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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Thirty-fourth session

Brasilia, Brazil
25 July – 3 August 2010

Item 14 of the Provisional Agenda: Feasibility Study on the working methods of the Committee – Possibility of holding two annual sessions of the World Heritage Committee

SUMMARY

At its 33rd session (Seville, 2009), the World Heritage Committee, by Decision **33 COM 14.A2**, requested the World Heritage Centre to undertake an in-depth feasibility study on the concept and implications of holding two sessions of the Committee per year, and also to examine other options for a more efficient and effective management of the increasing workload of the Committee, including drawing on the experience of other multilateral conventions.

Draft decision: 34 COM 14, see point IV

I. CONTEXT

1. At its 33rd session (Seville, 2009), the World Heritage Committee, by Decision **33 COM 14.A2**, requested the World Heritage Centre to undertake a feasibility study to examine in-depth the concept and implications of holding two sessions of the Committee per year, and also to examine other options for a more efficient and effective management of the increasing workload of the Committee, including drawing on the experience of other multilateral conventions.
2. This document aims to highlight the advantages and disadvantages, as well as the costs involved with this proposal, and to draw on the experience of other multilateral conventions for possible lessons to be learnt.
3. At this point, it should be recalled that the working methods of the Committee, due to the work overload, have already been discussed on several occasions in different contexts and frameworks. At its 23rd session (Marrakesh, 1999), the World Heritage Committee created a Working Group on the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*, chaired by Canada, that reported to the Committee at its 24th session (Cairns, 2000). This Working Group, entitled “Task Force on the Implementation of the Convention” drew up several proposals to improve the working conditions of the Committee. Its report can be consulted at the following link: <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2000/whc-00-conf204-inf7e.pdf>
4. It should also be recalled that, following the work of this Task Force, the Committee decided that the calendar and cycle of the Committee meetings would be modified as from 2002, and that the extraordinary sessions of the Committee and Bureau would be abolished. This was followed, in 2003, by Decision **6 EXT.COM 3** concerning the abolition of the meetings of the Bureau outside of the Committee sessions.
5. At its 7th extraordinary session (UNESCO, 2004), the World Heritage Committee, by Decision **7 EXT.COM 4B.3**, created a working group to study its working methods. The Committee decided that this working group would terminate its mandate at the 29th session (Durban, 2005). Based on this report, the Committee adopted, at its 29th session (Durban, 2005), Decision **29 COM 18C**, by which it was decided “*to explore at its 30th session ways and means of optimizing the time-management of its sessions, including the need and convenience of increasing on a permanent basis the periodicity of its ordinary sessions, taking particularly into account:*
 - a) *the importance of ensuring a manageable agenda; and*
 - b) *the need to have enough time to examine the state of conservation of sites on the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger, as well as the nominations to the World Heritage List.*”
6. At its 30th session (Vilnius, 2006), following debate, the Committee had recommended, by Decision **30 COM 13** that: “*the World Heritage Committee holds one session per year. Extraordinary sessions of the Committee should only take place when very exceptional circumstances make it necessary.*”

7. Most likely the debates that will take place in Brasilia will serve as a basis for discussion at the decision-making meeting to be held in Bahrain in the Autumn 2010 (see document *WHC-10/34.COM/12*).

II. FEASIBILITY STUDY

A. Advantages and disadvantages of an additional annual session

8. In the framework of the Workshop to reflect on the Future of the *World Heritage Convention* (UNESCO, 25-27 February 2009), the participants had remarked that the lack of time during the Committee meetings for adequate treatment of important issues posed a problem for the States Parties, the members of the Committee, the Advisory Bodies and the observers, and that this should be urgently remedied. This concern was taken into consideration by the Committee at its 33rd session in its adoption, amongst others, of Decision **33 COM 14.A2** proposing that two sessions be held per year.
9. One of the advantages of holding two annual sessions would be to decongest the overloaded agenda of the Committee sessions, which could ensure more serene debates. This splitting of the agenda could consist in holding one session devoted to the examination of nominations and reports on the state of conservation of the properties inscribed, as well as any other report concerning the conservation of the properties (Periodic Report, Reinforced Monitoring...). The other session would examine the administrative and financial aspects of the implementation of the *Convention*.
10. Another possibility would be to separate the examination of the nominations from that of the reports on the state of conservation. However, this formula might disassociate the concept of conservation from that of inscription.
11. The first session could be held at the end of the first semester and the other at the end of the second semester.
12. The disadvantages of organizing a second annual session would be:
 - a) Additional costs: direct and indirect costs doubled by the preparation and holding of two sessions (cf. paragraph B below).
 - b) Lack of time: in addition to costs, the most important resource for the organization of a second annual session is time. Because of a calendar already full of statutory deadlines and the organization of numerous reactive monitoring missions, the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre work within relatively short timeframes which leaves little time for the addition of new statutory dates. The report of the management audit (2007) had concluded that the workload of the Centre had increased. The Mapping of the Workload of the World Heritage Centre carried out by IOS in 2008 came to the same conclusion (the detailed report of this evaluation is contained in document *WHC-09/33.COM/INF.5A.3*).
 - c) Risk of lack of coherence between the sessions, as each session would deal with very different subjects (technical versus administrative and financial) which would call upon different competencies, obliging the States Parties to send different experts to each of the sessions.

The risk of lack of coordination and especially of a view of the total picture could be considerable.

B. Estimate of the cost of an additional annual session of the World Heritage Committee

13. As it was suggested that this second session of the Committee would be organized at UNESCO HQ, there would *de facto* be no cost for a host State Party. However, the inherent organizational costs for all meetings remain:

- **Direct costs :**

- interpretation of the session: **US\$ 60,000**;
- logistical aspects (transcribers, technicians, overtime): **US\$ 25,000**;
- The additional cost for the **Advisory Bodies** covers the presence of seven persons, their time during the session and their travel, board and lodging expenses: estimated at **US\$ 98,000**;
- transportation and per diem of the World Heritage Committee members financed under the World Heritage Fund: **US\$ 60,000**;
- preparation of the final report (translation of the summaries of the debates): **US\$ 20,000**.

- **Indirect costs/impacts :**

- Staff time of **World Heritage Centre** personnel: participation in the session and the additional coordination is estimated at 20 persons for two weeks.
- An additional session might disrupt the established agenda and could have an overall impact on the organization of work, on the compliance with statutory deadlines and the implementation of World Heritage Committee's decisions.

The estimated total cost of organizational expenses (not including the expenses incurred by other members of the Committee and States Parties for their participation) amounts to US\$ 263,000.

III. THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHER MULTILATERAL CONVENTIONS

In Annex 1, a comparative table on the organization of ordinary sessions or working groups of different conventions highlights the recourse to the creation of subsidiary bodies to which certain tasks are delegated.

IV. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision 34 COM 14

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC-10/34.COM/14,*
2. *Recalling Decision **33 COM 14.A2** adopted at its 33rd session (Seville, 2009),*
3. *Takes note of the above-mentioned Document;*
4. *Proposes the consideration of this issue of two sessions of the Committee per year in the context of the Expert Meeting “on decision-making procedures in statutory organs of the World Heritage Convention” that will be held in Bahrain, in the Autumn 2010.*

**WORKING METHODS OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE AND RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF VARIOUS CONVENTIONS CONCERNING SUBSIDIARY BODIES & WORKING GROUPS**

UNESCO CONVENTIONS	NUMBER OF ANNUAL ORDINARY SESSIONS OF GOVERNING BODIES	CREATION OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES & WORKING GROUPS	DETAILS & METHODOLOGY
<p>Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its Second Protocol (1999)</p>	<p>Committee (Second Protocol) meets once a year in ordinary session. Extraordinary sessions whenever it deems necessary.</p> <p>Meeting of the Parties to the Second Protocol once every 2 years (on the occasion of the General Conference).</p> <p>In total: three meetings during the biennium.</p> <p>Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Hague Convention once every 2 years (on the occasion of the General Conference).</p>	<p>Committee may establish subsidiary bodies as it deems necessary for the conduct of its work, within the limits of the technical facilities available</p> <p>Committee may set up ad hoc Sub-Committees for the study of specific problems related to its activities.</p>	<p>The Meeting of the Parties shall be convened at the same time as UNESCO General Conference and in co-ordination with the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties, if such a meeting has been called by the Director-General.</p> <p>Subsidiary bodies can only be constituted from amongst States members of the Committee. Membership of ad hoc subcommittees may be also open to States Parties to the Second Protocol which are not represented in the Committee without the right to vote.</p>

UNESCO CONVENTIONS	NUMBER OF ANNUAL ORDINARY SESSIONS OF GOVERNING BODIES	CREATION OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES & WORKING GROUPS	DETAILS & METHODOLOGY
1970 - Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property	The States Parties to this Convention shall in their periodic reports submitted to the General Conference of UNESCO on dates and in a manner to be determined by it, give information on the legislative and administrative provisions which they have adopted and other action which they have taken for the application of this Convention, together with details of the experience acquired in this field (art.16).	<p>The States Parties to this Convention may call on the technical assistance of UNESCO, particularly as regards: (a) Information and education; (b) consultation and expert advice; (c) co-ordination and good offices and also on the co-operation of any competent non-governmental organization (art.17).</p> <p><u>Partner IGOs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - INTERPOL – The International Criminal Police Organization - UNIDROIT – International Institute for the Unification of Private Law - WCO – World Customs Organization - European Commission - UNODC – Office on Drugs and Crime - Italo-Latin-American Institute (IILA) - Special Police Corps of the Carabinieri (Italy) - OCBC (France) – The Central 	The next consultation is currently taking place and the results will be presented to the 36 th session of the General Conference.

		<p>Office of Fight Against Trafficking of Cultural Property</p> <p><u>Partner NGOs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ICOM – International Council of Museums - Syndicat national des Antiquaires (SNA, France) - CINOA – International Confederation of art and antique dealers associations - International Law Association (ILA, Sub-Committee on Cultural Heritage) - Union of European Historic Houses Association (UEHHA) - Europa Nostra 	
1978 - Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit	Committee meets at least once and no more than twice every 2 years	The Committee may set up ad hoc committees and working groups for studying certain problems related to those of its activities (Art. 6).	<p>Subcommittees may include Member States of UNESCO which are not members of the Committee.</p> <p>During the 15th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit (11-13 May 2009), an ad hoc sub-committee was established to <u>continue discussions on the draft rules of procedure on mediation and conciliation</u> and</p>

			met at UNESCO HQ from 18 – 23 November 2009.
2001 - Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage	Meeting of States Parties may establish subsidiary bodies as it deems necessary for its purpose. Meets at least once every 2 years.	Scientific and Technical Advisory Body established to advise the meeting of States Parties in questions of a scientific and technical nature and foster good practices in underwater archaeology.	The Scientific and Technical Advisory Body usually meets once a year. There is no limited duration of meetings (in 2010, 3 days). It should work as far as possible electronically.

UNESCO CONVENTIONS	NUMBER OF ANNUAL ORDINARY SESSIONS OF GOVERNING BODIES	CREATION OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES & WORKING GROUPS	DETAILS & METHODOLOGY
2003 - Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage	General Assembly meets every 2 years. Intergovernmental Committee (24 members) meets at least once a year in ordinary session.	2007: creation of a Subsidiary body on possible modalities for the participation of communities and others (Decision 2.COM 8). 2007: creation of a subsidiary body for the design of an emblem of the Convention (Decision 2.COM 13). 2008: establishment of a permanent subsidiary body to work on nominations for the List of representative elements of Intangible heritage (Decision ITH/08/3.COM/CONF.203/11)	Committee may establish, on a temporary basis, whatever ad hoc consultative bodies it deems necessary to carry out its task. Committee may establish such subsidiary bodies as it deems necessary for the conduct of its work. 2008: subsidiary body composed of one Member State of the Committee for each electoral group (6 in total). Average duration of meetings: 5 days, once a year.

UNESCO CONVENTIONS	NUMBER OF ANNUAL ORDINARY SESSIONS OF GOVERNING BODIES	CREATION OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES & WORKING GROUPS	DETAILS & METHODOLOGY
2005 - Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions	Conference of Parties meets every 2 years (as far as possible in conjunction with UNESCO General Conference). Intergovernmental Committee (24 members) meets once a year.	Committee may establish subsidiary bodies (composed of Committee Members) as it deems necessary for the conduct of its work.	

OTHER CONVENTIONS	NUMBER OF ANNUAL ORDINARY SESSIONS OF GOVERNING BODIES	CREATION OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES & WORKING GROUPS	DETAILS & METHODOLOGY
1971 - Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar)	Conference of Contracting Parties (COP) meets every 3 years. Standing Committee intersessional executive body representing the COP. Meets once each year and just prior to the COP meeting and after.	Subsidiary expert body, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to provide scientific and technical guidance International Organization Partners (IOPs) Subsidiary bodies of the Standing Committee, 2009-2012: Subgroup on Finance, (established by Decision SC16-1, 1995) Subgroup on COP11, (Decision	16 regional and two ex officio members of the Standing Committee. COP to determine matters to be examined by each such body. If subsidiary body is open-ended, 1/4 of the Parties shall constitute a quorum (otherwise a majority). Held in public, unless decided otherwise. Creation of a website with discussion forums

		<p>SC34-6) Subgroup on the Strategic Plan, (Decision SC34-5) Management Working Group (Resolution IX.24, Decision SC34-3) CEPA Oversight Panel, (Res. IX.18, Decision SC34-12) STRP Oversight Committee (Resolution IX.11) Ad Hoc Working Group on Administrative Reform (Resolution X.5)</p>	
<p>1973 - Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS - Bonn Convention)</p>	<p>- Conference of the Parties (CoP): every 3 years - Standing Committee (StC): meets at least annually - Scientific Council (ScC) meets once a year (88 members)</p>	<p>All three bodies have the possibility to establish working groups on particular species or other topics.</p>	<p>CoP: decision-making organ of CMS</p> <p>StC: Established by Resolution 1.1 of the CoP (Representatives of every Global Region).</p> <p>ScC: Article VIII of the Convention.</p>
<p>1973 - Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wildlife Fauna and Flora (CITES)</p>	<p>Conference of the Parties (CoP) meets every 2 to 3 years. Standing Committee coordinates and oversees the work of other committees and working groups. Meets only once a year, although it does also meet just before and after each meeting of the CoP.</p>	<p>Animals Committee and Plants Committee are 2 permanent Subsidiary Bodies Animals Committee and Plants Committee provide technical support to decision-making about these species. Meet twice between meetings of CoP.</p>	<p>Any Party may be represented at a meeting of either committee as an observer and the Chairman may invite any person or organization to participate, also as an observer.</p>

1992 - Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	Conference of the Parties (COP) is the governing body of the Convention. 1994-1996: annual meetings, then after 2000 change in rules of procedures, held every 2 years.	Open-ended Subsidiary body on scientific, technical and technological advice (SBSTTA). In addition, COP may establish other subsidiary bodies, committees & working groups. Meets as necessary and sufficiently in advance of each regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties	Where appropriate, meetings of subsidiary bodies shall be held in conjunction with meetings of the Conference of the Parties. 1/4 of the Parties shall constitute a quorum (otherwise a majority). Held in public unless decided otherwise. Any such subsidiary bodies may meet in the period between ordinary meetings.
1992 - Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	Conference of the Parties (CoP): meets every year unless Parties decide otherwise. CoP is the "supreme body".	2 Subsidiary Bodies: for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and for Implementation (SBI). Both meet in parallel at least twice a year, whether in conjunction with the CoP or not.	
1994 - Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)	Conference of the Parties (CoP): Annual sessions 1997-2001, then biennial until today. Supreme decision-making body. Art.24. The Conference of the Parties may, as necessary, appoint ad hoc panels to provide it, through the Committee, with information and advice on specific issues regarding the state of the art in fields of science and	CRIC (Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention): subsidiary body created in 2001. Meets in between CoP ordinary sessions and in conjunction with CoP ordinary sessions. Committee on Science and Technology: meets in conjunction with CoP.	The Conference of the Parties shall consider and adopt procedures and institutional mechanisms for the resolution of questions that may arise with regard to the implementation of the Convention.

	technology relevant to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. The Conference of the Parties shall decide on the terms of reference and the modalities of work of these panels.		
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