centre, to enable the Committee to prioritise tasks for the WH Centre prioritise personnel needs and consider fund-raising possibilities	Medium term (report to WHC34 – 2010)	Centre document; results considered under existing agenda item 14	WH C'tee
Investigate methods to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Link Committee decisions to the budget - potential for additional external inputs (technical credibility) - Prioritize activities and the allocation of resources, including through the development of a business plan/strategy - Increase financial support for the objectives of the convention, including but not limited to voluntary State Party contributions, fund raising, partnerships, regional Centres and regional funds, bilateral and multilateral assistance and increased UNESCO support from the Regular Budget 	Long term (report to WHC35 – 2011) With report on ways to link decisions to budget considered at WHC 34 (2010)	document; reviewed by WG on finances, results considered under existing agenda item 16	WH C'tee
Ensure operation of the <i>WH Convention</i> is consistent with UNESCO's broader objectives and relevant Conventions	Long term	document	WH C'tee, Secretariat