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WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

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Item 4 of the Provisional agenda: Report by Bernd von Droste, Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and Secretary of the World Heritage Committee, on the activities undertaken by the Secretariat since the seventeenth session of the World Heritage Committee

1. Introduction

Before submitting to you my report, I would like to welcome the representatives and experts from the 21 States Parties that currently form the World Heritage Committee. I extend my welcome also to the representatives of other States Parties, attending as observers, and to the experts from the three advisory bodies to the Committee, namely ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN, as well as to the observers from several other international organizations, which cooperate with us in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

May I also use this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to our generous host, the Government of Thailand, which has invited us to Phuket and which has spared no efforts in organizing our meeting.

I would also like to thank the outgoing Chairperson of the Committee, Mrs Olga Pizano, whose leadership and personal commitment were crucial in the past twelve months. The same holds true for the other members of the outgoing Bureau.

To the new Chairperson and Bureau I convey my sincere congratulations and wish to assure all of you that you can count on the full support of the World Heritage Centre for the important and challenging tasks which lie ahead.

I would also like to mention those States Parties, which have joined the Convention since our last meeting in Cartagena, namely Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Myanmar. This brings the total of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention to 139.

## 2. Partnership and coordination

In the implementation of the World Heritage Convention we were able to rely, as usual, on the close **cooperation with our partners**. This year, the World Heritage Centre has held several consultations with the **advisory bodies** -ICCRUM, ICOMOS and IUCN- in order to establish joint plans for the implementation of major activities, such as the development of the methodology for systematic monitoring, a meeting on the global strategy, the processing of nominations, etc.

The joint review of nominations for inscription of properties on the World Heritage List has proven to be extremely useful to identify, at the earliest stage possible, if nominations are admissible or if essential additional documentation needs to be obtained from the States Parties. Both the advisory bodies and the World Heritage Centre feel, however, that the timetable for the processing of nominations is too tight, particularly in view of the heavy workload in September/October. Hence, certain deadlines should be revised. The World Heritage Centre will present proposals to this effect to the Committee (see document WHC-94/CONF.003/9).

I should also mention that the World Heritage Centre was actively supported by the work of **colleagues** of the Cultural Sector in UNESCO, notably of the Cultural Heritage Division, and of the Science Sector, particularly the Division of Ecological Sciences. In order to strengthen overall in-house coordination and policy coherence, the UNESCO Steering Committee for the World Heritage Centre met twice in 1994.

In the last 12 months significant progress has also been made in establishing and reinforcing links with the **Secretariats of other international conventions**.

In cooperation with the Secretariat of the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict ("Hague Convention") those States Parties that have adhered to both the World Heritage Convention and the Hague Convention were invited to enter their World Heritage properties on the "International Register of Cultural Property under Special Protection." (see document WHC-94/CONF.003/INF.12). So far, seven countries have formally announced their intention to do so. Furthermore, the World Heritage Centre participated in three expert meetings on cultural heritage protection and armed conflict. In June, ICOMOS Sweden organized an expert meeting on information distribution as a means of protection. A couple of months ago, a round table on disaster preparedness took place in Paris, organized by ICOMOS. One week ago UNESCO held an expert meeting on the review of the Hague Convention at its Headquarters to identify various problems in the implementation of the Convention and its Protocol and to provide a forum for experts to exchange their practical experiences.

On invitation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) the World Heritage Centre participated last March in the First Meeting on Coordination of Secretariats of Environmental Conventions, which discussed a wide range of areas and modalities of cooperation, and called for a synergy study on the implementation of the different conventions. The second meeting of the Secretariats is scheduled to take place in January 1995.

As a follow-up, staff from the World Heritage Centre met in Geneva with staff of the Interim Secretariat of the Biodiversity Convention, in order to explore the potential for joint efforts in the future. The Biodiversity Convention has entered into force this year, and the Conference of the Parties just finished its first meeting in the Bahamas. The dialogue with the Biodiversity Convention will be further strengthened once the institutional arrangements for its Secretariat have been finalized.

In this context, it is also worth noting that the Centre has at the same time opened the dialogue with the **Global Environmental Facility** (GEF), in order to coordinate and stimulate funding for biodiversity conservation at World Heritage sites. Currently up to US\$ 100 Million are provided under the GEF for World Heritage sites and their surroundings in about fifteen countries. For example, a US\$ 5,5 Million project on forest biodiversity in Poland involves Bialowieza World Heritage Site and in the Seychelles, a project of US\$ 1,8 Million focusses on Aldabra Atoll.

### **3. Breaking new ground: activities undertaken since the seventeenth session**

I would now like to review briefly the activities undertaken to implement the World Heritage Convention since the seventeenth session. I will highlight particularly those areas in which the World Heritage Centre succeeded in breaking new ground in the past twelve months.

#### **3.1 Global Strategy for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention**

As you will remember, in 1992 at its sixteenth Session in Santa Fe, USA, the World Heritage Committee adopted Strategic Orientations for the future implementation of the World Heritage Convention. Under its Goal 2 the Committee had called for action to ensure the continued representativity and credibility of the World Heritage List, which include the review, refinement and update of the nomination criteria for cultural and natural sites as well as the question of authenticity of cultural properties.

I am glad to report that five international expert meetings were held this year in order to implement Objective 2 of the Strategic Orientations.

In June a meeting, organized jointly by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS and chaired by Mrs Cameron, called for the abandonment of a predominantly monumental vision of cultural heritage in favour of a more anthropological and global concept (see document WHC-94/CONF.003/6). Among other things, the experts proposed to modify the criteria for cultural sites. A proposal on this will be submitted to you at this meeting (see document WHC-94/CONF.003/9). These recommendations aim to remedy a number of shortcomings of the World Heritage List, such as the over-representation of European cultural properties, the under-representation of pre-historic sites and contemporary 20th century properties. They also target particularly the absence of living traditional cultures and their testimonies on the World Heritage List.

This meeting was followed in September by a seminar on heritage canals hosted by Canada, which dealt with canals of outstanding universal value from historic and/or technological perspectives (see document WHC-94/CONF.003/INF.10). A couple of weeks ago, an international expert meeting in Madrid discussed itineraries and outstanding routes as cultural properties/landscapes in the context of the World Heritage Convention. Both meetings provided valuable guidance for future nominations to the World Heritage List.

Furthermore, international experts met twice this year to examine in depth the question of authenticity, first at a preparatory meeting in Bergen, hosted by Norway and then at the Nara Conference on Authenticity in Relation to the World Heritage Convention, which was organized under the auspices of ICCROM, ICOMOS, and the World Heritage Centre. Due to the excellent preparation and organization by the Japanese Cultural Agency and the Nara Prefecture and thanks to Canadian and Norwegian support this conference was a major success.

One of its outcomes is the recognition that authenticity needs to be an open and flexible concept, to be applied case by case taking into account the contextual circumstances, which are different from site to site. Instead of trying to adjust the World Heritage to a narrow concept of authenticity, the latter has to encompass all the different cultural architectural expressions of the world, monumental and vernacular, built not only of stone but also of wood, earth and straw or any other material. For further details on this important issue I wish to draw your attention to the Nara document on authenticity, which will be made available as an information document (see document WHC-94/CONF.003/INF.8)

### **3.2 Monitoring the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List (WHC-94/CONF.003/6)**

Monitoring the state of conservation of the natural and cultural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List has become one of the major tasks of the World Heritage Committee.

At its session in Cartagena, the Committee made a distinction between two types of monitoring: reactive and systematic monitoring.

As far as reactive monitoring is concerned, the Secretariat has made a particular effort in 1994 to obtain reports on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. I am very pleased that reports on all these sites except two can now be presented to the Committee for examination. In addition, more systematic (sub)regional programmes of monitoring are in execution in Latin America, the Mediterranean region and Africa. The Latin American pilot monitoring programme, launched four years ago, will be concluded in 1994 with a presentation to the Committee on the state of conservation of the World Cultural Heritage in Latin America.

The state of conservation of natural properties in Sub-Saharan Africa was reviewed at a workshop which was held two months ago in Krüger National Park (South Africa) jointly with IUCN.

The Committee at its seventeenth session and the Bureau at its eighteenth session examined almost seventy-five reports on the state of conservation of individual properties. In many cases, the observations and recommendations made by the Committee and its Bureau have had a positive impact and have directly contributed to adequate measures for the conservation of these sites. The number of reports, however, is becoming unmanageable for the Committee as well as for the Secretariat. A more systematic approach to observing the conditions of the World Heritage sites and its reporting to the Committee is urgently required.

Considerable progress has been made in refining the methodology of systematic monitoring. The Bureau, at its eighteenth session, reviewed and endorsed a detailed proposal for systematic monitoring and reporting which was prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of consultations with the Bureau and Committee members, with our advisory bodies and with other experts.

The proposed methodology is based on the responsibility of the States Parties to observe, on a day-to-day basis, the conditions of the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and introduces periodic reporting, with the involvement of external expertise, to the World Heritage Committee. The World Heritage Centre, at the same time, would promote voluntary national participation in regional and sub-regional programmes that aim at improving management and monitoring practices at the site level and would collect and review site-specific and national monitoring reports for presentation to the Committee.

Since the last session of the Bureau, the World Heritage Centre has proceeded to consult site managers and the advisory bodies on the proposed methodology. A circular letter was also sent to the States Parties requesting their views. The Centre has

so far received twelve formal replies and will report orally to the Committee on the results of these consultations.

As requested by the Bureau, the Centre prepared a draft text on monitoring for inclusion in the Operational Guidelines, which the Committee may wish to examine and eventually to adopt (see document WHC-74/CONF.003/9).

### 3.3 Tentative lists, nominations and international assistance

As regards **Tentative Lists**, the Committee - at its last session in Cartagena - had expressed its concern about the small number of Tentative Lists that meet the requirements stipulated in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Operational Guidelines. To remedy this situation the Secretariat sent out letters to the States Parties requesting them to submit appropriate Tentative Lists. The feedback was, however, disappointing: So far, out of the 139 countries that have ratified the Convention, half of them have not submitted any Tentative List; approximately 25% of them have presented Tentative Lists which do not meet the requirements established in the Operational Guidelines; and only 25% have submitted Tentative Lists which abide with the criteria specified in the Operational Guidelines. (For further details see document WHC-94/CONF.003/INF.7)

I strongly appeal to States Parties to give full consideration to this important matter, particularly in light of the Committee's decision last year that from 1 October 1995 onwards only nominations of cultural properties that are included in tentative lists which meet all requirements will be processed.

The Committee will have before it a busy agenda under the item **nominations**. : 41 sites were nominated for inscription in 1994, 26 cultural properties and 15 natural sites. Grave imbalances still persist: 51 % of the proposed properties are situated in Europe, 22 % in Asia and the Pacific, 12 % in Latin America, 12 % in Africa and 3 % in the Arab States. It is also worth noting that with nominations from Denmark, Georgia, Luxembourg and Uganda four States Parties without World Heritage sites so far will be represented (see document WHC-94/CONF.003/7).

You might also be interested to know that for 1995 the World Heritage Centre has received 34 new and 2 revised nominations, of which 29 are cultural sites, including 2 cultural landscapes, and 7 are natural sites.

Turning now to **international assistance** under the World Heritage Fund and related activities. In order to save your time, I would like to highlight only some of the more salient features (see also document WHC-94/CONF.003/12).

With respect to **preparatory assistance**, US\$ 150 000 was approved by the Committee for 1994 for the preparation of Tentative Lists, nominations and technical assistance projects.

Preparatory assistance was provided to 15 States Parties, 4 of them from Sub-Saharan Africa, 1 Arab State, 5 States Parties in Latin America and 5 in the Asia/Pacific region. Due to the large number of requests, the funds were used up a few months ago.

The 1994 budget for **technical co-operation** was also completely spent a few months ago; US\$ 489 000 were used on conservation work at more than 20 cultural World Heritage sites, US\$ 301 000 supported projects at 11 natural sites.

**Training** activities received a total of US\$ 440 000 in 1994, out of which US\$ 429 000 were spent by 1 December. US\$ 277 000 was granted for the training of cultural heritage conservation specialists. The single largest support was given to training courses organized by ICCROM, including the establishment of a regional course for Maghreb architects in Tunisia. The very successful International Course on Wood Conservation, organized by ICOMOS Norway, received continued support. Other training activities include a course on techniques of wood conservation, which will take place in China in early 1995, a seminar for site managers of historical cities in Ouro Preto, Brazil, a workshop for architectural students in Haiti, and the Regional Course on the Rehabilitation of Historic Towns in Salvador de Bahia.

Several (sub)regional training courses were organized this year in the field of natural heritage protection. Examples are a workshop in Srebarna Nature Reserve, Bulgaria, a regional training course organized by ENGREF France in Tai National Park and the Mobile Workshop of the Peace University in Costa Rica. In 1995, training seminars are scheduled for African wildlife specialists in Garoua College, Cameroon, and for Arab natural site managers in Egypt.

The newly established Emergency Fund of US\$ 1 Million was heavily utilized. Altogether 14 **emergency** situations were handled in 1994, and more than US\$ 400 000 spent. Let me give a few examples to illustrate the variety of emergency situations we had to address.

Two World Heritage sites in Zaire, located on the border with Rwanda - Virunga National Park and Kahuzi-Biega National Park - are presently in an emergency situation due to a massive influx of refugees. We may lose one of the last mountain gorilla populations in the world. In coordination with the Institut Zairois pour la Conservation de la Nature (IZCN), UNDP, UNHCR, and IUCN, the World Heritage Centre is trying to find solutions for the necessary relocation of the camps.

In Asia, emergency assistance was provided to undertake urgent conservation works at Angkor and in the Kathmandu Valley.

In Haiti, heavy cyclones damaged the roofs of the Batterie Royal at the Citadel threatening a total collapse. Despite the difficult situation in that country, the emergency assistance of US\$ 73 000, approved by the Bureau in July this year, could be immediately delivered through the good offices of UNDP in Haiti.

The World Heritage Centre was also able to respond within 24 hours to the emergency situation, caused by the outbreak of a huge fire on Isabela Island, which forms part of the Archipelago of the Galapagos (Ecuador). As a consequence a substantial part of the giant tortoise habitat was protected from loss.

#### 3.4 Awareness-building (document WHC-94/CONF.003/11)

Another novelty of the past twelve months has been the launching of the interregional project "Young People's Participation in World Heritage Preservation and Promotion", the first project done jointly by the World Heritage Centre, the Sector of Education, various National Commissions for UNESCO and a number of external partners including the private sector (document WHC-94/CONF.003/11). With the funds provided partly by UNESCO's Regular Programme and partly by the Groupe Rhone-Poulenc, the first phase is being carried out in thirty States Parties in different regions of the world. The project's main objective is to initiate the preparation of pedagogic materials for World Heritage sensitization, produced through the cooperation of local/national authorities in education, cultural and natural heritage conservation and the young people themselves, with the assistance of UNESCO and other international organizations.

In its second phase, UNESCO's first international "World Heritage Youth Forum", to be held in Bergen, Norway, from 26 to 28 June 1995, will bring together nearly 100 pupils and teachers from 30 secondary schools to exchange views among themselves and with the mayors of the World Heritage Cities, who will meet at the same time in Bergen.

These first two phases of the project are expected to lay the basis for a world-wide process of integrating World Heritage knowledge into school programmes and extra-curricula activities.

In 1994, the World Heritage Centre also continued to build up its information and documentation system. With the assistance of UNESCO's Department for Informatics and Telecommunications, the Centre's data-base has been updated and reorganized in order to allow multi-criteria retrieval of information, linkages with other relevant data-bases in UNESCO and - through the INTERNET - with other networks.

Considerable work has also been done in preparing concise descriptions in English and French of all the World Heritage sites, which is useful not only for the press and general public information purposes, but also for photo-exhibits, educational purposes and the development of a CD-ROM series.

In 1994 the very popular World Heritage folding poster/map was published in a revised version, and a new INCAFO World Heritage Guide appeared in July. In addition, three new issues



of the World Heritage Newsletter were published and widely distributed.

In the audio-visual field, the World Heritage Centre continued its co-operation with several TV producers and networks such as Independent Image (UK), CNN and France 2, and many of the resulting programmes received a broad public audience. Last but not least, several exhibits on World Heritage sites (e.g. Medinas of Fes and Marrakesh, Angkor, Hue, etc.) were organized in Paris, Geneva, New York and various other places. A large number of World Heritage site inaugurations took place under ample media coverage. For example, the Kagoshima Forum, which was organized this year in January in Tokyo on the occasion of the inscription of Yakushima Island on the World Heritage List, was attended by more than 500 persons as well as numerous journalists, given the presence of Crown Prince Narohito and Crown Princess Masako.

### **3.5 Fund-raising from the private sector**

World Heritage conservation can not succeed without public support and awareness and the mobilization of resources at a much larger scale not only from governments but also from the private sector.

In response to the World Heritage Committee's call at its 1992 session in Santa Fe for a professionally designed strategy that helps to increase public awareness, involvement and support, the Director-General of UNESCO appointed Mr Charles de Haes, former Director-General of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), as his Special Advisor on promotion and fund-raising for World Heritage. His report, jointly prepared with Mr David Mitchell, has been distributed to all Committee members (see document WHC-94/CONF.003/11).

The eight strategic recommendations contained in the report need to be addressed by UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee in order to mobilize the fund-raising potential from the private sector. Several of the recommendations focus on the World Heritage Logo, which must be distinctive, legally protected and whose use must be meticulously controlled. In addition, adequate financial benefits must go to the World Heritage Fund. I have invited Mr Charles de Haes to present his report to the Committee.

### **3.6 Autonomy and decentralization**

I would now like to report on the most recent developments of the World Heritage Centre. In doing so I will address four different topics, all of them crucial for providing improved services to the States Parties:

- a) Staffing of the World Heritage Centre;
- b) Financial resources;

- c) Functional autonomy;
- d) Decentralization.

With respect to the professional staff of the World Heritage Centre, I am glad to report that nine professional posts are now established under UNESCO's Regular Programme. This compares favourably with the situation a year ago, when only five posts were provided by UNESCO.

At this point I wish to express sincere thanks to the generous support provided by States Parties to the World Heritage Centre in 1994:

Canada and the United States provided a Fund-in-Trust under which the post of the Senior Natural Heritage Specialist was financed. Italy seconded one architect to the World Heritage Centre, whose term ended in August this year. Sweden seconded for the first time to the World Heritage Centre a senior cultural heritage specialist for three months. I also thank Germany for providing an Associate Expert for our regional office in Bangkok.

The situation of the General Services staff of the World Heritage Centre remains a major preoccupation. Out of ten General Services staff only three have tenure under the Regular Programme, while six General Services staff have short-term contracts financed by the World Heritage Fund.

The further build-up of the World Heritage Centre's services needs to be pursued, particularly in the areas of data management and information systems, promotion and fund-raising, reinforcement of servicing natural heritage and handling World Heritage emergencies.

The total financial resources which were made available to the World Heritage Centre in 1994 can be estimated at US\$ 5 million, out of which about US\$ 3,3 million came from the World Heritage Fund, US\$ 1 400 000 from UNESCO's Regular Programme (US\$ 1 Million for staff; US\$ 400 000 for programmes) and US\$ 250 000 from States Parties in kind or under Funds-in-Trust arrangements.

In 1994, the approved budget of US\$ 2 910 000 has been fully used and US\$ 418 410 of the Emergency Fund has been spent.

The budget for 1995 could be based on the following:

- a) The budgetary ceiling for 1995 should be kept at the same level as 1994, namely at US\$ 2 900 000.
- b) States Parties in arrears with contributions to the World Heritage Fund should urgently fulfil their obligations for payment. In that case the budgetary ceiling could be set above US\$ 2 900 000 in 1996.

c) US\$ 581 519, the remainder of the Emergency Fund, should be set aside for emergencies in 1995/96, and States Parties should be invited to make voluntary contributions to replenish and if possible to increase the World Heritage Emergency Fund.

As you remember, the World Heritage Committee defined at its last session the role and functions of the World Heritage Centre and encouraged UNESCO to envisage its **functional autonomy**. The Director-General responded to this request, *inter alia*, in his oral report to the 145th session of the Executive Board by stating: "I find it timely for UNESCO to take certain measures that will institute the practical conditions for effective functional autonomy of both IOC (Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission) and WHC (World Heritage Centre) within the Organization.

The procedures by which UNESCO would confer to IOC and the World Heritage Centre an effective functional autonomy in regard to administrative and financial aspects would be based upon the successful modalities already approved by the General Conference in regard to the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and the International Bureau of Education (IBE). In accordance with the precedents established for these two institutions, a proposal could be included within the Draft UNESCO Programme and Budget for 1996-1997 by which UNESCO would provide its regular programme support to IOC and WHC through a 'financial allocation'."

In response to the Director-General's wish the Centre has studied arrangements concerning the financial autonomy of the World Heritage Centre, taking into account the existence of the World Heritage Fund. Thus, the General Conference could decide that a financial allocation under the Regular Programme be paid into the World Heritage Fund, which would provide for full transparency of the Centre's budget and streamline its administrative procedures. Such a special account would be administered by the Director of the World Heritage Centre under the authority of the Director-General of UNESCO, and be based on the budget adopted by the World Heritage Committee.

In order to prepare this important move towards greater autonomy of the Centre, a draft text of the proposed new financial regulations for the World Heritage Fund is submitted to the Committee for comments (WHC-94/CONF.003/10).

In order to enhance further the World Heritage Centre's work and services to States Parties, an active policy of **decentralization** is now pursued which largely depends on the support provided by States Parties. I am glad to note that several countries have offered help to UNESCO, and the first International World Heritage offices, away from UNESCO Headquarters but integral parts of the World Heritage Centre at UNESCO, are likely to be established on an experimental basis in the near future. I hope to be able to report back to you on this important matter at the Committee's next session.

Finally, I wish to emphasize the importance of this eighteenth session of the World Heritage Committee in providing guidance for UNESCO's Medium Term Plan 1996-2001. Therefore, at the end of my presentation I wish to draw your attention to document WHC-94/CONF.003/4, which has already been reviewed by the Bureau and which I will present to you this afternoon.