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

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

BUREAU OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Twenty-fifth extraordinary session

**Helsinki, Finland
7 - 8 December 2001**

**Information document: Report of the International World Heritage site visit to
Auschwitz Concentration Camp and Surroundings (Poland) from 1 to 2 July 2001**

The Bureau may wish to take note of the Report of the International World Heritage site visit to Auschwitz Concentration Camp and Surroundings (Poland) from 1 to 2 July 2001, carried out under the leadership of the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee. The Bureau may wish to transmit the conclusions and recommendations contained in section 5 of this report to the Committee for consideration.

REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORLD HERITAGE SITE VISIT
TO AUSCHWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP AND SURROUNDINGS
(POLAND) from 1 to 2 July 2001

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The mission would like to express its deep gratitude for all the arrangements made at very short notice to receive the mission and for the generous hospitality of the Polish authorities. The mission was impressed by the dedication and professionalism of staff working on the management and protection of the site. The mission members were also most grateful to representatives from local and regional authorities who took the time to explain in detail the particular issues that they face and who continue to seek mutually acceptable solutions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the assessment of the information made available to the mission team in background documentation, meetings with Government officials, representatives of municipalities and the World Heritage site management team, and through observations during an on-site visit from 1 to 2 July 2001, the mission team has reached the conclusions listed below in Section 5 and within individual sections.

1 SUMMARY OF THE MISSION'S ACTIVITIES

The mission, led by the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee, Mr Peter King, visited the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau and related sites in the surrounding area on 1 and 2 July 2001. The mission was in response to an invitation from the Polish Government and a resolution passed at the World Heritage Bureau meeting in Paris immediately prior to the mission.

The mission was received by a Polish delegation led by Mme Malgorzata Dzieduszycka (Permanent Delegate of Poland to UNESCO), Mr. Stefan Wilkanowicz (Vice President of the International Auschwitz Council) and the Director the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau. The mission was taken on an inspection of the Auschwitz and Birkenau camps, and also walked the area in between the two camps to examine related sites such as the Judenrampe, railway infrastructure and the tobacco factory.

During the site inspection the Chairperson laid wreaths at the Death Wall in Auschwitz and at the memorial in Birkenau on behalf of the World Heritage community.

The mission subsequently viewed other sites related to the camps including the chemical factory, the brewery, the leather factory (site of a controversial discotheque), the supermarket site, the convent, the Red House and the White House (sites of the first gas chambers), the gravel pit, the unloading platforms, the potato storage and warehouses and the Russian Memorial site. The mission also visited the synagogue in Oswiecim.

On Day 2 the mission met at the Auschwitz Museum with the principal representatives of the local authorities of the city of Oswiecim and region, the governor and other representatives of the Polish authorities, and discussed the management and planning of the camps, their surroundings and related sites. A list of those present at the meeting is included in Annex III. The Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee, Mr Peter King, read the decision of the Bureau in its entirety to the members of the Polish delegation (attached as Annex IV).

As a result of the visit the mission has made several recommendations to the Polish Authorities that will assist in making progress to resolve the outstanding management and planning issues.

2 BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

Inscription history

The site was nominated on 6 June 1978 by the Polish Government. The World Heritage Committee at its third session in 1979, inscribed the site under criterion (vi) with the following note; “The Committee decided to enter Auschwitz concentration camp on the List as a unique site and to restrict the inscription of other sites of a similar nature.”

Criteria and World Heritage values

In inscribing the site solely for associative values, the Committee highlighted the values of the site as a place of memory to bear witness to the conditions within which the holocaust took place. The former concentration and extermination camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau was the largest of the Third Reich.

Examination of the State of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau

The World Heritage Bureau and its Committee reviewed the state of conservation of the site on several occasions, in particular during the twenty-second, twenty-third and twenty-fourth sessions as well as during the twenty-fifth session of the World Heritage Bureau (extract of the report included in Annex IV).

Justification of the mission

The President of the World Heritage Committee, Mr. Peter King, received an invitation from the Polish Government for a site visit. He decided the mission would take place immediately following the twenty-fifth session of the World Heritage Bureau (Paris, 25 to 30 June 2001). He was accompanied by Mr. Giora Solar, Representative of ICOMOS, Mr. Michael Turner, member of the International Group of Experts, Ms. Mechtild Rössler, representative of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, and Mr. David Roberts, advisor to Mr. King. The programme of the mission, the composition of the mission team and the representatives met are included in Annex I, II and III.

3 NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

The mission noted a number of Governmental and other provisions and programmes relevant to the protection of the World Heritage site, in particular:

- legislation of the Polish People’s Republic of 2 July 1947 (referred to in the nomination);
- the Protection Zone of 1990 covering 38,89 ha;

- the Strategic Governmental Programme for Oswiezim (1996-2001/ 2002-2007);
- the 'Declaration Concerning Principles for Implementation of Program Oswiecimski' (5 March 1997) initiated by the Polish Government, the Plenipotentiary for the Government Strategic Plan for Oswiecim, the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, the International Council of the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau and the Mayor of Oswiecim;
- Act for the Protection of Former Nazi Extermination Camps of 7 June 1999;

The mission acknowledged the commitment by the Polish Government to the preservation of the World Heritage site, but underlined the need for a policy of conservation and overall management for the surroundings.

4 IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ISSUES

Management of the World Heritage site

The over-riding conclusion from the extensive tour of the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau is that the World Heritage site is well managed. The site itself is in two parts, and covers a large area, and has considerable infrastructure and artifacts that require maintenance and protection. This represents a major commitment of resources by the Polish Authorities and by others involved in supporting the site, including international donors.

It was clear from the visit that the Polish Authorities take their responsibilities very seriously and undertake effective management and maintenance as far as available resources allow. The Authorities have made a considerable commitment to research and to the implementation of solutions to conservation problems, such as that affecting concrete walls and barbed-wire fence pillars on the site as well as the authentic preservation of the ruins of the gas chambers. Measures needed to ensure the long-term conservation of hair, leather and other artifacts in the main displays are also to be regularly reviewed.

The mission noted the excellent new works and displays recently established at the site and Museum buildings, and the considerable effort that had gone into design and implementation to ensure not only sound education, display and signage, but also to ensure the long term conservation of the property.

The mission wishes to reassure the World Heritage Committee of the excellent quality of management at the World Heritage sites and of the commitment and dedication of the staff of the museum, and to congratulate the Polish Authorities on its achievements within the site itself.

Bufferzone

While the sites themselves are well managed and subject to satisfactory legal and management regimes, the location of the site in such close proximity to a modern and developing city gives rise to conflicting priorities in the surrounding area. With the possible exception of constraints imposed by limited resources for the management and conservation of the State Museum, all management issues of concern occur outside of the site itself. Some of these

occur in the 100m zone established under the legislation passed in 1999, some occur in the larger zone originally proposed in the nomination of the site (silence zone and protection zone), while others occur in separate individual locations which are linked by the events rather than by physical connection (see below).

The mission also noted that the 300 to 1000m silence and protection zones (as shown in the map in Annex IV) were never implemented although the map formed an integral part of the nominations dossier submitted by the authorities that was accepted by the Committee for inscription. The mission noted that these zones were largely arbitrary in nature. The mission does not see revision of the zoning as an insurmountable problem, as it believes that outcomes acceptable to Governments, the World Heritage Committee, residents and other interested parties can be achieved through appropriate zoning, planning and management practices.

It was clear to the mission that an impasse has been reached in defining the management of the surrounding area, and providing external resources may assist with resolution of this impasse. The mission noted that in the view of some of the stakeholders involved, this impasse was a consequence of:

1. The arbitrary nature of the definition of previous zones. Whether they have been set at 100m, 300m, 1000m, arbitrary zones will inevitably cause inappropriate decisions at one or more points.
2. The imposition of zones without thorough consultation. Particularly given the historical context of inappropriately restrictive regulations (see above) any discussion of “buffer zones” currently causes an immediate negative reaction from local residents and developers;
3. Inappropriate management restrictions. Restrictions need not be identical in all parts of the surrounding area, depending on the outcome required in that area and on the alternatives available to residents and others proposing development or land-use changes.
4. A lack of flexibility in the application of the restrictions and the purpose of the “bufferzone” and the management plan.

The mission accepts the need for development and appropriate activities in some areas of any zone defined around the site, as these areas are an integral part of the city community. Equally, in other areas almost no activity would be appropriate. The need for this flexibility was agreed by all parties. It is important to note that it is also necessary to proceed quickly to resolve issues of zoning and management planning, as any delay is likely to make problems increasingly intractable. The Governor of the region noted that “there is a need to define zones and the activities permitted within each zone. The faster it is done the faster the management plan will be realised”.

It is important in any resolution of these issues to recognise the needs, requirements and support of the local residents who have settled in Ozwiecim. The large majority of residents first came to Ozwiecim after the war, presumably due to the availability of work in the chemical plant and in light industry. Others returned to Ozwiecim having fled the area or having been forcibly relocated during the war. It is these residents who sometimes now suffer the considerable burden and stigma that the name Auschwitz engenders. It is also these residents who, along with others, provide some of the financial support for the site through local taxes, utilities, infrastructure. Any resolution of these issues must acknowledge these contributions and provide a high level of dignity to the modern residents.

The mission acknowledges the desire of residents and local authorities for social and commercial development and the desire to diversify activities in the town. The mission also recognises the need to respect private property rights in neighbouring areas.

The mission acknowledges the constraints placed upon urban development by flood prone areas, and by the availability of utilities in only some areas.

The mission notes that in the longer term and with suitable investment there are many opportunities for appropriate tourism and education programmes which will allow compatible development in some areas of any protection zones.

Related sites

The mission noted that a number of sites outside of the World Heritage area are directly related to the events for which the site was inscribed on the World Heritage List and therefore need to be inventoried, protected and presented in an adequate manner. The related sites discussed during the mission include the Red House, the White House, the Leather Factory, the gravel pit, the chemical factory, the unloading platforms, Judenrampe, the potato storage and warehouses. There was also considerable discussion about the important area between the two camps of Auschwitz and Birkenau, and how it is to be managed to ensure its long term protection, either by integration into the existing site or by appropriate management zoning. It is clear that due to a number of factors, including financial, property rights and others difficulties have been encountered. Specific recent and ongoing issues concerning a proposal for the development of a new supermarket in one of these buildings, and the use of part of one of these buildings as a discotheque were also discussed.

The current status of the supermarket proposal is that permission has been declined, however local officials stressed that the lack of a supermarket in this part of Oswiecim causes modern residents major inconvenience, is a significant political issue, and colours community perceptions of the planning regime related to the camps. The officials requested in strong terms that some resolution be found that provides such facilities for residents within a reasonable distance of local residential areas. The point was made that without prompt resolution of this issue overall resolution of the planning regime is unlikely and opposition to reasonable restrictions is likely to become further entrenched.

The Polish Authorities have also instructed the owners of the discotheque to cease operation, however we understand that the owners are currently challenging this decision in the courts.

The mission noted that an inventory of related sites had been completed, and that some prioritisation appeared to have been applied to the sites identified. While time constraints prevented examination of these reports, the mission welcomed this work, noting that identification of important sites, and their prioritisation according to their importance, the practicality of physical conservation, financial demands of protection, and the practicality of protection considering other social and planning factors were key steps in developing a workable and widely acceptable management structure.

Local communities

One major observation of the mission was the lack of involvement of local communities of both Oswiezim and Brezinka in the consultation and decision making processes and the lack of integration of communities in the overall planning. As the site has been inscribed at a very early stage of the implementation of the Convention, article 14 of the Operational Guidelines has not been taken into account: "Participation of local people in the nomination process is essential to make them feel a shared responsibility with the State Party in the maintenance of the site."

The mission emphasises the importance of a shared responsibility for the heritage of humankind and strongly recommends (see below) an increased dialogue with local communities.

Government and level of responsibilities

The mission notes the different level of responsibilities for the management of the site and its surroundings, in particular

- the Government of Poland, represented through the Permanent Delegation of Poland to UNESCO and the Foreign Ministry
- the plenipotentiary
- The state Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau (site manager)
- the Governor of the province
- the municipality of Oswiezim; and
- the local authority of Brezinka

The mission recommends a strengthening of co-ordination between the different levels and a dialogue between that city of Oswiezim and the village of Brezinka in order to collaborate on issues related to the physical links of the two World Heritage areas and other related sites in future planning activities.

Management planning

The mission notes the efforts undertaken for an overall management planning of the site, in particular following the International Consultative Meeting of Experts on the Spatial Management of the Area around the Former Camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau (June 1998) and the establishment of the International Group of Experts.

The mission also noted that a Local Master Development Plan has been prepared only for Oswiezim while a Local Spatial Development Plan for Brezinka is in the concept stage, and that the plans were not formally presented nor discussed by the International Group of Experts, UNESCO or the World Heritage Committee. The Oswiezim plan has become a political issue in the context of local elections, and this has prompted objections from many members of the community and as a result it has not been implemented.

The mission furthermore noted the potential for local and regional development with compatible use of areas and buildings next to the World Heritage area or located in the 100m, 300m or 1000m zones.

The mission noted that the Polish Authorities welcomed a proposal to provide external professional assistance to provide technical advice on the current issues. The Polish

Authorities stressed that more than almost any other World Heritage site, the site of Auschwitz-Birkenau is a site that the world as a whole has an interest in, and not just the country in which it happens to have been placed historically. As such the Polish Authorities are keen to seek external input into its management. It was also noted that the site is probably unique, in that most sites are a source of pride and are related to local and national history and natural or cultural values of the residents, which is not the case in this instance. These facts have hampered decision making and have caused unusual difficulties in management planning. While recognising the absolute sovereignty of the Polish Government it is thus also important to recognise that, subject to the wishes of the Polish Government, the wider world also has responsibilities for the long-term protection of the site.

The mission supported the suggested use by the universities (e.g. Humanist Studies, Human Rights Department, Education Centre) of some of the tobacco buildings as an appropriate use and method of conserving the buildings which would otherwise continue to deteriorate. Major events such as peace initiatives, could enhance the collaboration of local communities and could be beneficial to the local economy. Many of the other related sites have been left untouched out of respect for their past, and without active conservation these buildings are deteriorating. These sites should also be preserved by encouraging their appropriate use, and the mission hopes that such a policy will assist in allaying community concerns that buffer zones and related sites will be closed to development.

The mission also noted that these sites are not part of the World Heritage Area, nor do all of them form part of any buffer zone, however it is clear that Polish Authorities and other interested parties see merit in addressing the management and protection of these related sites at the same time as resolving buffer zone issues.

The mission encourages the review of tourism development in the region, taking into account the location of three different World Heritage sites in relatively short distance (Cracow's Historic Centre, Wieliczka Salt Mine and Auschwitz – Birkenau Concentration Camp) while acknowledging that the character of the Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau is a unique site in its message to the world.

The mission recommends:

- Early determination of the terms of reference and structure for the work of the International Group of Experts and the formation of two sub-committees, one on museology and conservation and another one on urbanism and planning. This will enable the International Group of Experts to proceed with the work on an on-going basis. The Group of Experts should report to the International Auschwitz Council, with copy to UNESCO World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS.
- That the subcommittee on urbanism and planning maintains a dialogue with local communities from both Oswiezim and Brezinka
- The review of existing planning and a move towards strategic and integrated management planning;
- That the Government considers submitting a request for funding from the World Heritage Fund for the convening of the International Group of Experts. The contract for the assistance which had been approved by the Chairperson of the Committee in July 2000 was never signed by the Polish authorities and was therefore cancelled in January 2001.

In light of the above, the mission recommends:

- An immediate technical assistance mission to Auschwitz – Birkenau (it was made clear to the mission that timing is critical and that any delay will reduce the chances of success considerably);
- Subject to the agreement of the Polish Authorities the mission recommends that such a team should comprise at least: 1. An expert in management planning and zoning (Team Leader); 2. An expert in community consultation and public presentation; 3. An expert in Government responsibilities and processes in the Polish system; 4. A representative of the International Group of Experts. The Team should be demonstrably independent so that it can seek advice from and work closely with all relevant parties. In particular, close liaison would be required with a community representative or representative of local politics, and with Polish Government representatives.
- The work of the Team would be to:
 - Review briefly work done to identify sites of interest, and to prioritise and categorise these sites. Examine the prioritisation process, including comparison with factors for prioritising suggested above, and if necessary suggest amendments.
 - Review draft management planning done to date;
 - Develop categories for management of different types of site (eg management as part of WHA; management by appropriate use; management through external funding; management through zoning and planning regulation);
 - Document existing local, regional and national planning and management regulations in the areas of interest;
 - Delineate zoning within a suitable buffer area, and identify suggested planning and management regulations within each proposed zone. Incorporate the existing silence and protection zones.
 - Consult with all relevant levels of Government and semi-government bodies, and with the community;
 - Suggest, and attempt to negotiate solutions for current intractable issues such as the provision of supermarket and youth facilities, the integration of the Auschwitz and Birkenau sites, and the appropriate management of other related sites;
 - Incorporate these suggestions and other proposals relevant to site management and urban renewal (such as development of a tourism strategy, diversification) into a package of measures which could in future be developed to address the socio-political and conservation issues relevant to the site;
 - Run one or more community information sessions, and/or implement other more appropriate methods of providing the community with information on the proposals.
 - Recommend legislative and zoning changes and other actions (such as securing funding or corporate support) required to implement the proposed recommendations;
 - Make recommendations for on-going responsibilities and advisory arrangements;
 - Prepare professional Terms of References for the International Group of Experts
 - Delineate next steps and responsibility for each action.

The mission requested the Polish Authorities to present a request for this Technical Assistance Team to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre as soon as possible.

Financial issues

The mission notes the financial contribution of the Government of Poland, bilateral sources and international donors for the maintenance and conservation of the World Heritage site. The mission noted the on-going need for financial assistance to finalise a complete inventory of the World Heritage site and of related sites, for the preservation of related sites and in particular for the legitimate purchase of private properties where needed, and to enhance the overall presentation of the site. The mission also notes that despite considerable progress made in the preservation efforts by the state museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau, considerable financial needs and research requirements exist for the preservation of objects in the museum, the preservation of the ruins (in particular the gas chambers) and other areas.

Follow-up

The Head of the mission decided that following the presentation of the decisions of the twenty-fifth session of the World Heritage Bureau to the participants, a clarification concerning the World Heritage definitions of terms related to bufferzone would be needed. A letter addressed to the local authorities will be transmitted in this regard. The issue of the overall management plan has to be taken up as a matter of urgency.

The mission continues to fully support the recommendations adopted by the twenty-fifth session of the Bureau and found that there are no contradictions between the Bureau's recommendations and the mission's complementary findings.

The recommendations of the mission will be provided to the Polish Government for transmission to the different levels of responsibilities for the site and its surroundings. Comments on the decision by the Bureau at its twenty-fifth session and the mission's findings would have to be provided by 15 September 2001 for review by ICOMOS and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, integration into the working documents for state of conservation of properties on the World Heritage List and for presentation of the mission report and comments received to the twenty-fifth session of the World Heritage Committee (Helsinki, Finland, 11 to 16 December 2001).

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the site visit the mission concluded that the discussions with the Polish authorities and stakeholders were held in an constructive atmosphere to achieve progress with regard to the protection of the site and to achieve confidence for the overall management in consultation with all stakeholders in the future.

The mission makes a number of specific recommendations listed under each section above. The overall recommendations are as follows:

A. The mission in particular acknowledged the commitment by the Polish Government to the preservation of the World Heritage site, however also underlined the need for a policy of conservation and overall management for the surroundings incorporating a coherent silence and protection zone, appropriately zoned buffer area and satisfactory long term protection or integration of the area between the two camps. The mission wishes to reassure the World

Heritage Committee of the excellent quality of management at the World Heritage sites and of the commitment and dedication of the staff of the museum, and to congratulate the Polish Authorities on its achievements within the site itself. There are however a number of issues that require urgent resolution in the surrounding area and in related sites.

B. The mission acknowledges the desire of residents and local authorities for social and commercial development and the desire to diversify activities in the town. The mission also recognises the need to respect private property rights in neighbouring areas. The mission acknowledges the constraints placed upon urban development by flood prone areas, and by the availability of utilities in only some areas. The mission notes that in the longer term and with suitable investment there are many opportunities for appropriate tourism and education programmes which will allow compatible development in some areas of any protection zones.

C. The mission noted that an inventory of related sites had been completed, and that some prioritisation appeared to have been applied to the sites identified. While time constraints prevented examination of these reports, the mission welcomed this work, noting that identification of important sites, and their prioritisation according to their importance, the practicality of physical conservation, financial demands of protection, and the practicality of protection considering other social and planning factors were key steps in developing a workable and widely acceptable management structure.

D. The mission emphasises the importance of a shared responsibility for the heritage of humankind and strongly recommends (see below) an increased dialogue with local communities. The mission recommends a strengthening of co-ordination between the different levels and a dialogue between that city of Oswiezim and the village of Brezinka in order to collaborate on issues related to the physical links of the two World Heritage areas and other related sites in future planning activities.

E. The mission recommends an early determination of the terms of reference and structure for the work of the International Group of Experts and the formation of two sub-committees, one on museology and conservation and another one on urbanism and planning. This will enable the International Group of Experts to proceed with the work on an on-going basis. The Group of Experts should report to the International Auschwitz Council, with copy to UNESCO World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS. In light of the above, the mission recommends an immediate technical assistance mission to Auschwitz – Birkenau. The mission requested the Polish Authorities to present a request for this Technical Assistance Team to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre as soon as possible. The mission recommends that UNESCO assists in obtaining international funding for projects clearly identified.

The mission transmits its sincere gratitude to the Polish authorities for all assistance provided and its encouragement to continue to ensure the conservation of this unique World Heritage site.

**Itinerary of the international World Heritage mission headed by the
President of the World Heritage Committee, Mr. Peter King,
to the Auschwitz Concentration Camp (Poland)**

1 July 2001

Flight Paris-Krakow

Reception at the airport of Krakow by Mme Malgorzata Dzieduszycka (Permanent Delegate of Poland to UNESCO) and Mr. Stefan Wilkanowicz (Vice President of the International Auschwitz Council)

Visit of the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau (World Heritage area)
Placing of the wreathes

Site visit and surroundings with representatives of the Museum
World Heritage area of Auschwitz-Birkenau
Walking between the two sites
Presentation, interpretation, and education
surroundings (100 m zone, silence zone, bufferzone)
Russian memorial site in Brezinka
sites related to the events of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camps

City of Oswiezim
Tour of the city
Visit of the synagogue

Dinner

2 July 2001

8.45 to 13.15 Meeting with the representatives of the local authorities of the city of Oswiecim and region, the governor and other representatives of the Polish authorities

views of the local authorities on management and planning of the surroundings
Development issues, urban planning and information on masterplan
Discussion of decision of the 25th session of World Heritage Bureau
Conclusions and follow-up

Transfer to the airport

Flight Krakow Vienna
Flight Vienna Paris

Composition of the mission team

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PARTICIPANTS OF THE MEETING AT THE STATE MUSEUM

2 JULY 2001

NAME	FUNCTION
Peter KING	President, World Heritage Committee
Giora SOLAR	ICOMOS International
Elenonora BERGMAN	International Group of Experts, Poland
Jerzy WROBLEWSKI	State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau
Krsytyna OLEKSY	State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau
Jecch URBINSKI	City Council Oswiecim
Andrej BIBRZYCKI	Municipality Oswiecim
Jozef STRYCHANSKI	Municipality Council Oswiecim
Maciej BOBR	Regional Office of Governmental Administration
Jozef KRAWCZYK	Mayor of Oswiecim
Mateusz RESZCZYK	Office of Plenipotentiary of Oswiecim Strategic Programme at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, Warsaw
Stefen WILKANOWICZ	Vice President International Auschwitz Council
Adam BOLSHIN	Chief of a District Oswiecim
Malgorzata DZIEDUSZYCKA-ZIEMILSKA	Permanent Delegate of Poland to UNESCO
David ROBERTS	World Heritage Branch, Australia
Mechtild RÖSSLER	UNESCO World Heritage Centre
Michael TURNER	International Group of Experts, Israel

Extract from the Report of the twenty-fifth session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee**Auschwitz Concentration Camp (Poland)**

V.268 The Secretariat introduced this item by summarising the report that had been received from the Polish Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration on the Government Strategic Programme Oswiecim, the International Group of Experts and the matter of the buffer zone around the World Heritage site. In this context the Secretariat referred to and projected on the screen the delimitation of the site and its buffer zone as proposed in the nomination that was submitted by Poland in 1978. Furthermore, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that it had received a letter of invitation from the Chairman of the International Auschwitz Council for a working visit to Warsaw and to the site.

V.269 The Observer of Israel highlighted that the linking of the sites of Auschwitz and Birkenau is of the utmost importance.

V.270 The Observer of Poland pointed out that the International Auschwitz Council had been set up to consider all the issues pertaining not only to the site of Auschwitz, but also to other Holocaust sites in Poland. With regard to the 100m-zone established around these sites, the Observer of Poland explained that the 100m-zone is a minimum zone and that the linking of the sites of Auschwitz and Birkenau is under discussion. However, the town of Oswiecim with around 50, 000 inhabitants is suffering from an economic crisis that needs to be considered in the overall planning for the site. He stressed that the discussion on the issue of the buffer zone can best be discussed during a visit to the site itself. The Observer of Poland, furthermore, stressed the educational value of the concentration camps, and informed the Bureau that Poland is currently preparing a series of educational projects to be presented to UNESCO in this respect.

V.271 Following these interventions, the Chairperson established a drafting group, chaired by himself and with the participation of ICOMOS, the observers of Germany, Israel and Poland and the World Heritage Centre. Following the recommendation of the drafting group, the Bureau adopted the following decision:

"The Bureau takes note of the report of the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration on the Government Strategic Programme Oswiecim, the International Group of Experts and the matter of the buffer zone around the World Heritage site. It welcomes the decision of the Government to extend the Strategic Programme for another five years until 2007. It regrets that the International Group of Experts has not met since March 1999. It expresses the hope that under the aegis of the International Auschwitz Council, its terms of reference will be agreed upon and that the Group will be able to effectively meet and contribute to the development of a Management Plan for the area of the State Museum and its surroundings as referred to in the *Declaration Concerning Principles for Implementation of Programme Oswiecimski* that was signed on 5 March 1997.

V.272 The Bureau recalls that the area inscribed on the World Heritage List coincides with the area of the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau and that, on the matter of the buffer

zone, the nomination dossier for the site, submitted by the Polish authorities on 6 June 1978, refers to *the zone of protection being expanded from 300 to 1000 meters* and that a map was attached (see Annex VI) with an indication of a silence and a protection zone. Noting that the matter of the buffer zone and the need for a preservation plan for the site and its surroundings had been under discussion at sessions of the Bureau and the Committee since 1996, the Bureau recalls that the World Heritage Committee at its twenty-second session (1998) *confirmed its support for the principles laid out in the Declaration of March 1997 and also confirmed its support that this process continues in a consensual manner among all parties involved and that it expressed the belief that no steps should be made unless consensus is reached.* It notes with regret that a consensus on the planning and protection of the surroundings of the Auschwitz and Birkenau Concentration Camps has not been reached and that the Minister in his report states that the effective legal buffer zone *is a strip of land not wider than 100 meters from the boundaries of the Holocaust Monument* and that how land outside this zone be used is decided exclusively by the officials of the township council. The Bureau notes that no information has been made available to it on the plans that have been or may be in the process of preparation by the local authorities.

V.273 The Bureau commends the State Party for the establishment of the 100-metre zone as a zone with strict regulations and control, for the substantive study that has been undertaken by the State Museum on the situation of the area before, during and after the war and on the importance it attaches to the education of young people.

V.274 However, the Bureau is of the opinion that the 100 meters zone cannot be considered as equivalent to a buffer zone and that there is an urgent need to:

- (i) confirm the buffer zone that is specific to the site and that was submitted at the time of the nomination of the site for inscription on the World Heritage List and implement appropriate management practices in this zone under the responsibility of the national authorities;
- (ii) establish a Management Plan for the area that is under the authority of the State Museum and for the buffer zone.

V.275 The Management Plan for the State Museum and the buffer zone should:

- guarantee the preservation of the sacred and symbolic character of both the Auschwitz and the Birkenau Concentration Camps and their surroundings;
- prevent inappropriate constructions and/or functions in their surroundings including the discotheque;
- ensure the preservation of elements that at this moment are not part of the State Museum and World Heritage site but that are intimately linked to it and that are essential for the understanding and interpretation of the site (e.g. the area between Auschwitz and Birkenau where the railways are located). The above-mentioned study may provide the basis for the identification of these elements.
- ensure the physical link of both sites [Auschwitz and Birkenau], as referred to in the Declaration of March 1997.

V.276 The Bureau acknowledges with appreciation the invitation for a working visit that the Chairman of the International Auschwitz Council extended by letter dated 25 May 2001 and

requested the Secretariat to make the necessary arrangements for the visit of a UNESCO-ICOMOS mission. It expresses the sincere hope and expectation that such a mission will contribute to an effective and constructive co-operation between all parties concerned and will result in a common understanding of and agreement on the ways and means to adequately protect and manage the Concentration Camps and their surroundings.

V.277 The Bureau decides to defer further examination of this issue to its twenty-fifth extraordinary session and to the twenty-fifth session of the World Heritage Committee."

V.278 The Chairperson then informed the Bureau that at the invitation of the State Party, he would undertake a mission to Auschwitz-Birkenau on 1 and 2 July 2001 together with representatives of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and the International Group of Experts.

Map of Auschwitz-Birkenau

Extract from the nomination dossier
submitted by the Government of Poland on 6 June 1978

plan N°1

Carte de terrains du Musée national d'Auschwitz - Birkenau
avec limites de la propriété et des zones de protection.
On y discerne la situation du Musée dans le partie sud-est
de la ville d'Oświęcim

la légende

- _____ les limites du Musée
 ----- les limites de zone de silence
 .-.-.-.-.- les limites de zone de protection
 A - le Musée d'Auschwitz
 B - le Musée Birkenau
 La ville Oświęcim



