SUMMARY

At the request of the World Heritage Committee at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008), this document contains a point of information on the on-going and proposed global thematic studies undertaken by ICOMOS and IUCN.

Draft Decision: 33 COM 10C see point IV.
I. Introduction

1. At the request of the World Heritage Committee at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008) by its Decision 32 COM 10A, this document contains a point of information on the ongoing and proposed global thematic studies undertaken by ICOMOS and IUCN.

II. Progress report on global thematic studies by ICOMOS

A. Progress report on the thematic study on Rock Art in Central Asia

2. A number of sub-regional thematic studies on rock art have been previously prepared (such as, Rock art sites of Central Asia. Public participation, management, conservation, documentation, UNESCO, 2004) and in the view of ICOMOS, Central Asia is the next priority. The preparation of the thematic study was delayed and possibilities to work further on it should be discussed at an expert meeting organised by the UNESCO world Heritage Centre on 29th May 2009.

B. Progress report on the thematic study on Potential Fossil Hominid Sites for inscription on the World Heritage List

3. This topic has been identified through the study The World Heritage List Filling the Gaps – An action Plan for the Future (ICOMOS, 2005). This thematic study updates previous work and also contributes to the larger topic on Prehistory. It will be made available at the 33rd session of the World Heritage Committee in Seville.

C. Progress report on the thematic study on Agro-pastoral Cultural Landscapes

4. Following the September 2007 expert Meeting on “Agro-pastoral cultural landscapes in the Mediterranean” (Meyrueis, France), and the presentation of the results at an informal lunchtime event during the 32nd session of the World Heritage Committee (Quebec City, July 2008), the proceedings of the expert meeting have been disseminated and made available on the web-page at: http://whc.unesco.org/en/culturallandscape/ or http://whc.unesco.org/en/events/489. A comparative study on agropastoralism is being carried out by a group of international experts who are collecting data. The results are expected to be delivered by the end of 2009.

D. Progress report on the thematic study on Thematic study on the Heritage of Astronomy

5. This thematic study is developed in the context of the recent interest in the review of the relationship between heritage of sciences and the World Heritage Convention and the International Year of Astronomy 2009. It sets out to undertake a substantial and wide-ranging survey on astronomical heritage. It is carried out in cooperation with the International Astronomical Union. Preparatory work started and it is scheduled that the study would be delivered to the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session in 2010. Resources for this work to be funded have been sought through States Parties.

6. The Thematic studies on Irrigation and Water Management Systems and Cultural and Natural Heritage of the Arctic Region which were considered as priorities did not find financial support to be undertaken for the moment.
E. Additional thematic work undertaken by ICOMOS

7. Outstanding Universal Value: A first compendium on Standards for the inscription of cultural properties to the World Heritage List was prepared in 2008 as requested by the World Heritage Committee and made available in English and French.

8. World Heritage in Danger: A second compendium of key decisions on the conservation of cultural heritage properties on the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger was prepared in response to the request of the World Heritage Committee. It will be available for the 33rd session of the World Heritage Committee in English and French.


F. Future plans for thematic work of ICOMOS

10. For each biennium, ICOMOS reviews its priorities based on requests/decisions of the World Heritage Committee, discussions by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel, the World Heritage List Filling the Gaps – An action Plan for the Future, and discussions with our membership worldwide. At this stage, the following priorities remain from the present biennium, but were unable to be started due to stretched staff and financial resources.

11. The Thematic studies on Irrigation and Water Management Systems and Cultural and Natural Heritage of the Arctic Region which were considered as priorities did not find financial support to be undertaken for the moment.

12. ICOMOS has held discussions about the possible methodological approach to a thematic study on 20th Century Heritage but it cannot proceed without adequate funding.

13. Next thematic study for the Pacific is awaiting further discussion and agreement with the World Heritage Centre and the annual meeting of the Pacific States Parties to work out what is the next priority area.

III. Progress report on global thematic studies by IUCN

14. IUCN also continued its work in the field of global thematic studies, which it publishes in a series entitled “World Heritage Studies”. Progress with three new thematic studies it presented last year and other thematic work is as follows. In view of the importance of these studies IUCN has augmented the small budget currently allocated for thematic studies for its work in this area (c. USD15,000 pa) with its own resources during 2008-09 and in partnership with other organisations such as BfN, the German Nature Conservation Agency and UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre. IUCN is keen to sustain this thematic work in partnership with interested States Parties, in relation to new subject areas and in relation to the translation of studies into relevant languages. The suggested priorities for translation of the different studies are noted below.

G. Progress report on the thematic study on Volcanoes and Volcanic Landscapes

15. This study responds to Decision 31 COM 8B.17.
16. This thematic study is being finalised following peer review, including input from the IUCN
World Commission on Protected Areas, International Association of Geomorphologists
and the International Union of Geological Sciences. It is intended that the study will be
distributed in an English version at the 33rd Session of the World Heritage Committee.
The study will be made available at the following Web address: www.iucn.org. The study
has been partly funded through the World Heritage Fund, augmented by IUCN’s own
resources. IUCN is keen to receive support for the translation of the study into other
relevant languages to assist its implementation (French, Spanish, Hindi, Japanese and
others).

H. Progress report on the thematic study on Caves and Karst

17. This study responds to Decision 31 COM 8B.13 to the need identified in Decision: 31
COM 8B.13 to advise States Parties on the scope of karst and cave values already
represented on the World Heritage List and the potential and priorities for future
recognition of karst landscapes and features in relation to the relevant World Heritage
criteria.

was completed and distributed in an English version as part of the IUCN World Heritage
Studies series at the 32nd Session of the World Heritage Committee. It is available at the
following address: www.iucn.org/wcpa. The study was partly funded through the World
Heritage Fund, augmented by IUCN’s own resources. IUCN is keen to receive support
for the translation of the study into other relevant languages to assist its implementation
(French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Chinese and others).

I. Progress report on the thematic study on Deserts and Desert Landscapes

19. Desert and semi-arid landscapes have been recognised as one of the areas where there
is a relative under-representation of properties on the World Heritage List. IUCN is
developing a thematic study in partnership with the International Association of
Geomorphologists to consider the future priorities for recognition of World Heritage
deserts, including consideration of properties included on the tentative lists of States
Parties to the World Heritage Convention.

20. This thematic study can is currently being considered through a peer review process. It
is likely that this study will be finalised in an English version in Autumn 2009 although
every effort will be made to provide a draft to the 33rd Session of the Committee. The
study has been partly funded through the World Heritage Fund, augmented by IUCN’s own
resources. IUCN is keen to receive support for the translation of the study into other
relevant languages to assist its implementation (Arabic, Spanish, French, Chinese,
Russian and others).

J. Progress report on the thematic study on Polar and subpolar regions

21. A thematic study on the Arctic has been commissioned by IUCN in partnership with
UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre, with funding from the World Heritage Fund
which will be augmented by resources from IUCN and possibly also from UNEP-WCMC.
It is anticipated that this study will be completed in 2010, but it is not certain that it can be
completed before the 34th Session of the World Heritage Committee due to the scope of
the work involved. The study will be carried out with reference to the natural World
Heritage criteria, and considering properties that have been included in the tentative lists
of States Parties to the Convention. The possibility of the study being carried out in
partnership with the Ramsar Convention has also been raised. IUCN is keen to receive
support for the translation of the study into other relevant languages to assist its
implementation (French, Russian and others).

**K. Additional thematic work undertaken by IUCN**

22. In addition to the above studies which have been partly funded through the World Heritage Fund, IUCN has also carried out a number of other studies at its own expense. The current list of IUCN World Heritage Studies is as follows:


- 2. World Heritage Caves and Karst. See Above.


- 7. World Heritage in Danger (in press). A second compendium of key decisions of the World Heritage Committee. Prepared by IUCN for publication in 2009 in response to request of the World Heritage Committee and to be available at the 33rd Session of the World Heritage Committee with some funding from the World Heritage Fund and significant additional support from IUCN. To be available in English and French.


23. Eight other earlier IUCN studies that are also currently available and relevant to the work of States Parties are as follows:


### L. Future plans for thematic work of IUCN

24. IUCN is keen to extend its thematic work, within available resources. IUCN is particularly keen to carry out a full Revision of the Gaps Analysis for natural World Heritage properties, which would be carried out in partnership with the IUCN Species Survival Commission and UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre and others. This should include revision and update of studies on mountains, forests, marine and freshwater systems and consolidate and integrate other recent studies. The likely costs of such a study which would need to be multi-authored, peer-reviewed and published with colour maps, would be c. 100,000 USD and an 18 month period would be required for its completion. IUCN’s current target to achieve this is 2012, depending on the availability of resources.

25. Topics that IUCN is keen to work on immediately and which will contribute to the above study are as follows. The estimated typical costs of commissioning and producing a thematic study in three languages range from between USD 20-50,000.

   o Marine World Heritage (led by WCPA-Marine, following up a workshop held in partnership with the Kingdom of Bahrain and the World Heritage Centre);
   
   o Freshwater systems (to be developed in partnership with UNEP-WCMC and Ramsar);
   
   o The application and assessment of natural criterion vii on “superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.”
   
   o Assessment of natural values within World Heritage Cultural Landscapes.
   
   o Revision and update of IUCN thematic studies on: Mountains and Forests
IV. Draft Decision

Draft Decision: 33 COM 10C

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-09/33.COM/10C,

2. Recalling Decision 32 COM 10A adopted at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008),

3. Requests the Advisory Bodies, in cooperation with the World Heritage Centre, to reorganize the Annex III of the Operational Guidelines with the latest references of the above-mentioned thematic studies;

4. Invites States Parties to the Convention to consider providing extra-budgetary assistance the thematic studies programmes of the Advisory Bodies as identified above, and to also identify opportunities to support translation of completed studies.