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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-fifth session

Paris, UNESCO Headquarters
19 -29 June 2011

Item 7C of the Provisional Agenda: Reflection on the trends of the state of conservation

SUMMARY

At its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010), the World Heritage Committee welcomed (Decision **34 COM 7C**) the analytical summary of the trends, changes and threats to the state of conservation of World Heritage properties over a five-year period (2005-2009). It considered this study as the basis for further reflection and more extensive analysis of this information. It added that this work highlighted the need for more systematic monitoring of threats and for ways to identify and react to emerging trends. This Document provides some elements of response to the Committee's concern in this regard.

Draft Decision: **35 COM 7C**, see Point V.

This document should be read in conjunction with Document WHC-11/35.COM/INF.7C and the Introduction of Document WHC-11/35.COM/7B.

I. Background

1. At its 33rd session (Seville, 2009), the World Heritage Committee requested the World Heritage Centre to prepare, in consultation with the Chairperson, a summary of the perceived trends, changes and threats to World Heritage properties based on an analytical summary of the state of conservation of World Heritage properties over five years (Decision **33 COM 7C**).
2. Document WHC-10/34.COM/7C provided such analytical summary, undertaken by the World Heritage Centre, based on an analysis of the state of conservation reports that were examined by the World Heritage Committee at its 29th (Durban, 2005), 30th (Vilnius, 2006), 31st (Christchurch, 2007), 32nd (Quebec City, 2008) and 33rd (Seville, 2009) sessions and was presented to the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010).
3. At its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010), the World Heritage Committee welcomed (Decision **34 COM 7C**) the analytical summary of the perceived trends, changes and threats to the state of conservation of World Heritage properties over the considered five-year period (2005-2009), as the basis for further reflection and more extensive analysis of this information. It added that this work highlighted the need for more systematic monitoring of threats and of how to identify and react to emerging trends.
4. To address this concern of the World Heritage Committee, every year, a commented list of new and emerging trends related to the conservation of World Heritage properties, such as Mining and mineral exploration, oil exploration and exploitation; Dams and other energy related megaprojects; as well as Natural disasters, is presented in the Introduction of Document 7B (see Document WHC-11/35.COM/7B).

II. Monitoring of threats

5. Furthermore, at its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010), the World Heritage Committee suggested that data on the emergence of trends and on the underlying reasons for the emergence of trends could be helpful to all stakeholders to better protect World Heritage properties.
6. To this end, the expert meeting on the global state of conservation challenges for World Heritage properties (Dakar, Senegal, 13-15 April 2011 – See Document WHC-11/35.COM/INF.7C) recommended that the World Heritage Centre provide, in the state of conservation reports on individual properties, a link to an integrated online database compiling all relevant background information concerning the property (previous state of conservation reports and Committee decisions, Desired state of conservation, corrective measures, International assistance requests, etc...) necessary for well-informed decision-making procedures.
7. Indeed, over the past decades, the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies have gathered a tremendous amount of information relevant to documenting and analysing trends in state of conservation. However, this global information is not stored in a practical and systematic manner and can not be easily extracted for the purpose of statistical and other analyses. Establishing a comprehensive "state of conservation information system" would be an essential first step to provide the required analytical studies and assist in site-management so as to avoid inappropriate development and to better address the factors affecting the Outstanding Universal Value of properties.

8. To be more efficient and operational, such database would need to be integrated to all the current databases on the World Heritage Centre's website (Nominations, International Assistance, Tentative Lists, statutory documentation, World Heritage Committee's Decisions, etc), with links to the documentation and information management systems of the Advisory Bodies.
9. Such a system could also allow all users to conduct analyses of the threats affecting the properties and their evolution over time. Such analyses could help identify generic threats, underlying key issues and potential trends over time and would assist States Parties to improve the mitigation measures to better protect their properties.

III. Remote sensing techniques for monitoring

10. In its Decision **34 COM 7C**, the World Heritage Committee also requested that the Advisory Bodies work with the World Heritage Centre, the UNESCO Science Sector, and relevant remote sensing agencies, to examine the feasibility of using remote sensing to help assess the potential contribution of this technique to the monitoring of certain threats to the Outstanding Universal Value of properties.
11. This specific point is addressed in the introduction of Document WHC-11/35.COM/7B.

IV. Preparation of Desired state of conservation for the removal of properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger

12. Since its 31st session (Christchurch, 2007), the World Heritage Committee has been requesting States Parties to the *Convention*, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, to submit to the World Heritage Centre a draft statement for the properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, related to the necessary improvement in their state of conservation and based on their Outstanding Universal Value. This statement aims at defining the thresholds for removing the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger once the "Desired state of conservation for removal of property from the List of World Heritage in Danger" . (DSOCR) has been reached.
13. Whilst there are still no fixed guidelines on how those statements should be drafted, as well as on the process to follow to finalize them in view of their adoption by the World Heritage Committee, there is a growing body of practice in defining DSOCR. A reflection has started among the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, based on this practice, to document methods and modalities for the drafting and adoption of such statements and this will be proposed for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session in 2012.

V. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision: 35 COM 7C

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC-11/35.COM/7C, WHC-11/35.COM/INF.7C and WHC-11/35.COM/7B,

2. *Recalling Decision **34 COM 7C**, adopted at its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010),*
3. *Thanks the States Parties of Senegal and Australia for the organization of the Expert meeting on the global state of conservation challenges for World Heritage properties (Dakar, Senegal, 13-15 April 2011);*
4. *Endorses the recommendations of the Expert meeting on the global state of conservation challenges for World Heritage properties presented in Document WHC-11/35.COM/INF.7C and invites States Parties to the Convention, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to develop plans to implement them, and identify the required resources;*
5. *Considering the need for more systematic monitoring of threats, calls upon the States Parties to the Convention to support the establishment of a comprehensive "state of conservation information system" to support analytical studies and assist all stakeholders in site-management, with the target to make this system available ,on the World Heritage Centre's website, at the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee in 2013;*
6. *Requests the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, to prepare clear modalities and guidance for the drafting and adoption of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session in 2012;*
7. *Also requests the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies to prepare a progress report on the issues mentioned above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session in 2012.*