



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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

World Heritage

33 COM

Distribution Limited

WHC-09/33.COM/10C
Paris, 11 May 2009
Original: English/French

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Thirty-third session

Seville, Spain
22 – 30 June 2009

Item 10 of the Provisional Agenda: Global Strategy for a representative,
balanced and credible World Heritage List

10C Thematic Studies

SUMMARY

At the request of the World Heritage Committee at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008), this document contains a point of information on the on-going and proposed global thematic studies undertaken by ICOMOS and IUCN.

Draft Decision: 33 COM 10C see point IV.

I. Introduction

1. At the request of the World Heritage Committee at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008) by its Decision **32 COM 10A**, this document contains a point of information on the on-going and proposed global thematic studies undertaken by ICOMOS and IUCN.

II. Progress report on global thematic studies by ICOMOS

A. Progress report on the thematic study on *Rock Art in Central Asia*

2. A number of sub-regional thematic studies on rock art have been previously prepared (such as, *Rock art sites of Central Asia. Public participation, management, conservation, documentation*, UNESCO, 2004) and in the view of ICOMOS, Central Asia is the next priority. The preparation of the thematic study was delayed and possibilities to work further on it should be discussed at an expert meeting organised by the UNESCO world Heritage Centre on 29th May 2009.

B. Progress report on the thematic study on *Potential Fossil Hominid Sites for inscription on the World Heritage List*

3. This topic has been identified through the study *The World Heritage List Filling the Gaps – An action Plan for the Future* (ICOMOS, 2005). This thematic study updates previous work and also contributes to the larger topic on Prehistory. It will be made available at the 33rd session of the World Heritage Committee in Seville.

C. Progress report on the thematic study on *Agro-pastoral Cultural Landscapes*

4. Following the September 2007 expert Meeting on “Agro-pastoral cultural landscapes in the Mediterranean” (Meyrueis, France), and the presentation of the results at an informal lunchtime event during the 32nd session of the World Heritage Committee (Quebec City, July 2008), the proceedings of the expert meeting have been disseminated and made available on the web-page at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/culturallandscape/> or <http://whc.unesco.org/en/events/489>. A comparative study on agropastoralism is being carried out by a group of international experts who are collecting data. The results are expected to be delivered by the end of 2009.

D. Progress report on the thematic study on *Thematic study on the Heritage of Astronomy*

5. This thematic study is developed in the context of the recent interest in the review of the relationship between heritage of sciences and the World Heritage Convention and the International Year of Astronomy 2009. It sets out to undertake a substantial and wide-ranging survey on astronomical heritage. It is carried out in cooperation with the International Astronomical Union. Preparatory work started and it is scheduled that the study would be delivered to the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session in 2010. Resources for this work to be funded have been sought through States Parties.
6. The Thematic studies on *Irrigation and Water Management Systems* and *Cultural and Natural Heritage of the Arctic Region* which were considered as priorities did not find financial support to be undertaken for the moment.

E. Additional thematic work undertaken by ICOMOS

7. Outstanding Universal Value: A first compendium on Standards for the inscription of cultural properties to the World Heritage List was prepared in 2008 as requested by the World Heritage Committee and made available in English and French.
8. World Heritage in Danger: A second compendium of key decisions on the conservation of cultural heritage properties on the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger was prepared in response to the request of the World Heritage Committee. It will be available for the 33rd session of the World Heritage Committee in English and French.
9. In addition to the above studies funded through the World Heritage Fund, ICOMOS also prepared a special edition of the Heritage@Risk on *The Soviet Heritage and European Modernism* (2007). Following the *Cultural Heritage in the Arctic and Antarctic Regions* (2004) a new publication is now available on *Historical Polar Bases – Preservation and Management* (2008).

F. Future plans for thematic work of ICOMOS

10. For each biennium, ICOMOS reviews its priorities based on requests/decisions of the World Heritage Committee, discussions by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel, the *The World Heritage List Filling the Gaps – An action Plan for the Future*, and discussions with our membership worldwide. At this stage, the following priorities remain from the present biennium, but were unable to be started due to stretched staff and financial resources.
11. The Thematic studies on *Irrigation and Water Management Systems* and *Cultural and Natural Heritage of the Arctic Region* which were considered as priorities did not find financial support to be undertaken for the moment.
12. ICOMOS has held discussions about the possible methodological approach to a thematic study on 20th Century Heritage but it cannot proceed without adequate funding.
13. Next thematic study for the Pacific is awaiting further discussion and agreement with the World Heritage Centre and the annual meeting of the Pacific States Parties to work out what is the next priority area.

III. Progress report on global thematic studies by IUCN

14. IUCN also continued its work in the field of global thematic studies, which it publishes in a series entitled "World Heritage Studies". Progress with three new thematic studies it presented last year and other thematic work is as follows. In view of the importance of these studies IUCN has augmented the small budget currently allocated for thematic studies for its work in this area (c. USD15,000 pa) with its own resources during 2008-09 and in partnership with other organisations such as BfN, the German Nature Conservation Agency and UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre. IUCN is keen to sustain this thematic work in partnership with interested States Parties, in relation to new subject areas and in relation to the translation of studies into relevant languages. The suggested priorities for translation of the different studies are noted below.

G. Progress report on the thematic study on Volcanoes and Volcanic Landscapes

15. This study responds to Decision **31 COM 8B.17**.

16. This thematic study is being finalised following peer review, including input from the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, International Association of Geomorphologists and the International Union of Geological Sciences. It is intended that the study will be distributed in an English version at the 33rd Session of the World Heritage Committee. The study will be made available at the following Web address: www.iucn.org. The study has been partly funded through the World Heritage Fund, augmented by IUCN's own resources. IUCN is keen to receive support for the translation of the study into other relevant languages to assist its implementation (French, Spanish, Hindi, Japanese and others).

H. Progress report on the thematic study on Caves and Karst

17. This study responds to Decision **31 COM 8B.13** to the need identified in Decision: **31 COM 8B.13** to advise States Parties on the scope of karst and cave values already represented on the World Heritage List and the potential and priorities for future recognition of karst landscapes and features in relation to the relevant World Heritage criteria.
18. This thematic study (Williams, P, (2008) World Heritage Caves and Karst, IUCN, Gland) was completed and distributed in an English version as part of the IUCN World Heritage Studies series at the 32nd Session of the World Heritage Committee. It is available at the following address: www.iucn.org/wcpa. The study was partly funded through the World Heritage Fund, augmented by IUCN's own resources. IUCN is keen to receive support for the translation of the study into other relevant languages to assist its implementation (French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Chinese and others).

I. Progress report on the thematic study on Deserts and Desert Landscapes

19. Desert and semi-arid landscapes have been recognised as one of the areas where there is a relative under-representation of properties on the World Heritage List. IUCN is developing a thematic study in partnership with the International Association of Geomorphologists to consider the future priorities for recognition of World Heritage deserts, including consideration of properties included on the tentative lists of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention.
20. This thematic study can is currently being considered through a peer review process. It is likely that this study will be finalised in an English version in Autumn 2009 although every effort will be made to provide a draft to the 33rd Session of the Committee. The study has been partly funded through the World Heritage Fund, augmented by IUCN's own resources. IUCN is keen to receive support for the translation of the study into other relevant languages to assist its implementation (Arabic, Spanish, French, Chinese, Russian and others).

J. Progress report on the thematic study on Polar and subpolar regions

21. A thematic study on the Arctic has been commissioned by IUCN in partnership with UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre, with funding from the World Heritage Fund which will be augmented by resources from IUCN and possibly also from UNEP-WCMC. It is anticipated that this study will be completed in 2010, but it is not certain that it can be completed before the 34th Session of the World Heritage Committee due to the scope of the work involved. The study will be carried out with reference to the natural World Heritage criteria, and considering properties that have been included in the tentative lists of States Parties to the Convention. The possibility of the study being carried out in partnership with the Ramsar Convention has also been raised. IUCN is keen to receive support for the translation of the study into other relevant languages to assist its

implementation (French, Russian and others).

K. Additional thematic work undertaken by IUCN

22. In addition to the above studies which have been partly funded through the World Heritage Fund, IUCN has also carried out a number of other studies at its own expense. The current list of IUCN World Heritage Studies is as follows

- o 1. Outstanding Universal Value: Standards for Natural World Heritage: A Compendium of standards for inscriptions of natural properties on the World Heritage List, prepared in 2008 by IUCN at the request of the World Heritage Committee with financial support of the World Heritage Fund and IUCN. Available in English, French and current translation into Arabic. 2008.
- o 2. World Heritage Caves and Karst. See Above.
- o 3. World Heritage and Protected Areas. An analysis of the contribution of World Heritage properties to the global network of protected area. Prepared in 2008 as a factual analysis by IUCN in partnership with UNEP-WCMC, and based on the World Database on Protected Areas. Funded by IUCN and available in English.
- o 4. Natural World Heritage Nominations: A Resource Manual for Practitioners. A manual on good practice in the preparation of World Heritage nominations. Prepared by IUCN with support from the World Heritage Fund and additional support from IUCN. Scheduled for revision during 2009 to produce a single joint manual prepared by IUCN and ICOMOS. Available in English.
- o 5. Management Planning for Natural World Heritage Properties: A Resource Manual for Practitioners. An interim manual on the preparation of management plans for natural World Heritage properties. Prepared by IUCN in 2008 with support from the World Heritage Fund and the World Commission for Protected Areas. Intended to be expanded and replaced by a manual on Managing Natural World Heritage Properties to be prepared for 2010.
- o 6. Serial Natural World Heritage Sites (in press). A factual digest on the status of the World Heritage List in relation to the inclusion of serial natural World Heritage properties. Prepared by BfN (Germany) in partnership with IUCN and published in May 2009.
- o 7. World Heritage in Danger (in press). A second compendium of key decisions of the World Heritage Committee. Prepared by IUCN for publication in 2009 in response to request of the World Heritage Committee and to be available at the 33rd Session of the World Heritage Committee with some funding from the World Heritage Fund and significant additional support from IUCN. To be available in English and French.
- o 8. World Heritage Volcanoes (in press) See above.
- o 9. World Heritage Deserts (in press) See above.

23. Eight other earlier IUCN studies that are also currently available and relevant to the work of States Parties are as follows:

- o **Fossil Sites:** Wells, R.T (1996) Earth's Geological History: A contextual framework for assessment of World Heritage fossil site nominations.

- o **Human Use of Natural Sites:** Thorsell, J. and Sigaty, T. (1997) Human Use of World Heritage Natural Sites: A Global Overview.
- o **Wetlands and Marine Areas:** Thorsell, J., Forster Levy, R. and Sigaty, T. (1997) A Global Overview of Wetland and Marine Protected Areas on the World Heritage List.
- o **Forests:** Thorsell, J. and Sigaty, J. (1997) A Global Overview of Forest Protected Areas on the World Heritage List.
- o **Mountains:** Thorsell, J. and Hamilton, L. (2002) A Global Overview of Mountain Protected Areas on the World Heritage List.
- o **Biodiversity:** Magin, C. and Chape, S. (2004) Review of the World Heritage Network: Biogeography, Habitats and Biodiversity.
- o **Central Asia:** Magin, C. (2005) World Heritage Thematic Study for Central Asia: A Regional Overview.
- o **Geology:** Dingwall, P., Weighell, T. and Badman, T. (2005) Geological World Heritage: A Global Framework.

L. Future plans for thematic work of IUCN

24. IUCN is keen to extend its thematic work, within available resources. IUCN is particularly keen to carry out a full Revision of the Gaps Analysis for natural World Heritage properties, which would be carried out in partnership with the IUCN Species Survival Commission and UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre and others. This should include revision and update of studies on mountains, forests, marine and freshwater systems and consolidate and integrate other recent studies. The likely costs of such a study which would need to be multi-authored, peer-reviewed and published with colour maps, would be c. 100,000 USD and an 18 month period would be required for its completion. IUCN's current target to achieve this is 2012, depending on the availability of resources.
25. Topics that IUCN is keen to work on immediately and which will contribute to the above study are as follows. The estimated typical costs of commissioning and producing a thematic study in three languages range from between USD 20-50,000.
 - o Marine World Heritage (led by WCPA-Marine, following up a workshop held in partnership with the Kingdom of Bahrain and the World Heritage Centre);
 - o Freshwater systems (to be developed in partnership with UNEP-WCMC and Ramsar);
 - o The application and assessment of natural criterion vii on "superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance."
 - o Assessment of natural values within World Heritage Cultural Landscapes.
 - o Revision and update of IUCN thematic studies on: Mountains and Forests

IV. Draft Decision

Draft Decision: 33 COM 10C

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC-09/33.COM/10C,*
2. *Recalling Decision **32 COM 10A** adopted at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008),*
3. *Requests the Advisory Bodies, in cooperation with the World Heritage Centre, to reorganize the Annex III of the Operational Guidelines with the latest references of the above-mentioned thematic studies;*
4. *Invites States Parties to the Convention to consider providing extra-budgetary assistance the thematic studies programmes of the Advisory Bodies as identified above, and to also identify opportunities to support translation of completed studies*