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**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
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**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Thirty-third session

Seville, Spain
22-30 June 2009

Item 11 of the Provisional Agenda: Periodic Report

11A: Progress report on the Second cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Arab States

SUMMARY

The second cycle of Periodic Reporting was launched by the World Heritage Committee at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008). This document presents the progress of the exercise which started in the Arab States.

Draft Decision: 33 COM 11A, see Point III

I. Background

1. In 2000, the Arab region was the first to undertake the exercise of Periodic Reporting which was approved by the World Heritage Committee at its 24th session (Cairns, 2000). The Regional Programme for the Arab States was developed on the basis of the findings of the report and approved by the World Heritage Committee in 2003.
2. After the two years of reflection that followed the end of the first cycle (2006-2008) and the revision of the Questionnaire, the World Heritage Committee launched the second cycle at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008), with the Arab States at its forefront (Decision **32 COM 11B**).
3. As presented to the World Heritage Committee at its previous sessions (Vilnius, 2006, Christchurch, 2007 and Quebec City, 2008), the Working Group on the simplification of the Periodic Report Questionnaire emphasized that the main principles guiding the development of the revised Questionnaire should be: good practice; efficiency, utility and sustainability. At the fifth Periodic Reporting Reflection meeting (28 November 2007), the Working Group clarified that the World Heritage Focal points designated by the States Parties for Periodic Reporting would be invited to report on Section I (Implementation of the *Convention*), while Section II (State of conservation of each World Heritage property) should be prepared by those who are responsible for the day-to-day management of the World Heritage property i.e. the World Heritage property manager/coordinator. Nevertheless, the process envisages that only the Focal point has the ability to finalize and submit the on-line Periodic Reporting Questionnaire to the World Heritage Centre.
4. The Periodic Reporting in the Arab States concerns 18 States Parties, 15 of which have properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. It will be presented to the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session in 2010. In parallel, as per the request of the World Heritage Committee, Retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value will be prepared, although these should have, logically, been drafted and adopted prior to starting the Periodic Reporting exercise.
5. As a first step, the World Heritage Centre invited concerned States Parties to identify their national Focal points, responsible for coordinating the exercise at the national level with the site managers of World Heritage properties in their country. The next step was to undertake the pre-filling of the Questionnaire on the basis of the information available at the World Heritage Centre through the Nomination files, the first cycle of Periodic Reporting and the Retrospective Inventory. In addition, ALECSO offered to translate the revised Questionnaire into Arabic in order to facilitate the work of the site managers who can use this version as a support document. To this end, the "user's guide" was also translated into Arabic.
6. Considering that the pre-filled Questionnaire can only be accessed through the World Heritage web site and that the finalization and submission also need to be done on-line, detailed explanations and individual passwords were provided to the Focal points and, further, to all site managers designated by their authorities.

7. Finally, it was proposed to select “Mentors” to provide guidance and assistance to the States Parties in the process, according to a distribution of countries in 3 sub-regional clusters.

II. Activities

8. A first regional meeting to launch the exercise took place from 14-17 December 2008 in Manama, generously hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain. It was the opportunity to provide information and guidance to the national Focal points identified by the States Parties to coordinate this exercise in their countries, accompanied by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee (ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN). Fourteen countries participated in this meeting, while Algeria, Libya, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates did not attend. Since that date, Algeria, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have designated their Focal points.
9. The principal objectives of this meeting were: (a) to present and explain to the Focal points the new format for the submission of the Periodic Report; (b) obtain their adhesion and active participation in the programme; (c) promote regional cooperation through the exchange of information and experiences in the framework of the application of the *Convention*, and more specifically, with regard to Periodic Reporting and follow up and (d) to provide guidance to States Parties on the drafting of the Retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value for properties in the region, where these statements are missing.
10. The meeting's agenda was shared between the two topics of Periodic Reporting and Retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value. Besides presentations by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, working groups carried out drafting exercises. The next steps agreed upon by all participants, are as follows:
 - April-June 2009: 3 sub-regional workshops, with both the Focal points and the site managers, will take place in Amman (Jordan), Doha (Qatar) and Meknes (Morocco) respectively, organised jointly with the UNESCO field offices in these countries, with a view to provide additional guidelines and training in the drafting of Retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value and in filling in the Questionnaire;
 - 31 July 2009: Submission of the two sections of the Periodic Reporting Questionnaire and of the draft Retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value to the World Heritage Centre;
 - August-December 2009: analysis and synthesis of the results of the Periodic report by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;
 - December 2009: Final regional meeting to discuss the results of the exercise with the national Focal points and to elaborate a regional Action plan;
 - March 2010: final drafting of the report to be submitted to the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session.
11. From 6-9 April 2009, a workshop took place in Amman (Jordan) gathering the Focal points and site managers of Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. A Palestinian observer was also invited to attend as part of the capacity-building process ongoing to support the professionals of the Palestinian Authority.

From 27-30 April 2009, a similar workshop took place in Doha (Qatar), gathering the Focal points and site managers of the Gulf countries as well as Egypt, Sudan and Yemen. From 2-5 June 2009, a third workshop will be organised in Meknes (Morocco), focusing on the Maghreb countries.

12. It is to be noted that these three meetings – and in particular the component of the work related to the drafting of Retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value - received the financial support of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
13. A final regional meeting is scheduled to take place in December 2009 in order to assess the results of the exercise and elaborate a Regional Action Plan for future activities in the Arab States according to the needs and priorities expressed by the States Parties within the Report.
14. In this respect, it is to be noted that the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage to be established shortly in Bahrain (see *Document WHC-09/33.COM/10B*) will be instrumental in assisting in the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* in the Arab States. The reinforced cooperation with the “Athar” programme of ICCROM and other regional institutions such as ALECSO, will also offer opportunities for strengthening capacity-building in the region.
15. In the light of the results of the Periodic Reporting exercise and of the drafting of Retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value, it might be necessary to envisage missions to certain properties for which no State of conservation report was presented since a long time.

III. Draft Decision

Draft Decision: 33 COM 11A

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-09/33.COM/11A,
2. Recalling Decisions **31 COM 11D.1** and **32 COM 11B**, adopted respectively at its 31st session (Christchurch, 2007) and at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008),
3. Takes note of the information provided by the World Heritage Centre on progress accomplished in the implementation of the second cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Arab States;
4. Thanks the States Parties of the Arab region which have engaged in the Periodic Reporting process for their active involvement;
5. Also thanks the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and ALECSO for their support;
6. Requests the States Parties of the Arab region to revise or prepare all the missing Retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value concerning

*properties situated in their territories and to submit them by **31 July 2009** for examination at the 34th session of the World Heritage Committee in 2010;*

- 7. Also requests the States Parties of the Arab region to complete the two sections of the Periodic Reporting Questionnaire by **31 July 2009** according to the time table agreed upon at the Bahrain Regional meeting in December 2008;*
- 8. Further requests the States Parties of the Arab region that have not yet responded to the questions raised in 2006 in the framework of the Retrospective Inventory, to provide all clarifications and documentation requested **by 31 July 2009**;*
- 9. Invites the States Parties to contribute to the implementation of the above activities and decides to allocate an amount of USD 50,000 from the World Heritage Fund for the publication of the Periodic Report and the elaboration of the new Regional Action Plan during the 2010-2011 biennium;*
- 10. Requests moreover the World Heritage Centre to submit the results of the Periodic Reporting exercise in the Arab States at its 34th session in 2010.*