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

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

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Thirty-eighth Session

**Doha, Qatar
15 - 25 June 2014**

**Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda: Reports of the World Heritage Centre and
the Advisory Bodies**

5D. World Heritage and Sustainable Development

SUMMARY

This document presents the progress achieved in developing a proposal for a policy to integrate a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention, which had been requested by the Committee in its Decision **36 COM 5C**, as well as developments that are envisaged.

Draft Decision: 38 COM 5D, see Part II.

I. PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION 36 COM 5C

1. The World Heritage Committee at its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010) had welcomed the outcome of an expert meeting on the relations between the World Heritage Convention, conservation and sustainable development that was held in Paraty (Brazil) from 29 to 31 March 2010, and agreed that it would be desirable to further consider, in the implementation of the Convention, policies and procedures to maintain the Outstanding Universal Value of properties, and also contribute to sustainable development. By its Decision **35 COM 5E**, moreover, the Committee requested that the World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies, and with the support of interested States Parties, continue its efforts to implement various activities recommended by the Paraty Meeting.
2. By its Decision **36 COM 5C**, the World Heritage Committee requested the World Heritage Centre, with the support of the Advisory Bodies, to convene a small expert working group to develop, within a year, a policy for the integration of sustainable development into the processes of the World Heritage Convention, for possible inclusion in the future Policy Guidance document. The Committee had also requested that, within available resources, a draft of the above-mentioned policy be submitted for examination by the Committee no later than at its 38th session in 2014.
3. The overall goal of such a policy would be to assist States Parties, practitioners, institutions, communities and networks, through appropriate guidance, to harness the potential of World Heritage properties, and heritage in general, to contribute to sustainable development, and ensure that their conservation and management strategies are appropriately aligned with broader sustainable development objectives. In the process, of course, the primary objective of the World Heritage Convention, which is to protect the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, should not be compromised.
4. In its Decision **36 COM 5C**, the World Heritage Committee further specified that the proposed policy should take into account the outcomes of meetings that took place for the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention across the world, as well as the previous and ongoing relevant discussions on related topics within the larger UN context. Therefore, before assembling the expert working group, a full analysis was performed by the World Heritage Centre to examine the recommendations resulting from these conferences, meetings and workshops (which totalled more than 100 events), in relation to sustainable development.
5. In laying out the methodology to be followed, the Report of the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, entitled “Realizing the Future We Want For All” was taken as a reference¹. Based on the outcome of the 2012 World Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio + 20), this Report proposes an integrated framework for sustainable development, including three fundamental principles, four core dimensions as well as a range of “enablers” (see diagram on page 24 of the Report).
6. To facilitate the work of the experts, the World Heritage Centre then set out to prepare a working document, defining the background, scope and proposed structure of the policy to be developed. This integrates the conceptual framework adopted at the wider UN level in the context of the discussions leading to the post-2015 development agenda, as well as the analysis of the events related to the 40th Anniversary of the Convention and other important reference documents. The working document is accessible online at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/sustainabledevelopment>.
7. Eight key dimensions of sustainable development were thus identified, namely: Inclusive Social Development; Inclusive Economic Development; Environmental Sustainability; Peace and Security; Resilience/Disaster Risk Reduction; Gender Equality; Indigenous People; and Human Rights. For each of these eight dimensions, an expert was identified. An additional ninth expert, a senior Officer from the UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs, was invited to be part of the group to ensure that its work is fully in line with the UN’s framework for sustainable development.

¹ Accessible online from : http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Post_2015_UNTTreport.pdf

8. The Working Document prepared by the World Heritage Centre envisaged that, when completed, the draft policy might include the following three components:
 - a) A set of very concise and compelling policy statements, containing principles for the integration of a sustainable development perspective, in relation to its various dimensions, in the implementation of the processes of the World Heritage Convention;
 - b) Proposed specific operational procedures and working modalities that could be introduced in the World Heritage processes, as a consequence of the adoption of the above-mentioned policy statements;
 - c) Suggestions for capacity-building initiatives, including training programmes, resource materials (manuals, case-studies, tools) and other activities that would need to be implemented with a view to enable and facilitate the actual implementation of the new proposed policies.
9. In addition to the expert working group, it was envisioned that a select number of managers/administrators of World Heritage properties from different regions of the world would be invited to take part in the consultation, at different stages, of the proposed policy components. These site managers would be asked to review and comment on the initial draft of the policy statements developed by the 'core' experts with a view to test their relevance and applicability from the perspective of practitioners on the ground. To enable a more meaningful exchange and achieve a more comprehensive and balanced document, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies consider that a three-day workshop should ideally be organized, which would bring together both the thematic experts and the site managers, as well as representatives of heritage institutions with a record of integrating sustainable development concerns into their policies and programmes.
10. Furthermore, it was proposed to share the resulting document with a larger group of World Heritage stakeholders (via an online forum), possibly including Category 2 Centres, UNESCO Chairs on heritage and NGOs, and solicit their feedback, which would be integrated into a final draft of the policy. The World Heritage Centre will coordinate the whole process, in close consultation with the Advisory Bodies.
11. Unfortunately, no resources could be identified to support this complex undertaking, which currently is taking place on a voluntary basis and remotely (via email and, since March 2014, through an online platform). As a result, progress has been slow in developing the draft policy, which therefore is not yet at a stage where it can be submitted to the Committee for its consideration. At the time of writing of this report, the eight experts are still developing draft policy statements, which would need to be subsequently reviewed and harmonized before they can be shared with site managers for their comments.
12. The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies are of the view that the importance of this process would require adequate resources, if it is to achieve its expected aim. Such resources should contribute to both the above-mentioned workshop and to the hiring of a consultant who would ensure the necessary scientific coordination as well as the coherence of the policy to be developed with existing policies in different but related frameworks, for a total estimated amount of approximately 60,000 USD. Only in this way a solid proposal could be developed and submitted to the consideration of the Committee at its 39th session in 2015, in conjunction with its expected review of the *Operational Guidelines* and of the scoping study on the so-called "policy guidelines" (see Decisions **35 COM 12B** and **37 COM 13**).
13. The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies further consider that the successful development of a policy for integrating a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention would be a major achievement, which would directly contribute to the objectives set by the Committee and by the General Assembly of the States Parties, notably within the Strategic Action Plan 2012-2022, adopted in 2011 (Objective 3). It would also ensure that all the wealth of reflections and recommendations that emerged from the 40th anniversary of the Convention would be translated into actual policies and thus have a real impact on the ground.

14. The mainstreaming of sustainable development in the World Heritage Convention, moreover, would be also consistent, and in timing, with the current trend in favour of integrating culture as a critical consideration with the UN post-2015 development agenda, which is expected to be agreed in the fall of 2015. This trend has been reiterated by numerous important international statements and declarations adopted over the recent years. These include three consecutive resolutions on "Culture and Development", adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2010, 2011 and 2013; the Hangzhou Declaration (May 2013); the outcome of the UN General Assembly Thematic Debate on Culture and Development, which took place in New York in June 2013; the outcome of the World Culture Forum (Bali Promise, November 2013); as well as numerous other statements adopted by Member States in the context of regional cooperation frameworks.

II. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision: 38 COM 5D

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC-14/38.COM/5D,*
2. *Recalling decisions **35 COM 5E** and **36 COM 5C**, adopted at its 35th and 36th sessions respectively,*
3. *Welcomes the progress made towards the development of a draft policy for integrating a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention, despite the lack of resources;*
4. *Acknowledges the significance of developing a policy which would emphasize the link between World Heritage and sustainable development in conjunction with the upcoming establishment of the UN post-2015 development agenda;*
5. *Endorses the proposed methodology for developing the draft policy for integrating a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention;*
6. *Recognizes however that broader consultations should be conducted in the drafting process of the policy and that adequate financial resources should be mobilized in this regard;*
7. *Strongly encourages all States Parties, other potential donors and partner institutions to provide financial or in kind support for the successful completion of this initiative;*
8. *Requests the World Heritage Centre along with the Advisory Bodies, if feasible within the available resources, to submit a draft of the policy for examination by the Committee at its 39th session, in 2015.*