UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION
OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

(adopted by the Committee at its first session
and amended at its second session)

INTRODUCTION

1. The cultural heritage and the natural heritage are among the priceless and irreplaceable possessions, not only of each nation, but of mankind as a whole. The loss, through deterioration or disappearance, of any of these most prized possessions constitutes an impoverishment of the heritage of all the peoples of the world. Parts of that heritage, because of their exceptional qualities, can be considered to be of outstanding universal value and as such worthy of special protection against the dangers which increasingly threaten them.

2. In an attempt to remedy this perilous situation and to ensure, as far as possible, the proper identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of the world's unique and irreplaceable heritage, the Member States of Unesco adopted in 1972 the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. This Convention, which complements and in no way competes with heritage conservation programmes at the national level, provides for the establishment of a World Heritage Committee and a World Heritage Fund. Both the Committee and the Fund are now in existence.

3. The World Heritage Committee has four critical functions:

(i) to draw up a World Heritage List, comprising those properties, cultural and natural, which the Committee considers to be of outstanding universal value in accordance with criteria adopted by it;

(ii) to prepare a List of World Heritage in Danger consisting of those properties on the World Heritage List which, for their protection, require major conservation measures and for which assistance has been requested by the States Parties concerned;

(iii) to determine in what way and under what conditions the World Heritage Fund resources can most advantageously be used; and

(iv) to assist Member States, as far as possible, in the protection of their properties of outstanding universal value.

4. The responsibilities of the World Heritage Committee are immense. But there can be no more important challenge and no more worthwhile task than an endeavour, on behalf of the peoples of the world, to assist States in protecting for future generations those cultural and natural properties, which are of outstanding universal value.

I. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST

A. General Principles

5. The Committee agreed that the following general principles would guide its work in establishing the World Heritage List:

(i) The World Heritage List, in view of its importance not only for the work related to the Convention, but also for educational and public information purposes, shall be considered as a separate entity. The criteria for the inclusion of properties in the List, therefore, shall enable the World Heritage Committee to act with full independence in evaluating solely the intrinsic merit of a property and not its suitability for assistance by the World Heritage Fund.

(ii) The Convention provides a vehicle for the protection of those cultural or natural properties or areas deemed to be of outstanding universal value. It is not intended to provide for the protection of all properties and areas of great interest, importance, or value, but only for a select list of the most outstanding of these from an international viewpoint.

(iii) The outstanding universal value of cultural and natural properties shall be determined according to two sets of criteria:

one set of criteria for cultural property;

one set of criteria for natural property.

(iv) Cultural and natural properties shall be included in the World Heritage List according to a gradual process and no formal limit shall be imposed either on the total number of properties included in the List or on the number of properties any individual State can submit at successive stages for inclusion therein.

(v) When a property included in the World Heritage List has deteriorated to such an extent that it has lost those characteristics for which it was inscribed thereon or when further research has shown that the property is not, in fact, of outstanding universal value, that property shall be deleted from the List. In this connection, it is hoped that the reports to be submitted by States Parties under the terms of Article 29 of the Convention will provide sufficient information for the Committee to decide on the continuing eligibility of the properties for inclusion in the List.

(vi) The property included in the World Heritage List should be marked with the World Heritage Emblem adopted by the Committee (see paragraph 25). However, this emblem should be placed in such a way that it does not visually impair the property in question.

6. The definition of "universal" in the phrase "outstanding universal value" requires comment. Some properties may not be recognized by all people, everywhere, to be of great importance and significance. Opinions may vary from one culture or period to another. As far as cultural property is concerned, the term "universal" must be interpreted as referring to a property which is highly representative of the culture of which it forms part.

B. Criteria for the inclusion of cultural properties in the World Heritage List

7. Outstanding universal value will be recognized when a monument, group of buildings or site - as defined in Article 1 of the Convention - submitted for inclusion in the World Heritage List is found to meet one or more of the following criteria. Therefore, each property nominated should:

(i) represent a unique artistic or aesthetic achievement, a masterpiece of the creative genius; or

(ii) have exerted considerable influence, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture, monumental sculpture, garden and landscape design, related arts, town-planning or human settlements; or

(iii) be unique, extremely rare, or of great antiquity; or

(iv) be among the most characteristic ~~examples~~ of a type of structure, the type representing an important cultural, social, artistic, scientific, technological or industrial development; or

(v) be a characteristic example of a significant style of architecture, method of construction or form of town-planning or traditional human settlement that is fragile by nature or has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible socio-cultural or economic change; or

(vi) be most importantly associated with ideas or beliefs, with events or with persons, of outstanding historical importance or significance.

8. In every case, consideration must be given to the state of preservation of the property (which should be evaluated relatively, in comparison to the state of preservation of other property dating from the same period and of the same type and category.

9. In addition, the property should meet the test of authenticity in design, materials, workmanship and setting; authenticity does not limit consideration to original form and structure but includes all subsequent modifications and additions, over the course of time, which in themselves possess artistic or historical values.

C. Criteria for the inclusion of natural properties in the World Heritage List

10. Outstanding universal value will be recognized when a natural heritage property - as defined in Article 2 of the Convention - submitted for inclusion in the World Heritage List, is found to meet one or more of the following criteria. Therefore, properties nominated should:

(i) be outstanding examples representing the major stages of the earth's evolutionary history. This category would include sites which represent the major "eras" of geological history such as "the age of reptiles" where the development of the planet's natural diversity can well be demonstrated and such as the "ice age" where early man and his environment underwent major changes; or

(ii) be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing geological processes, biological evolution and man's interaction with his natural environment. As distinct from the periods of the earth's development, this focuses upon ongoing processes in the development of communities of plants and animals, landforms and marine and fresh water bodies. This category would include for example (a) as geological processes, glaciation and volcanism, (b) as biological evolution, examples of biomes such as tropical rainforests, deserts and tundra, (c) as interaction between man and his natural environment, terraced agricultural landscapes; or

(iii) contain unique, rare or superlative natural phenomena, formations or features or areas of exceptional natural beauty, such as superlative examples of the most important ecosystems to man, natural features, (for instance, rivers, mountains, waterfalls), spectacles presented by great concentrations of animals, sweeping vistas covered by natural vegetation and exceptional combinations of natural and cultural elements; or

(iv) be habitats where populations of rare or endangered species of plants and animals still survive. This category would include those ecosystems in which concentrations of plants and animals of universal interest and significance are found.

It should be realized that individual sites may not possess the most spectacular or outstanding single example of the above, but when the sites are viewed in a broader perspective with a complex of many surrounding features of significance, the entire area may qualify to demonstrate an array of features of global significance.

11. In addition to the above criteria, the sites should also meet the conditions of integrity:

(i) The areas described in 10(i) should contain all or most of the key interrelated and interdependent elements in their natural relationships; for example, an "ice age" area would be expected to include the snow field, the glacier itself and samples of cutting patterns, deposition and colonization (striations, moraines, pioneer stages of plant succession, etc.).

(ii) The areas described in 10(ii) should have sufficient size and contain the necessary elements to demonstrate the key aspects of the process and to be self-perpetuating. For example, an area of "tropical rain forest" may be expected to include some variation in elevation above sea level, changes in topography and soil types, river banks or oxbow lakes, to demonstrate the diversity and complexity of the system.

(iii) The areas described in 10 (iii) should contain those ecosystem components required for the continuity of the species or of the objects to be conserved. This will vary according to individual cases; for example, the protected area for a waterfall would include all, or as much as possible, of the supporting upstream watershed; or a coral reef area would be provided with control over siltation or pollution through the stream flow or ocean currents which provide its nutrients.

(iv) The areas described in 10(iv) should be of sufficient size and contain the necessary habitat requirements for the survival of the species.

D. Format and content of the nominations for inclusion in the World Heritage List

12. The nominations to be submitted by the States Parties to the Convention must include all the necessary information and supporting documentation to enable the Committee to decide on the eligibility of property for inclusion in the World Heritage List.

13. Nominations by States for inclusion of cultural and natural properties in the World Heritage List must be presented in the form of a closely argued case, supported by full documentation and bibliography. The same printed form shall be used for the cultural and natural heritage. Such a form shall request the following type of information and documentation:

(i) Specific Location

Country.
State, Province or Region.
Name of property (local and eventually other names).
Exact location on map and indication of geographical co-ordinates.

(ii) Juridical Status

Owner.
Legal status.
Responsible administration.

(iii) Identification

Description and inventory.
Maps and/or plans.
Photographic and/or cinematographic documentation.
History.
Bibliography.

(iv) State of preservation/conservation

Diagnosis.
Agent responsible for preservation and conservation.
History of preservation/conservation.
Proposed projects for preservation/conservation.
Means for preservation/conservation (legal, technical, administrative and financial ones, etc.).
Management plans.

(v) Justification for inclusion in the World Heritage List

For cultural property the justification should be based on the criteria listed in paragraph 7. For natural property the justification should be based on the criteria listed in paragraphs 10 and 11.

14. A nomination form shall be furnished to States Parties accompanied by explanatory instructions. The initial form shall be used until changes become necessary.

E. Procedure and calendar

15. The Committee adopted the following annual schedule for the receipt and processing of nominations to the World Heritage List which shall come into effect as from 1980:

1 January : Deadline for the receipt of nominations to be examined by the Committee at the session to be held that year.

Up to end March : The Secretariat, on behalf of the Committee, will be responsible for the following tasks with respect to each nomination received (this will be an on-going process, but it should be completed by end March in the case of those nominations to be examined by the Committee that year):

- registering each nomination;

- transmitting nominations to the appropriate international organizations who will (i) review and advise the Secretariat on the completeness of the documentation and (ii) transmit direct to States members of the Committee and to the Secretariat their evaluation of the nominations against the agreed criteria;

- contacting, if necessary, the States Parties concerned with a view to completing the information and documentation.

- translating and reproducing the nominations and as far as possible the supporting documentation in the working languages of the World Heritage Committee.

April : Transmission of nominations to members of the Bureau.

May : Examination of the nominations by the Bureau which will formulate its recommendations thereon to the Committee.

June : Preparation of the report on the Bureau meeting and assembling by the Secretariat of additional information and documentation on the nominations, as requested by the Bureau.

July : Transmission of nominations, together with the recommendations of the Bureau, to members of the Committee.

September/October: Examination of nominations by the Committee which will decide on the properties to be entered in the World Heritage List.

November/December: Transmission of decisions taken by the Committee on nominations to the World Heritage List, together with report on the Committee meeting, to all States Parties to the Convention.

II. GRANTING OF INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE WORLD HERITAGE FUND

A. Format and content of the requests for international assistance

16. International assistance shall be requested in accordance with a standard format which shall include the following information:

(a) country;

(b) date of submission;

(c) name of property;

(d) date of inscription on World Heritage List (if applicable);

(e) date of inscription on list of World Heritage in Danger (if applicable);

(f) brief description of property;

(g) detailed description of danger to property (if possible supported by documentary evidence, drawings, maps, etc.);

(h) legal status of the property including the protective, legal and administrative measures already taken for the conservation of the property;

(i) objectives of proposed project (in terms of scientific or cultural interest, educational value, social and economic benefits, etc.);

(j) proposed activities to be undertaken

- with national financing

- with assistance under the Convention (breakdown according to categories listed in Article 22 of the Convention);

(k) approximate cost of these activities

- paid nationally

- requested under the Convention

(l) national body responsible for the project, and details of project administration.

17. For the large-scale projects referred to in Article 24 of the Convention, the Committee considers it necessary to have, in addition, a more detailed project document prepared, which shall include the following information:

(a) detailed scientific and technical data concerning the work to be undertaken;

(b) a detailed analysis of the requirements in equipment, expendable and non-expendable supplies, specialist services, skilled and unskilled labour as well as administrative personnel, etc;

(c) the training component (in-service training as well as fellowships for training abroad);

(d) a presentation of the cost of all items required broken down to reflect local inputs and those which must come from external sources;

(e) schedule showing the desirable starting date; flow of funds, equipment supplies and personnel; and, the overall flow of activities of the programme;

(f) a statement and supporting analysis where appropriate of the social and environmental impact of the project.

B. Procedure for consideration of requests for international assistance

18. The Committee agreed to adopt the following procedure:

(a) The Director-General, on behalf of the Committee, shall inform States Parties that they may submit requests for international assistance which, according to the terms of Article 21(1) of

the Convention, "should define the operation contemplated, the work that is necessary, the expected cost thereof, the degree of urgency and the reasons why the resources of the State requesting assistance do not allow it to meet all the expenses" concerning:

(i) properties included in the World Heritage List or nominated for inclusion therein:

(ii) the identification of property which, according to Article 13(2) may be financed "when preliminary investigations have shown that further inquiries would be justified";

(iii) the training of staff and specialists at all levels in the field of identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of the cultural and natural heritage; and

(iv) support for national or regional centres for the training of staff and specialists referred to in Article 23 of the Convention;

(b) The Secretariat on behalf of the Committee, shall be responsible for:

registering each request;

assisting in completing the requests (if necessary);

translating and reproducing the requests.

The requests for technical cooperation shall be processed according to the same calendar as that adopted in the case of nominations to the World Heritage List.

C. Order of priorities for the granting of international assistance

19. Without prejudicing the provisions of the Convention, which shall always prevail, the Committee agreed on the following order of priorities with respect to the type of activities to be assisted under the Convention:

emergency measures to save property which is in immediate danger of total destruction or disappearance;

preparatory assistance, for drawing up nominations to the World Heritage List and requests for technical co-operation;

projects which are likely to have a multiplier effect ("seed money") because they:

stimulate general interest in conservation;

contribute to the advancement of scientific research;

contribute to the training of specialized personnel;

generate contributions from other sources.

20. The Committee also agreed that the following factors would in principle govern its decisions with respect to assistance under the Convention:

(i) the urgency of the work and of the protective measures to be taken;

(ii) the legislative, administrative and financial commitment of the recipient State to preserve and manage the property;

(iii) the cost of the project;

(iv) the interest for and exemplary value of the project in respect of scientific research and the development of economic conservation techniques;

(v) the educational value both for the training of local experts and for the general public;

(vi) the cultural and ecological benefits accruing from the project; and

(vii) the consequences from the social and economic points of view.

21. Properties included in the World Heritage List shall be considered as being of equal value. For this reason, the criteria proposed above make no reference to the relative value of properties. The criteria related to scientific interest covers, inter alia, the proposed use on the project of new methods and techniques in conservation, i.e. "pilot projects" carried out with the most economical means which would have an exemplary value. By "educational value" is meant the training opportunities that would arise for local staff and the impact which the project would have on the awareness and appreciation of the general public, not only in the country in which the property is located, but on a world-wide scale.

D. Preparatory and emergency assistance

22. The Committee decided that a special procedure would be followed in the case of requests for preparatory and emergency assistance : such requests shall be submitted for approval to the Chairman who will decide, in consultation with the Director General, on the type and extent of assistance to be granted. In this connection, the Committee decided that this assistance could take the form of expert services or equipment or, in exceptional cases, of financial grants. The Committee will determine at regular intervals the funds to be allocated for these purposes. The budgetary ceiling for each preparatory assistance project was fixed by the Committee at $15.000.

E. Standard agreement to be concluded with States receiving international assistance

23. An agreement will be concluded between the Committee and the State Party receiving assistance under the Convention. Under this agreement, the recipient State will undertake to continue to protect, conserve and present the property safeguarded with the assistance provided under the Convention. Until the adoption by the Committee of the text of a standard agreement, Unesco's rules and procedures shall be followed in providing technical cooperation to States Parties.

F. Financial regulations for the World Heritage Fund

24. The Committee took note of the financial regulations of the World Heritage Fund, as set out in document CC-77/CONF.001/3.

III. OTHER MATTERS

A. World Heritage Emblem

25. At its second session, the Committee adopted the World Heritage Emblem which had been prepared by Mr. Michel Olyff. This emblem symbolizes the interdependence of cultural and natural properties : the central square is a form created by man and the circle represents nature, the two being intimately linked. The emblem is round, like the world, but at the same time it is a symbol of protection. The Committee decided that the two versions proposed by the artist (see Annex I) could be used, in any colour, depending on the use, the technical possibilities and considerations of an artistic nature.

B. Publication of the World Heritage List, the List of World Heritage in Danger and the list of properties for which technical co-operation is granted

26. The Committee decided that the above-mentioned three lists would be issued annually in the form of one simple publication.

C. Invitations to sessions of the Committee

27. The Committee decided that the following organizations would be invited to send observers to future sessions of the Committee:

United Nations;
United Nations Development Programme;
United Nations Environment Programme;
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations;
Interamerican Development Bank;
World Bank
World Food Programme
Afro-Malagasy and Mauritian Cultural Institute;
Arab Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization;
Council of Europe;
Organization of African Unity;
Organization of American States;
Organization for Museums, Monuments and Sites in Africa;
South-East Asian Ministers of Education Organization;
International Council of Museums;
International Federation of Landscape Architects;
International Organination for the Protection of Works of Art;
International Union of Architects.

Any other international organization which may develop programmes of heritage conservation may also be invited in an observer capacity.

The Chairman of the International Fund for the Promotion of Culture may also be invited to attend as an observer.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS TO STATES PARTIES

28. When setting the boundary of a property to be nominated to the List, the concept of a buffer zone around the property may be applied where appropriate and feasible. In such instances the nominations would include:

(a) a precise definition of the surface area of the property itself, including the sub-surface area where necessary; and

(b) an indication of the buffer zone around the property itself (i.e. the natural or man-made surroundings that influence the physical state of the property or the way in which the property is perceived).

Such buffer zones would be determined in each case through technical studies and provided with adequate protection.

29. As far as possible, States Parties should include, in their submissions, properties which combine in a significant way cultural and natural features of outstanding universal value.

30. In order to ensure efficient execution of projects, for which assistance has been granted from the World Heritage Fund, a single body - whether national, regional, local, public or private - should be entrusted with the responsibility of executing the project in the State Party concerned.

WORLD HERITAGE EMBLEM / EMBLEME DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

(adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its second session /
adopté par le Comité du Patrimoine Mondial lors de sa deuxième session)



