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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

Twelfth Session

(Unesco Headquarters, 14-17 June 1988)

Item 8b) of the Provisional Agenda: Monitoring of the status of
conservation of cultural properties inscribed on the World
Heritage List

1. In accordance with the decision taken by the Committee at its eleventh session, the first 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 fifty cultural properties inscribed. The questionnaire was accompanied by an explanatory letter from the Secretariat, the text of which is given in Annex I of this document.

2. By 5 May 1988, only eight States had returned the completed questionnaire. The Secretariat is about to send a new letter to the fourteen States Parties whose response has not yet been received, asking them to return the filled in questionnaire by 1 August 1988.

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

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
Syria	5 May	Damascus

The low number of replies received as at 5 May indicates that the deadline for the receipt of the questionnaires which the Committee had initially fixed was difficult to respect. A longer period of time would enable the State Party concerned to assemble all the necessary documents, to take photographs as appropriate and to reply in as much detail as possible to the questions asked. The Secretariat therefore proposes that the deadline be fixed in the future at 1 August.

4. The responses were received too late to be analysed by ICOMOS which, during that period, was fully occupied with evaluating the nominations of cultural properties for 1988.

5. Before transmitting the replies received to ICOMOS, the Secretariat has itself undertaken a preliminary examination. (Copies of the questionnaires will be at the disposal of the members of the Bureau).

6. Of the 15 properties considered, only two have reportedly experienced no change since their inscription on the List. In thirteen other cases, changes have taken place in the legal protection of the property, the perimeter of protection, in the ownership or in the administration responsible for the control and management of the property, in the state of conservation of the property (due either to conservation work already undertaken, or to deterioration caused by atmospheric factors).

7. A few remarks may 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 essential for the Committee, not only to be informed of the texts in question or to receive copies thereof, but to receive also an analysis, albeit brief, explaining the modifications which have taken place in the legal protection of the property in question. Another State has referred to archaeological excavations which have been undertaken on one of its sites and to discoveries made which are of great interest. 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 it to update regularly the promotional material on world heritage sites.

8. 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.

9. Although the first results obtained from the information update questionnaires are few in number, they are encouraging. If all the replies reach the Secretariat by 1 August 1988, it would no doubt be possible to present to the twelfth session of the Committee a more substantial report on the state of conservation of the cultural properties inscribed on the List and thus on the effectiveness of the experimental monitoring system adopted by the Committee at its eleventh session.



united nations educational, scientific and cultural organization
organisation des nations unies pour l'éducation, la science et la culture

7, place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris
1, rue Miollis, 75015 Paris

adresse postale : B.P. 3 07 Paris
téléphone : national (1) 45 68 10 00
international + (33.1) 45 68 10 00
télégrammes : Unesco Paris
téléc : 204461 Paris
270602 Paris

référence : CC/CH/01/7.3/06.1

- 1 FEB 1988

Subject: Convention concerning the protection
of the world cultural and natural heritage

Sir,

The World Heritage Committee which, according to Article 11.2 of the Convention, is to establish and keep up to date the World Heritage List, wishes to be kept informed of the state of conservation of the cultural properties inscribed on this List. Therefore, it decided at its eleventh session held from 7 to 11 December 1987, to set up a system to monitor the state of conservation of listed cultural properties. The purpose of this system is to stimulate the conservation efforts of States parties, encouraging those States whose resources are limited to make wider use of the help which the Committee could give them. To implement this system, the Committee decided to use a questionnaire designed to update the information provided in the nomination files as well as to help the States parties to identify the dangers threatening world heritage cultural properties. This monitoring system, adopted on an experimental basis, will be applied in the first instance to the first fifty cultural sites inscribed on the World Heritage List.

In accordance with this decision, two cultural sites of your country (Mesa Verde, 1978; Independence Hall, 1979) are among the fifty properties to be examined in 1988. I am sending you herewith two copies of the questionnaire entitled "Information update on the cultural sites inscribed on the World Heritage List" which I would kindly ask you to transmit to the authorities concerned, asking them to complete and return them as soon as possible so that they reach the Secretariat of the Committee by 15 April 1988 at the latest. We do regret that the time is so short, but the questionnaires must be examined by the Secretariat before being submitted to the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee in June 1988.

Mr Richard T. Miller
Permanent Observer
United States Observer Mission at Unesco
American Embassy
2, Avenue Gabriel
75008 Paris

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Mr Y.R. Isar, Chief, International Standards Section, is at your disposal to provide any further information on the monitoring system or to answer any question pertaining to the World Heritage Convention. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.



*Anne Raidl
Director
Division of Cultural Heritage*