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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Paris, UNESCO Headquarters
7- 9 November 2011

Item 11 of the Provisional Agenda: Future of the *World Heritage Convention*

SUMMARY

In conformity with Decision **35 COM 12A** (UNESCO, 2011), this document provides the Strategic Action Plan and Vision as developed by the World Heritage Committee through a working group established as a consultative body at its 33rd (Seville, 2009), 34th (Brasilia, 2010) and 35th (UNESCO, 2011) sessions respectively and was finalized subsequently by the Chair of the working group in cooperation with the World Heritage Centre.

The Committee recommended furthermore that “the 18th session of the General Assembly takes note of documents WHC-11/35.COM/12A, WHC-11/35.COM/12B, WHC-11/35.COM/12C, WHC-11/35.COM/12D and WHC-11/35.COM/INF.7C, as part of a summary of the work undertaken in relation to the reflection on the future of the *Convention*.” These documents are available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/35COM/documents/>. All decisions on the “Reflection of the Future of the *World Heritage Convention*” (**35 COM 12A to 35 COM 12E**) are available in the Decisions Report of the 35th session of the World Heritage Committee at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/35COM>

Draft Resolution: 18 GA 11, see Point 11.

Strategic Action Plan for the Implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* 2012 -2022

1. Our Vision for 2022

International cooperation and shared responsibility through the *World Heritage Convention* ensures effective conservation of our common cultural and natural heritage, nurtures respect and understanding among the world's communities and cultures, and contributes to their sustainable development.

2. Our Mission since 1972

To identify, protect, conserve, present and transmit to future generations the world's outstanding cultural and natural heritage (cf. Art. 4)

3. Our pledge to cooperation

Through cooperation, we seek:

- A sustainable environment in which States Parties are encouraged, supported and assisted by the international community to fully meet their obligations and enjoy their rights under the *World Heritage Convention*
- Local, national and international communities, both now and in the future, which feel a connection to, engage with and benefit from the world's natural and cultural heritage
- A World Heritage List that is a credible, relevant and representative selection of the world's most outstanding heritage sites
- A World Heritage system which remains transparent, equitable, accountable and efficient in an ever-changing world

4. Our World Heritage Goals 2012-2022

- Goal 1:** The Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage sites is maintained
- Goal 2:** The World Heritage List is a credible selection of the world's most outstanding cultural and natural heritage
- Goal 3:** Heritage protection and conservation considers present and future environmental, societal and economic needs
- Goal 4:** World Heritage maintains or enhances its brand quality
- Goal 5:** The Committee can address policy and strategic issues
- Goal 6:** Decisions of statutory meetings are informed and effectively implemented

4.1 Background

The 1972 *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* has proved to be a remarkably visionary instrument for safeguarding the world's heritage. Following significant achievements over four decades, the context in which the *Convention* operates has changed and the very success of the *Convention* has led to an increasing scale and complexity of operations.

This Strategic Action Plan seeks to ensure that the *World Heritage Convention* maintains its status as a credible international mechanism for the identification and conservation of the world's cultural and natural heritage. It seeks to use the strengths of the *Convention* to assist the Committee to adapt to a new context and maximise the identification, protection, conservation, and presentation of World Heritage and its transmission to future generations.

In 2008, the World Heritage Committee (Decision **32 COM 10**) decided to reflect on nearly forty years of achievement. The *Futures Process* was characterised by its spirit of creativity, cooperation and open participation by all members of the World Heritage community.

A website (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/futureoftheconvention/>) enabled all States Parties to participate, including through submissions. A workshop on the Future of the *Convention* was held in February 2009 at UNESCO headquarters to identify global strategic issues, key challenges, trends and opportunities facing the *Convention*. The report of the workshop (WHC-09/33.COM/14A) was conveyed to both the World Heritage Committee at its 33rd session (Seville 2009) and the 17th session of the General Assembly. Resolution **17 GA 9** mandated priorities for action and called for this Strategic Action Plan. States Parties hosted expert workshops on mandated priorities. *The Strategic Action Plan for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention: 2012 – 2022* was reviewed by the 34th (Brasilia 2010) and 35th sessions (UNESCO 2011) of the World Heritage Committee.

4.2 Situation analysis

The submissions to and discussion at the February 2009 workshop on the Future of the *Convention* identified the following strengths and weaknesses and the perceived opportunities and threats to the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 years of operation • An intergovernmental agreement with strong consensus • Near universal membership, including wide range of members from developing and developed countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow to enact change • Emphasis on inscription as an end in itself • Differing interpretations of the Convention, Outstanding Universal Value and management standards by States Parties, Advisory Bodies and the secretariat • Reduced technical basis for decision-making • Increasing Committee, Advisory Body and secretariat workloads
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of the UN family and able to strengthen relations with other international instruments • Heritage as a driver for sustainable development • Able to improve structures, plans and practices for business • Can harness civil society support • New technology enables faster and more efficient awareness raising and knowledge sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressure on budget from near universal membership and global economic slowdown • Emerging competitor organisations/lists and brand confusion • Political, economic, environmental and social pressures on heritage sites

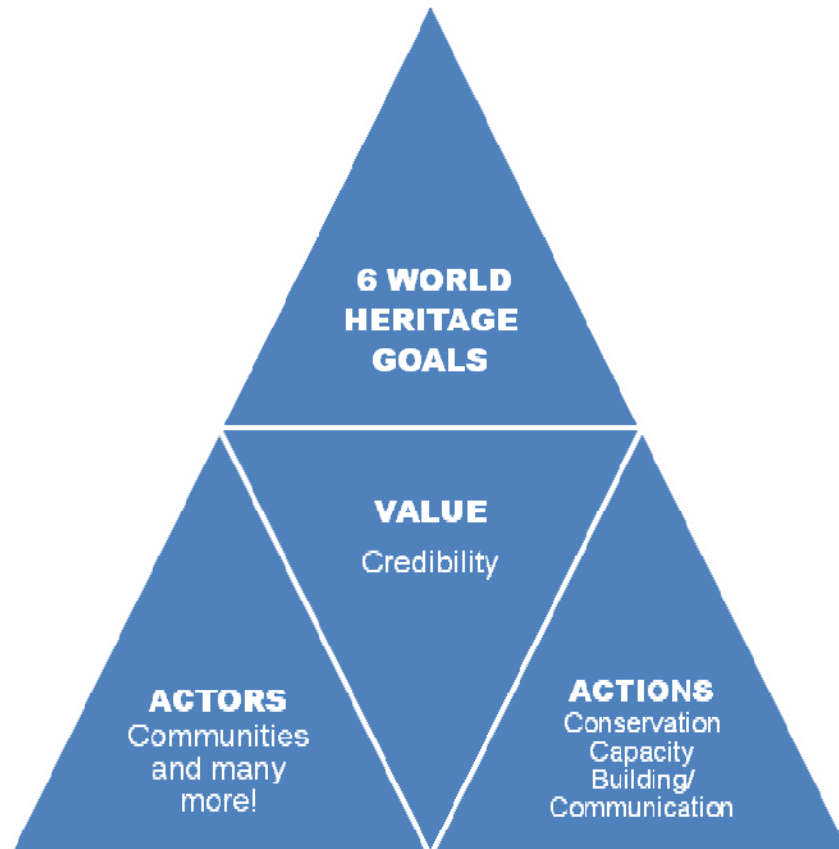
5. Revisiting the 5Cs

The Committee has set a number of key long-term strategic directions. These are encapsulated in the Strategic Orientations adopted in Santa Fe (1992) to mark the 20th anniversary of the *Convention* and the 'Cs' outlined in the Budapest Declaration on World Heritage (adopted in 2002 to mark the 30th anniversary of the *Convention* and reaffirmed and added to in 2007).

The Committee agrees that it is essential to:

Strengthen the credibility of the World Heritage List, as a representative and geographically balanced testimony of cultural and natural properties of outstanding universal value	Ensure the effective conservation of World Heritage properties	Promote the development of effective capacity building measures for the understanding and implementation of the World Heritage Convention and related instruments	Increase public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage through communication	Enhance the role of communities in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention
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Participants in the Futures process reaffirmed the primacy of the 5Cs, and also agreed to the need to update how they are implemented.



6. A Future value: The World Heritage system has 'Credibility'

Credibility is the central quality or value that we seek for the World Heritage system as a whole and results from a renewed focus on conservation, awareness raising, engaging communities, building the capacity of all actors within the system and performing core functions efficiently and effectively. The desired reputation or identity of the *World Heritage Convention* – its credibility – was a key focus of the Futures Process.

7. Future Goals: Defining priorities and desired outcomes

The Futures Process sought to assist in structuring the work of the *Convention*. It identified World Heritage Goals, priorities and desired outcomes to consolidate and build upon the existing strengths of the *World Heritage Convention* over the next ten years. Implementation arrangements, including timeframes, financial and human resources required, roles and responsibilities and indicators of progress are to be developed under an Implementation Plan.

8. Future Actors: Engaging Communities

The *World Heritage Convention* is implemented through a wide and ever-expanding network of actors. Each has an important role to play in shaping policies, driving management practices, building capacity and expanding awareness of cultural and natural heritage. The traditional actors – States Parties, the Committee, Secretariat and Advisory Bodies - continue to need encouragement, support and assistance to meet their obligations under the *Convention*, but it is also important to ensure that local, national and international communities feel a connection to, engage with and benefit from the world's natural and cultural heritage.

9. Future Actions: Conservation, Capacity Building and Communication

The World Heritage system includes both core activities mandated under the *Convention* and what might be termed corporate or operational activities. The ongoing credibility of World Heritage relies upon maintaining the conservation of cultural and natural heritage sites, increased capacity building and improved communication.

Inscription on the World Heritage List is not the end of the process, but a part of the responsibility to ensure that World Heritage is effectively protected and managed for the benefit of current and future generations. There are clear synergies between this primary conservation task of the *World Heritage Convention* and sustainable development principles.

Conservation and communication are complementary tasks. For World Heritage, increased awareness and knowledge of World Heritage objectives can increase commitment to conserve, engage with and support cultural and natural heritage sites. Each World Heritage property communicates the value and quality of the *World Heritage Convention* and should operate as a standard bearer for other heritage places.

The Future's Process emphasised the need for greater dialogue on Tentative Lists, the preparation of nominations, evaluation processes and inscription, as well as on conservation and monitoring activities. Similarly, there is a clear need to develop skills and knowledge on the implementation of the *Convention* to ensure a World Heritage system which remains transparent, equitable, accountable and efficient in an ever-changing world.

Strategic Action Plan for the Implementation of the <i>World Heritage Convention</i> 2012 -2022		
World Heritage Goal 1: The Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage sites is maintained		
	Priority	Outcomes
1.1	Statements of Outstanding Universal Value	Statements of Outstanding Universal Value are the basis for protection and management
1.2	Monitoring mechanisms	Focus monitoring mechanism and resources on critical conservation issues while allowing States Parties time to implement recommendations
1.3	Conservation requirements	Requirements for conservation of Outstanding Universal Value are implemented transparently and consistently
1.4	Training and research	Capacity needs of communities and agencies to address conservation are met, including those identified through Periodic Reporting
1.5	Mitigation of serious threats	Requirements for removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger or World Heritage List are clear and applied consistently
World Heritage Goal 2: The World Heritage List is a credible selection of the most outstanding world's cultural and natural heritage		
	Priority	Outcomes
2.1	Strategy for representative, balanced, and credible World Heritage List	Activities under the Global Strategy for a representative, balanced and credible World Heritage List reflect agreed priorities and are consistent with the <i>Convention</i>
2.2	Nominations	Inscriptions on the World Heritage List fully meet requirements set out in the Operational Guidelines
World Heritage Goal 3: Heritage protection and conservation considers present and future environmental, societal and economic needs		
	Priority	Outcomes
3.1	Sustainable development	Increased consideration of sustainable development through connecting conservation to communities
World Heritage Goal 4: World Heritage maintains or enhances its brand quality		
	Priority	Outcomes
4.1	Awareness raising	World Heritage is widely recognized as the highest standard of heritage and conservation
4.2	Public image	World Heritage value, credibility and quality widely known and understood
World Heritage Goal 5: The Committee can address policy and strategic issues		
	Priority	Outcomes
5.1	Inclusive and systematic policy development	Time is allowed to address strategic and policy issues in a consultative and systematic manner
5.2	Coordination with related instruments	Increased synergy with UNESCO's broader objectives and programmes and other relevant international instruments

World Heritage Goal 6: Decisions of statutory meetings are informed and effectively implemented		
	Priority	Outcomes
6.1	Decision making	Decisions are informed, consistent and implemented
6.2	Workload	Reduced workload while maintaining quality
6.3	Secretariat support	Strengthened secretariat support to the Committee
6.4	Budget	Decisions are costed, reporting considers all sources of funding and funding reflects agreed priorities
6.5	Implementation Plan	Actions under the Strategic Action Plan are linked to priorities and available budget, and outcomes monitored and reviewed

10. Implementation and review of the Strategic Action Plan

This plan is a living document.

The World Heritage Centre, working with the Advisory Bodies, will develop an Implementation Plan to ensure the goals and objectives identified are realized, to be updated biennially. The Implementation Plan should include a business planning section to review the financial impact of proposed activities and to assess options for funding actions included within the Implementation Plan. It should draw upon *inter alia*:

- The Independent Evaluation by the UNESCO External Auditor on the Implementation of the Global Strategy for a credible, representative and balanced World Heritage List and the Partnerships for Conservation Initiative (PACT)
- The World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy
- The Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy
- The Policy on the Impacts of Climate Change on World Heritage sites
- The recommendations of expert group meetings held on:
 - global state of conservation challenges for World Heritage properties
 - decision-making procedures of the statutory organs of the *World Heritage Convention*
 - improvements to the 'upstream processes' prior to consideration of nominations by the World Heritage Committee
 - the relationship between the *World Heritage Convention*, conservation and sustainable development.

The role of the Advisory Bodies, through the provision of technical support and access to expert networks, will be central to supporting implementation of the Strategic Action Plan.

Outcomes against the Strategic Action Plan will be reported to the General Assembly of States Parties. This will ensure that activities undertaken under the framework of the Strategic Action Plan are linked to agreed priorities and budget allocations and will provide an opportunity for States Parties to retest Committee priorities, check progress and where necessary, revise priorities and the allocation of resources.

The Secretariat's annual report to the World Heritage Committee should also be adapted to follow this structure.

It is expected that the Committee will review the activities under each goal on a two-yearly basis to receive feedback from members, discuss objectives and activities, set timelines for their implementation and ensure the highest standards of delivery.

11. Draft Resolution

Draft Resolution 18 GA 11

The General Assembly,

1. Having examined Document WHC-11/18.GA/11 and Document WHC-11/18.GA/INF.11,
2. Recalling Decisions **35 COM 12A**, **35 COM 12B**, **35 COM 12C**, **35 COM 12D**, and **35 COM 12E** adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011),
3. Adopts the Vision and Action Plan and requests the World Heritage Centre to disseminate it widely;
4. Recalls the request by the 35th session of the World Heritage Committee to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to develop a draft Implementation Plan for consideration by the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session in 2012;
5. Welcomes the activities proposed by States Parties to the Convention for the 40th anniversary and encourages all States Parties and partner organizations to promote the anniversary and sponsor further events to reach out to the broader public;
6. Also requests that an updated report of activities on the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention be included on the World Heritage Centre web-page and be provided for information to the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session in 2012.