



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

World Heritage

39 COM

WHC-15/39.COM/12

Paris, 15 May 2015

Original: English

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Thirty-ninth session

Bonn, Germany
28 June - 8 July 2015

Item 12 of the Provisional Agenda: Progress Report on the draft Policy Guidelines

SUMMARY

By its Decision **35 COM 12B**, the World Heritage Committee decided that a new document *Policy Guidelines* be developed. At its 37th session (Phnom Penh, 2013), it requested the World Heritage Centre to "present a report on progress made to the World Heritage Committee at its 39th session in 2015" (Decision **37 COM 13**, paragraph 7). It also requested that ICCROM, in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and the other Advisory Bodies, "further develops the *Policy Guidelines* and presents a scoping document" (Decision **37 COM 13**, paragraph 6).

This document presents a progress report on the elaboration of the *Policy Guidelines* as well as on the scoping document requested to ICCROM.

Draft Decision: 39 COM 12, see point IV.

I. BACKGROUND

1. The need to develop *Policy Guidelines* for the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* was expressed during the expert meeting on decision-making procedures of the statutory organs of the *World Heritage Convention* (Manama, Bahrain, 2010). Experts underlined that policy debates on the *Convention* did not have a proper forum during the statutory meetings, such as sessions of the General Assembly and of the World Heritage Committee, as well as meetings of experts and/or consultative bodies. So far, the *Operational Guidelines* are the only means to register the outcomes of policy discussions.
2. The drafting of a *Policy Guidelines* document is also to be considered within the overall context of the reflection initiative by the Director-General entitled "The *World Heritage Convention: Thinking Ahead*", whose overall objective is to strengthen the implementation of the *Convention* through a reform of statutory processes and improvement of working methods (see Document WHC-15/39.COM/5C).
3. The detailed report of the 2010 Manama expert meeting was examined at the 35th session of the Committee (Paris, 2011). The Committee decided "that the *Operational Guidelines* should be restricted to operational guidance, and that a new document, 'Policy Guidelines', be developed as a means to capture the range of policies that the Committee and the General Assembly adopt" (Decision **35 COM 12B**, paragraph 11). It further decided "to develop Policy Guidelines" for the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*, drawing in part on the results of expert meetings and advisory bodies (Decision **35 COM 12B**, paragraph 12).
4. In 2013, the World Heritage Centre presented at the 37th session of the Committee (Phnom Penh, 2013), a document on the process concerning the elaboration of the *Policy Guidelines* (document WHC-13/37.COM/13). The document proposed general considerations related to its status, issues discussed including resource constraints and links to the *Operational Guidelines*, as well as examples of text to be included in future *Policy Guidelines*.
5. After reviewing the action taken, the Committee requested the Centre to "present a report on progress made to the World Heritage Committee at its 39th session in 2015" (Decision **37 COM 13**, paragraph 7) and entrusted ICCROM, in collaboration with the Centre and the other Advisory Bodies, with the preparation and presentation of a scoping document (Decision **37 COM 13**, paragraph 6). During the 38th session of the Committee (Doha, 2014), ICCROM reported on the objectives that the scoping study should address, but noted that no funding had been made available for the activity (document WHC-14/38.COM/5B).
6. Since the 38th session, Australia has confirmed and finalized its financial support for preparing and finalizing the *Policy Guidelines* document through a Funds-in-Trust mechanism at UNESCO. Subsequently, a project document was developed by the Centre in close consultation with ICCROM early this year. A working meeting, led by ICCROM, with the participation of the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre on the preparation of the scoping study is scheduled on the sidelines of the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee to initiate the implementation of this project.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE *POLICY GUIDELINES*

7. As put forward by the expert meeting and decided by the Committee, the *Policy Guidelines* document will capture the range of policies that the Committee and the General Assembly adopt. It will provide States Parties with a consolidated source of

policy decisions made in the framework of the *World heritage Convention* to guide its implementation.

8. As a guidance tool, *Policy Guidelines* will contribute to the management by the States Parties of World Heritage properties when addressing, for example, such key challenges as disaster risk preparedness, climate change, human rights, etc. It intends to help States Parties in establishing adequate mechanisms within their legislation and heritage protection systems. The *Policy Guidelines* will therefore fully contribute to sharing best practices in heritage conservation policies worldwide through the implementation of the *Convention*.
9. More specifically, the objectives of the *Policy Guidelines* document are :
 - a. To provide a consolidated source of policy decisions made by the Governing Bodies under the *Convention*;
 - b. To improve decision-making by the World Heritage Committee and States Parties for a better implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* and for the advancement of conservation, management and protection of World Heritage properties;
 - c. To assist States Parties in reviewing their policies, legal systems, institutional infrastructure and governance mechanisms related to the management of World Heritage properties; and
 - d. To promote capacity-building of State Parties for the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*, including stronger awareness on environmental, social and economic challenges to World Heritage conservation.

III. THE WAY FORWARD

10. The project of preparing a *Policy Guidelines* document will consist of three phases over a timespan of two years. The scoping study will present the feasibility, framework, scope and content and methodology of the *Policy Guidelines*, including the complementarity functions of the *Policy Guidelines* and the *Operational Guidelines*. The first working meeting during the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee should consider and confirm the specific objectives of the scoping study and validate its work plan. In addition to the scoping study, this first phase will ultimately result in the identification, collection and classification of existing policy elements in various statutory documents and current expert knowledge related to the implementation of the *Convention*.
11. In a second phase, and after validation by the Committee of the scoping study, the Centre will inform the regional groups of UNESCO about the initiative and will invite them to nominate their regional experts in order to establish a panel with an equitable geographical and gender-balanced representation. The panel of experts, together with representatives of the Advisory Bodies, will act as steering committee for the *Policy Guidelines* project.
12. The steering committee will review the range of policies already developed since the adoption of the 1972 *Convention*, analyse the existing policy elements collected and consider the overall guidance that has been provided since then. On this basis, the steering committee will:
 - Complete the list of issues and subjects for which needs for strategy and policy orientations have been expressed during experts meetings;
 - Collect consolidated elements of policies that have responded to issues raised by contemporary heritage protection and preservation to serve as reference;

- Draw on results of scientific, experts and professional meetings to inform and inspire policies with the view to (upstream) prepare nominations files and (downstream) better contribute to the management of inscribed properties.

The steering committee could also identify the guidance that needs to be further developed in the future.

13. As a third phase, the draft *Policy Guidelines* will be developed and submitted to the Committee. Subject to availability of funds, the Secretariat should evaluate possibilities of establishing a regular up-dating procedure.

IV. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision: 39 COM 12

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC-15/39.COM/12,*
2. *Recalling Decision **35 COM 12B** and Decision **37 COM 13** adopted respectively at its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011) and its 37th session (Phnom Penh, 2013);*
3. *Thanks the Government of Australia for their commitment and financial contribution in view of the development of a Policy Guidelines document for a better implementation of the World Heritage Convention;*
4. *Takes note of the progress report prepared by the World Heritage Centre on the progress made so far;*
5. *Thanks ICCROM for taking the lead for preparing the scoping study in close consultation with ICOMOS and IUCN and the World Heritage Centre;*
6. *Requests the World Heritage Centre to present the scoping study to the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session in 2016.*