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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF  
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

BUREAU OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE  
FIFTEENTH SESSION

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Room XIV

Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda: Monitoring of the state of conservation of cultural World Heritage properties and related technical problems

1. At its fourteenth session (Banff, Canada, 1990), the World Heritage Committee decided that replies to the questionnaires sent in 1988 and 1989 should be analysed within the context of the monitoring of the state of conservation of cultural World Heritage properties.

42 replies were received to the first batch of 50 questionnaires of which ten can be considered as having useful information, both with regard to the management of the sites and to their conservation and related problems. Only 23 replies were received to the second batch of 49 questionnaires of which nine can be considered interesting. Out of the 46 other replies 19 cannot be used, 17 having little information (or in some cases because the sense of the questionnaire was incorrectly interpreted) and two which, because they were not written in the working languages of the Committee, nor even of the Secretariat, could not be analysed. 2

As mentioned at former meetings both of the Bureau and of the Committee, in many cases the positive or negative factors affecting the properties do not emerge clearly from the replies (because of their elliptic formulation). In addition, some replies from the same country are of varying quality, which might be explained by the fact that the questionnaires were perceived differently by the different persons responsible for replying to them.

It should also be pointed out that in two cases the replies provided do not mention the modifications made to the sites by the addition of new elements or the deterioration of the property. In respect of one of these sites, the Secretariat had been informed of modifications made a few years before the mailing of the questionnaires; for the other site, a request for technical co-operation was made to repair a collapsed roof of a monument at the same time as the questionnaire was being returned to the Secretariat.

2. It therefore seems difficult to remove the doubts expressed for several years on the questionnaire's efficiency. This exercise, which is moreover a strain on the Secretariat's limited human resources, would only be understandable if it were possible to request more information or revision of the replies from the State Party on each occasion, which would lead the Committee and the Secretariat to play an "inquisitorial" role, a role considered inappropriate by the Committee at its tenth session in 1986.

During that session, foreseeing the difficulties which did in fact subsequently occur and were borne out by the analysis of the questionnaires, members of the Committee suggested that missions should be organized to assist States Parties who requested such assistance to fill out the questionnaires, a proposal which was rejected by the Committee because of the high cost of implementation.

If the establishment of a monitoring system is not to be called into question, it must be recognized that the use of a questionnaire does not really respond to the Committee's desire to be kept informed and to encourage States Parties to make a regular diagnosis of their properties and sites inscribed on the World Heritage List in order to ensure their better maintenance.

Rather than request States Parties to fill in questionnaires, the Committee should perhaps envisage that every request for international assistance be accompanied by a thorough diagnosis of the property concerned, made out in more detail than the one provided for in the forms of Request for technical co-operation. The Committee would then have an essential element for assessment and this would enable the problems concerning each inscribed site to be understood as they emerge.

As far as the region of Latin America and the Caribbean is concerned, because of budgetary constraints in technical co-operation for 1990, the Co-ordinator of the UNDP/UNESCO Regional Project on Cultural Heritage and Development was requested to include, in the pilot operation considered for the diagnosis of the sites of this region, those sites for which requests were expected.

3. In this perspective, the Secretariat has undertaken the establishment of a tool, in the form of records by countries and sites, which could contribute both to the monitoring of properties and to assisting the Committee in its decisions as to the allocation of technical assistance.

These records will give general information, including the financial status of States Parties with regard to the World Heritage Fund and on past assistance for each site. These records will also contain (a) comments made by the Committee at the time of the inscription of the sites, (b) replies to the questionnaires sent so far, (c) possible complaints about threats to the integrity of the sites, etc. The Secretariat intends to elaborate by this means a systematic memory of important information on each site which has now become absolutely indispensable. Because of their strictly utilitarian character and of the fact that they are not likely to be of interest to the public, dissemination of these records will, of course, be limited to the members of the Committee as need arises. When this tool becomes operational, it will also enable the Secretariat and the Committee to identify sites for which no reports or requests for intervention have been made since their inscription, and which consequently should be the subject of a diagnosis.

4. Given the weakness of the questionnaire system, the Secretariat suggested new means of action at the fourteenth session of the Committee, in particular in the form of pilot projects at the regional level. In the spirit of the project foreseen for the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, on which the Co-ordinator of the UNDP/UNESCO Regional Project on Cultural Heritage and Development will make a report to the Bureau, the Secretariat intends to submit to the Committee reports on a score of sites located around the Mediterranean Basin which are on the World Heritage List and also figure on the list of 100 sites protected under the *Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution* (Barcelona), concluded under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). This analysis will be prepared in co-operation with the director of the cultural heritage office of Marseille, who is the co-ordinator of the co-operation network established by UNEP under the Barcelona Convention. At the next session of the Committee, it is thus planned to present reports similar to those submitted in Banff on the following sites: Paphos (Cyprus); Memphis, Saqqara, Islamic Cairo and Abu Mena (Egypt); Mosque of Cordoba, Alhambra and Generalife in Granada, Parque Güell, Palacio Güell, and Casa Milá in Barcelona, and Cathedral, Alcazar and Archivo de Indias in Seville (Spain); Roman and Romanesque Monuments of Arles (France); Delphi, Acropolis of Athens, Mount Athos, Paleochristian and Byzantine Monuments of Thessalonika, Epidaurus, Mediaeval City of Rhodes, Olympia, Mystras, Delos (Greece); Venice, Piazza del Duomo in Pisa, Historic Centre of Rome (Italy); Valetta, Hal Saflieni Hypogeum, Ggantija Temples (Malta); Medina of Tunis, Carthage, Amphitheatre of El Djem, Punic Town of Kerkuane and its Necropolis, Medina of Sousse (Tunisia); Historic Areas of Istanbul, Xanthos-Letoon (Turkey); Old City of Dubrovnik, Historic Complex of Split with the Palace of Diocletian, Kotor (Yugoslavia). As a sample, a first report on Xanthos-Letoon is at the disposal of the Bureau.