

Distribution limited

SC-88/CONF.001/4B  
25 October, 1988

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,  
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF  
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

World Heritage Committee

Twelfth Session

(Brasilia, Brazil, 5-9 December 1988)

Item 8 of the Provisional Agenda : Monitoring the state of conservation of cultural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List.

1. At its eleventh session, the Committee decided to implement on an experimental basis a system of monitoring the state of conservation of cultural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. In accordance with this decision, a questionnaire entitled Information Update on the cultural sites inscribed on the World Heritage List was sent on 1 February 1988 to the 22 States Parties which have one or several properties among the first 50 cultural properties inscribed. The questionnaire was accompanied by an explanatory letter from the Secretariat. The deadline for receiving the completed questionnaires had been fixed at 15 April 1988.

2. As at 14 June 1988, the date of the beginning of the twelfth session of the Bureau, only ten States had sent back the completed questionnaire. The Secretariat thus sent in June 1988 a reminder letter to the twelve States Parties whose answers had not yet been received, asking them to return the completed questionnaire by 1 August 1988.

3. As at 12 October 1988, the date at which this document was prepared, 15 States out of 22 have sent back the questionnaire. One State has only sent back two questionnaires out of three. Information has been received for 35 out of 50 of the properties concerned, i.e. 70%.

.../2

4. The replies from States Parties were received on the following dates:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Cultural Property</u>
ETHIOPIA	30 March	Aksum Lalibela Fasil Ghebi Awash Tiya
POLAND	31 March	Wieliczka
CANADA	1 April	L'Anse aux Meadows
CYPRUS	6 April	Paphos
BRAZIL	21 April	Ouro Preto
ITALY	25 April	Valcamonica
POLAND	25 April	Cracow Auschwitz
USA	27 April	Mesa Verde Independence Hall
BULGARIA	3 May	Boyana Madara Thracian tomb of Kazanlak Ivanovo
SYRIA	5 May	Damas
GERMANY (Fed. Rep.)	20 May	Aachen
TUNISIA	9 June	El Jem Carthago
SENEGAL	20 June	Island of Goree
YUGOSLAVIA	8 August	Dubrovnik Kotor Ohrid Sopacani Split
FRANCE	12 August	Chartres Mont St.-Michel Versailles Vezelay Vezere
NORWAY	12 Sept.	Urnes Church Bryggen/

5. The dates at which the questionnaires were received show that the deadline for the receipt initially fixed by the Committee (31 March) is difficult for States members to meet. Thus, it proved to be impossible in 1988 to apply the multi-stage mechanism advocated by the Committee, namely:

- 1) preliminary examination of the reports received by the Secretariat;
- 2) transmission of copies of the reports which require more detailed examination to the members of the Bureau and to ICOMOS;
- 3) originals of all the reports to be put at the disposal of the members of the Bureau during the meeting, for examination.

6. The alternative which would consist of postponing the deadline to 31 March of the next year would have the effect of slowing down a process which, to be effective, must be carried out at a sustained pace.

7. The Secretariat has regularly transmitted copies of the received questionnaires and of their annexes to ICOMOS which accepted to examine them. If the Committee so wishes during its twelfth session, ICOMOS could give its oral comments on this subject and communicate its suggestions to the Committee.

8. The Secretariat, on its part, has carried out a preliminary examination of the replies given in the questionnaires. Following this examination, the Secretariat has the following remarks. Almost all the questionnaires provide interesting elements of information: strengthening of the legal protection of the property, extension of the perimeter of protection or of the buffer zone, changes in the ownership or in the state of conservation of the property (either owing to conservation works already carried out or to deterioration due to atmospheric factors, natural phenomena, pollution, ...); new archaeological discoveries.

9. A few remarks should be made with respect to the information transmitted by States to explain the changes which have taken place. One State Party has referred to a change in the legislation which protects the property, without explaining the change in question, which is not clearly apparent. It is therefore indispensable that the replies include not only mention or copy of the texts concerned, but also an analysis, albeit brief, stating explicitly the modifications which have taken place in the legal protection of the property concerned. Also, in case of changes in the boundaries of the buffer zone, it would be useful to have a map showing the new perimeter. Another State mentioned that

archaeological excavations had been continued on one of its sites and that discoveries of great interest had been made. This type of information should obviously be included in the questionnaires. However, it would be desirable to request States Parties to communicate to the Secretariat information about any new archaeological discovery as soon as it has taken place, to enable the Secretariat to regularly update the promotional material on World Heritage properties. In the same way, it would be desirable for the Secretariat to be regularly informed of any change that occurs within the administration responsible for the management of the property.

10. The results obtained during this first experimental phase of the monitoring system are encouraging. The questionnaires make it possible to register the changes occurred on a site, to be made aware of alarming states of conservation or, on the other hand, to take note of the progress accomplished in the conservation of a property. They also indicate difficulties in protecting certain properties, such as rapid urban growth, etc. Finally, if need be, the Committee could become aware of the necessity to take action.

11. At its eleventh session, the Committee agreed that adjustments could be made in the light of the first experimental phase. It is still too early, however, to be able to identify the problems which could arise in relation to the problems of phasing mentioned above, and to reach some conclusions as to the viability of the principles of the system as adopted by the Committee at its eleventh session.

12. However, the Committee might find it appropriate to postpone, for instance to 31 December, the deadline for the receipt of questionnaires, which would thus give the States Parties enough time to reply in a detailed manner (with, when necessary, supporting photographs, plans, and legal texts). This would give the following work-plan:

First year

January .Secretariat sends out questionnaires

31 December .Deadline for receipt

Second year

January - April .Preliminary examination by the  
Secretariat  
.Copies of questionnaires sent to ICOMOS

June (Bureau session)

.Questionnaires put at the disposal  
of the Bureau  
.Report of the Secretariat to the Bureau  
.ICOMOS's comments given to the Bureau,  
as appropriate

December (Committee session)

- .All questionnaires put at the disposal of the Committee
- .Specific problem cases brought to the attention of the Committee
- .Report of the Secretariat to the Committee
- .ICOMOS's comments given to the Committee, as appropriate