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# World Heritage

## 22 GA

**WHC/19/22.GA/7**  
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### UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

### TWENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Paris, UNESCO Headquarters  
27-28 November 2019

**Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda: Determination of the amount of the contributions to the World Heritage Fund in accordance with the provisions of Article 16 of the World Heritage Convention**

#### SUMMARY

In accordance with Article 16 of the World Heritage Convention, the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention is invited in the present document to determine the amount of the contributions to the World Heritage Fund in the form of a uniform percentage applicable to all States Parties.

The document also presents the most recent decisions taken by the World Heritage Committee in relation to the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund.

**Draft Resolution: 22 GA 7, see Part III.**

## I. DETERMINATION OF THE AMOUNT OF THE STATES PARTIES' CONTRIBUTIONS

1. In accordance with Article 16.1 of the World Heritage Convention, the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention determines every two years, in the form of a uniform percentage, the amount of contributions to be paid by States Parties to the World Heritage Fund.
2. Article 16.1 of the World Heritage Convention states that “in no case shall the compulsory contribution of States Parties to the Convention exceed 1% of the contribution to the regular budget of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization” while the assessed voluntary contributions of States Parties “should not be less than the contributions which they should have paid if they had been bound by the provisions of paragraph 1 of this Article.” (Article 16.4).
3. Since the first General Assembly of States Parties in 1976, the percentage used to determine the amount of contributions to be paid by States Parties to the World Heritage Fund has been set by each General Assembly at **1%**, which is the maximum percentage allowed by the text of the Convention. It is proposed to retain this percentage for the financial period 2020-2021.

## II. SUSTAINABILITY OF THE WORLD HERITAGE FUND

4. Over the past years, the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund has been one of the most pressing issues of the World Heritage Convention. The number of properties on the World Heritage List has increased by 16.5% since 2012, whilst at the same time the budget of the World Heritage Fund has decreased by 19.5% for the same period. In view of this situation combined with the increasing need for support to States Parties, the supplementary voluntary contributions are helpful but remain largely insufficient. The General Assembly at previous sessions has discussed the issue of arrears, which are also detrimental to the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund. Resolution **20 GA 8** (UNESCO, 2015) invited the General Assembly to consider “potential measures concerning arrears”. The Budget Working Group has also widely discussed this same topic during past Committee sessions, including at the 43rd session in Baku (July 2019).
5. In the meantime, the World Heritage Committee has envisaged various ways of increasing the resources of the World Heritage Fund. The Committee asked the Secretariat to explore the possibility of a voluntary annual fee to be paid by each World Heritage property (Decision **40 COM 15**). Subsequently, 2 online consultation surveys in English and French were carried out in 2017 and 2018 respectively, each for a duration of 4 months. The results of the online surveys were presented to the World Heritage Committee in Documents WHC/17/41.COM/INF.14.I (Krakow, 2017) and WHC/18/42.COM/14, paragraphs 46 to 49 (Manama, 2018). The very low level of replies to the surveys on one side and the even lower percentage of positive responses on the other were not very encouraging for the possibilities to strengthen the World Heritage Fund through annual voluntary fees by World Heritage property. However some funds paid in this framework came from 6 States Parties from 2018 up to 30 June 2019, namely Andorra, Bulgaria, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia and Viet Nam for a total of US\$ 18,005. The World Heritage Committee invited States Parties which have not responded to the survey to continue consultations with their respective local administrations (Decision **42 COM 14**, paragraph 7).
6. Considering the pressing need for a holistic, integrated and long-term line of action with regards a possible increase in resources, the World Heritage Committee adopted a “Roadmap for Sustainability of the World Heritage Fund” in 2017<sup>1</sup> (Decision **41 COM 14**).

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<sup>1</sup> See document WHC/17/21.GA/7 at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/21GA/documents/>

Designed by the ad hoc working group 2016-2017, it integrates a set of complementary short-, medium-, and long-term actions to be implemented in a phased timeline. Reporting on the short-term actions (3-year time-span) set in this Roadmap will be made to the Committee at its 44th session in 2020.

7. By Decision **41 COM 12A**, the Committee further extended the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group for the period 2017-2018, to discuss about and make recommendations on (*inter alia*) the elaboration of a comprehensive resource mobilization and communication strategy.
8. The purpose of developing a resource mobilization and communication strategy was to enable the mobilization of additional funds for and raise awareness of the World Heritage Convention, as well as to diversify sources of funding for World Heritage through engaging a wider scope of partners such as multilateral institutions and funds, civil society and local stakeholders. The Ad Hoc Working Group prepared a framework document defining core principles, guidelines and targets. The document covers a number of key issues such as scope, goal, targets, priorities, timeline, ethical principles, diversification of donors and methodology. It also encompasses *de facto* the existing PACT Strategy and is in line with other relevant UNESCO documents.
9. The Committee at its 42nd session (Manama, 2018) endorsed the proposed “Resource mobilization and communication strategy” Framework document (Decision **42 COM 14**, paragraph 16) and requested the Secretariat to develop a two-year Resource Mobilization and Communication (RMC) Plan. The Plan has been presented to the Committee at its 43rd session (Baku, 2019). Its implementation in 2018 gave encouraging results: the annual target of US\$ 250,000 for the World Heritage Fund was reached whereas the target for extrabudgetary funds was exceeded. The implementation has been pursued in 2019 and a report will be presented to the Committee at its 44th session (2020).
10. The Committee also encouraged all States Parties to assist the Secretariat in fundraising activities (Decision **42 COM 14**, paragraph 17). A circular letter was sent to the States Parties to that effect (CL/WHC-19/03 dated 9 April 2019), inviting them to assist the Secretariat in its fund-raising efforts through, among others, in-kind/pro-bono consultancy, communication advice, prospecting potential donors, advocating for World Heritage, etc. For the time being no State Party has provided positive response on this subject.
11. Finally, at its 42nd session (Manama, 2018), the Committee noted with appreciation the proposal by Norway of a cost-sharing model for the evaluation of nominations<sup>2</sup> which was recommended for approval by the Ad-hoc Working Group 2017-2018, and decided to further examine this matter at its 43rd session in 2019 (Decision **42 COM 14**).
12. In view of the interest already expressed in 2018, there was an overwhelming consensus in the Budget Working Group in 2019 for the adoption of the mechanism by the Committee. However, some States Parties expressed regrets that the payment of contributions in this framework could not be mandatory, because it seems that imposing a mandatory fee for the submission of nominations would not be in accordance with the Convention.
13. Therefore, by Decision **43 COM 14**, paragraph 13, the Committee adopted the mechanism which consists of sharing the costs of evaluations between the World Heritage Fund and the submitting States Parties through the payment, on a voluntary basis, of a lump sum to the Fund, allowing for a shifting of resources to conservation activities. The mechanism was also included in the Operational Guidelines in a new paragraph 168bis (see Decision **43 COM 11A**).

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<sup>2</sup> See document WHC/18/42.COM/12A, Annex E at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/42COM/documents/>

14. The implementation of this mechanism will be starting with nominations submitted from 1 February 2020. As requested by the Committee, the Secretariat will take the necessary steps to establish the new sub-account and to provide information to the States Parties on the practical modalities for payment before the end of 2019.

### III. DRAFT RESOLUTION

#### **Draft Resolution: 22 GA 7**

*The General Assembly,*

1. *Having examined Documents WHC/19/22.GA/7 and WHC/19/22.GA/INF.7,*
2. *Recalling Article 16 of the World Heritage Convention,*
3. *Decides to set the percentage for the calculation of the amount of the contributions to be paid to the World Heritage Fund by States Parties for the financial period 2020-2021 at 1% of their contributions to the regular budget of UNESCO;*
4. *Emphasizing the urgency of securing adequate financial resources to achieve the objectives of the World Heritage Convention to identify and conserve the world's cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value, in particular in light of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the unprecedented threats such as climate change, natural disasters, and deliberate attacks on cultural heritage in territories affected by armed conflicts and terrorism,*
5. *Notes the status of compulsory and voluntary contributions to the World Heritage Fund as presented in Document WHC/19/22.GA/INF.7;*
6. *Recalls, in this regard, that the assessed annual contributions to the World Heritage Fund are a legal obligation incumbent on all States Parties which have ratified the Convention;*
7. *Reiterates the plea of the World Heritage Committee to States Parties to the Convention to pay their annual contributions by 31 January wherever possible in order to facilitate the timely implementation of the activities financed by the World Heritage Fund;*
8. *Takes note of Decisions **42 COM 14** and **43 COM 14** taken by the World Heritage Committee on the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund;*
9. *Invites States Parties to provide supplementary voluntary contributions to the various sub-accounts of the World Heritage Fund.*