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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Thirty-fifth session

Paris, UNESCO Headquarters

19-29 June 2011

Item 12 of the Provisional Agenda: Reflection on the Future of the *World Heritage Convention*

12A. Reflection on the Future of the *World Heritage Convention* (*Strategic Action Plan and Vision of the Convention*)

SUMMARY

At its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008), the World Heritage Committee decided to initiate a process of reflection on the future of the *World Heritage Convention*. At its 33rd session (Sevilla, 2009), the Committee decided that it would be useful to develop an overall strategic plan to guide the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* over the next decade. The 17th session of the General Assembly of States Parties (UNESCO, 2009) called for further work on the development of this plan based on the Strategic Objectives. At its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010), the Committee decided that a draft of the Strategic Action Plan and Vision should be elaborated at the 35th session of the Committee for transmission to the 18th session of General Assembly in 2011 for its consideration. A specific open-ended Working Group, established by the Committee at its 33rd and 34th sessions, and chaired by Australia met to discuss the issues regarding the Future of the *Convention*.

The present document has been prepared based on the work by the above-mentioned Working Group and contains a Draft **Strategic Action Plan and Vision** to guide the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* over the decade 2012-2022, based on the several meetings held on this subject as well as on the comments received from States parties.

Draft Decision 35 COM 12A, see Point III

I. Background

1. In view of approaching 40th anniversary of the *World Heritage Convention*, as well as the potential inscription of the 1000th property to the World Heritage List and near universal ratification, the World Heritage Committee, at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008), decided to initiate a process of reflection on the future of the *World Heritage Convention* (the ‘Futures process’). This document outlines the Futures discussion to date and provides an updated Vision Statement and Strategic Action Plan for the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* over the next decade.

II. The Futures process to date

2. *The Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage 1972* has proved to be a remarkably visionary instrument for safeguarding the world’s heritage and has marked some significant achievements over the past four decades of operation. There have also, however, been fundamental changes in the context within which the *Convention* operates and an increasing scale and complexity of operations. To remain sustainable, the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* must adapt to these changes.

3. Recognising the need to build on the past years of work in addressing the issues resulting from the growing complexity and diversity of the implementation of *World Heritage Convention*, at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008), the World Heritage Committee decided to initiate a process of reflection on the future of the *World Heritage Convention* (the Futures process).

4. The following table provides an overview of the timeline, stages completed and the outcomes achieved to date through the process of reflection on the future of the *World Heritage Convention*.

July 2008	Need for reflection agreed upon	- The Committee at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008), decided to convene a workshop to reflect on the future of the Convention in light of the approaching 40th anniversary and imminent inscription of the 1000th site to the World Heritage List
September 2008	Issues to be addressed identified	- Website established to enable all States Parties to participate in the identification of issues to be addressed by the process to reflect on the future of the Convention ¹ - Written submissions received from States Parties, Advisory Bodies, non-governmental and international organisations and interested individuals - Submissions of identified issues considered important for the future direction of the Convention
November 2008	Issues grouped into themes	- Background paper produced, synthesising issues raised in submissions into 3 key themes: 1. Values, messages and image of the Convention 2. Conservation and sustainable development 3. The World Heritage system
25 – 27 February 2009	Issues and actions identified, discussed and prioritised by States Party experts	- Workshop on the Future of the Convention held to enable States Party experts to: 1. reflect on the future of the World Heritage Convention 2. identify global strategic issues, key challenges, trends and opportunities facing the World Heritage Convention and 3. develop approaches to address these issues, as well as synergies with other international instruments

¹ (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/futureoftheconvention/>)

June 2009	Items for immediate action identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chairperson's summary of the Workshop to reflect on the Future of the <i>World Heritage Convention</i> (doc WHC-09/33.COM/14A) provided to the Committee at its 33rd session to capture the discussion on the 3 themes and record priorities identified at the Workshop - An open consultative group was established during the 33rd session of the World Heritage Committee to consider Chair's report and make recommendations to the Committee - Committee agrees need for 'architecture' to direct the future of the <i>Convention</i> and several high priority short to medium term activities for immediate commencement
October 2009	Priorities mandated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resolution 17 GA 9 of the 17th General Assembly of States Parties, supported by 42 States Parties, outlines broad policy agenda for the future of the Convention, sets priorities on this and mandated further work - Strategic priorities for action agreed and offers from States Parties to convene expert meetings on these welcomed - Mandated work to orient the Convention for the future
March 2010	Priority issues discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expert Meeting held on the relationship between the <i>World Heritage Convention</i>, conservation and sustainable development (Paraty, Brazil).
April 2010	Priority issues discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expert meeting held on "Upstream processes to nominations: creative approaches in the nomination process" (Phuket, Thailand) which identifies options to refine and augment the provision of support, advice and feedback to States Parties throughout the nomination process
July 2010	Framework for draft Vision and Action Plan developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An open consultative group established during the 34th session of the World Heritage Committee to consider key components of draft Vision and Action Plan, based on discussion at the 17th session of the General Assembly and submissions received - Committee called for further work on developing the overall framework of the Action Plan and continued work on the Vision
November 2010	Priorities confirmed by States Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written submissions received from States Parties, Advisory Bodies, and interested individuals on identification of priorities for action
November 2010	Elements to include in framework for Action Plan identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written submissions received from States Parties, Advisory Bodies, and interested individuals on the overall framework and particular activities that could be contained within the Strategic Action Plan, as well as the draft Vision
December 2010	Priority issues discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expert meeting held on "decision-making procedures of the statutory organs of the World Heritage Convention" (Manama, Bahrain) which identified opportunities for increasing the efficiency and transparency of these procedures
April 2011	Priority issues discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expert meeting held on "global state of conservation challenges for World Heritage properties" (Dakar, Senegal), which developed creative approaches to assist States Parties and World Heritage site-managers in effectively responding to the range of problems that emerge from inscribed properties
April 2011	Elements to include in framework for Action Plan identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further written submissions received from States Parties, Advisory Bodies, and interested individuals on the overall framework and particular activities that could be contained within the Strategic Action Plan, as well as the draft Vision

5. The Futures process has been designed as an inclusive and transparent process for all States Parties to consider both present and future challenges, as well as opportunities, to the *World Heritage Convention* and to develop strategies to strengthen the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* during its 5th decade. It is focused on preparing for the 40th anniversary of the *Convention* in 2012.

6. The Futures process has involved all members of the World Heritage community in the identification of issues and the prioritisation of those issues for the coming decade. It has also identified a small number of issues requiring immediate action and States Parties have hosted expert meetings to develop creative solutions for some of these urgent challenges.

7. Participants in the Futures process have also identified the core 'architecture' needed to orient the implementation of the *Convention* for the next decade. This includes:

- A Vision Statement: a clear and inspirational statement of the aspirations the World Heritage community has for the future
- A Strategic Plan: a clearly defined plan outlining the aspirational goals, priorities and actions required to help us achieve our vision.

8. These draft documents have been developed through extensive consultation and are available in **Annex**.

III. Draft decision

Draft decision: 35 COM 12A

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC-11/35.COM/12A,
2. Recalling Decision 32 COM 10, 33 COM 14A.2, 34 COM 12 adopted at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008), 33rd session (Seville, 2009) and 34th session (Brasilia, 2010) respectively and Resolution 17 GA 9 adopted by the 17th General Assembly of States Parties (UNESCO, 2009);
3. Welcomes the positive progress made in developing a Draft Strategic Action Plan and Vision to guide the implementation of the World Heritage Convention over the decade 2012-2022;
4. Expresses its appreciation to States Parties, Advisory Bodies, UNESCO Category 2 Centres specializing in cultural and natural heritage, and non-governmental organizations for their written submissions on the overall framework and particular activities that could be contained within the Strategic Action Plan, as well as the Draft Vision;
5. Takes note of the Draft Strategic Action Plan and Vision to guide the implementation of the World Heritage Convention over the decade 2012-2022 and decides to transmit this draft to the 18th session of the General Assembly of States Parties for consideration.

**Draft Strategic Plan for the Implementation of the
World Heritage Convention**

2012 - 2022

Our Mission:

To identify, protect, conserve, present and transmit the world's outstanding cultural and natural heritage.

Our Vision:

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

Through cooperation, we aim for:

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

1. Introduction

The *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* 1972 has proved to be a remarkably visionary instrument for safeguarding the world's heritage. Following significant achievements over four decades, there are currently 187 States Parties to the *World Heritage Convention*, making it nearly universal.

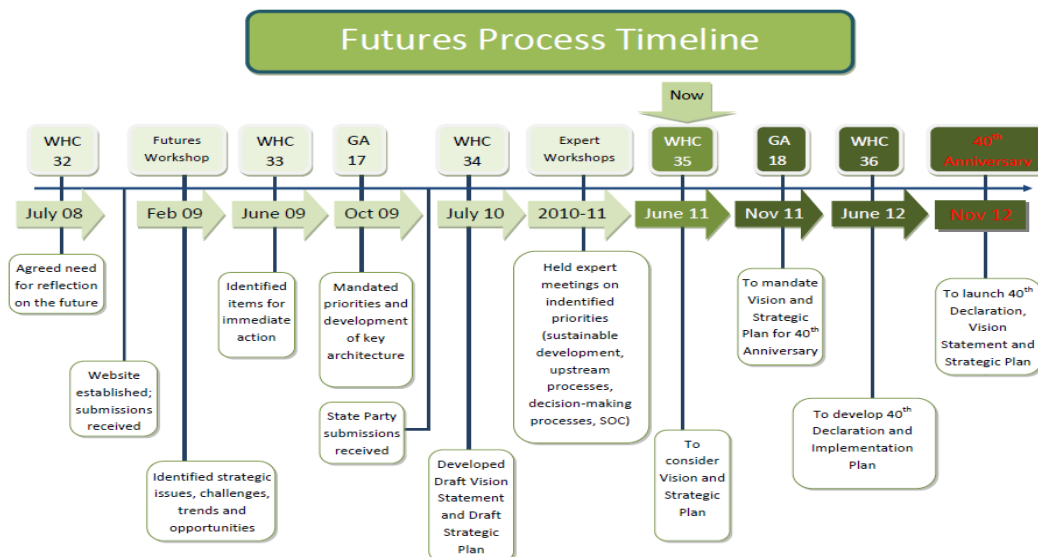
Since 1972, the environment in which the *Convention* operates has changed and the very success of the *Convention* has led to an increasing scale and complexity of operations. These changes mean that the implementation of the *Convention* must also change and adapt if it is to remain credible.

Decisive response is needed by States Parties, the General Assembly, the World Heritage Committee, the Secretariat, the Advisory Bodies and property managers. Local communities, independent non-governmental organisations, Category 2 Centres and regional educational institutions, interested individuals and the media also have a vital role in ensuring the ongoing credibility of the *World Heritage Convention*. Synergies with other international instruments can enhance our efforts to bring tangible benefits to properties.

The *World Heritage Convention* needs to maintain its status as an effective and credible international mechanism for the identification and conservation of the world's outstanding cultural and natural heritage.

2. The Futures process

In 2008, the World Heritage Committee (Decision 32 COM 10) decided to reflect on nearly forty years of achievement through an inclusive and transparent process. The *Futures process* was characterised by its spirit of creativity and cooperation to develop new solutions to familiar problems 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. In preparation for a workshop on the Future of the Convention in February 2009, 44 submissions were received from States Parties, Advisory Bodies, UNESCO, NGOs and IGOs and interested individuals, identifying important issues. These were synthesised in a background paper for the workshop held at UNESCO Headquarters. Four hundred representatives from States Parties, Advisory Bodies, NGOs and UNESCO worked over three days to identify global strategic issues, key challenges, trends and opportunities facing

the *Convention*. The meeting developed approaches to address challenges, and identified synergies with other conventions. The Chair's Report (WHC33-09/33.COM/14A) was conveyed to both the Committee and the General Assembly. Forty-two States Parties sponsored Resolution 17 GA 9, which mandated priorities for action and called for a Vision statement and this Draft Strategic Plan. States Parties hosted expert workshops on mandated priorities and their recommendations were considered by the Committee and in developing this Draft Strategic Plan.

The Draft Strategic Plan for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention: 2012 - 2022 is the culmination of this Futures process. It seeks to use the strengths of the *Convention* to assist the Committee to adapt to a new environment and maximise the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of World Heritage to future generations.

3. 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
An intergovernmental agreement/strong consensus	Budget limitations especially given increasing demands ²
Near universal membership (currently 187 members)	Differing local interpretations of OUV and management standards ³
Wide range of members from developing and developed countries	Limits of administrative oversight ⁴
40 years of operation	Slow to enact change ⁵
Part of the UN family	Few mechanisms for industry and private sector engagement ⁶
Opportunities	Threats
Use better structures, plans and practices for business	Emphasis on inscription as an end in itself rather than conservation ⁷
Increase civil society support	Increasing politicisation of functions ⁸
Strengthen relationships with other international instruments	Increasing Committee, secretariat and Advisory Body workload ⁹
Room to grow diversity of properties	Number of new competing organisations/lists and brand confusion ¹⁰

The *Draft Strategic Plan for the Implementation of the Convention 2012-2022* seeks to build on the past 40 years of work in addressing these emerging issues. The tools to address these challenges are at hand.

4. World Heritage Goals to 2022

Over forty years of activity, the Committee has set a number of key long-term strategic directions. These are encapsulated in the *Global Strategy for a Balanced, Representative and Credible World Heritage List* (1994) and the '5 C's' outlined in the *Budapest Declaration*

² Addressed under Part 5, Priority 5.5

³ Addressed under Part 5, Priority 2.1 and 2.4

⁴ Addressed under Part 5, World Heritage Goal 1

⁵ Addressed under Part 5, Priority 4.1, 5.1 and 5.2

⁶ Addressed under Part 5, Priority 3.2

⁷ Addressed under Part 5, World Heritage Goal 1

⁸ Addressed under Part 5, Priority 4.1 and 5.1

⁹ Addressed under Part 5, Priority 5.2

¹⁰ Addressed under Part 5, Priority 3.2

on *World Heritage* (adopted in 2002 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, including assistance for preparing the nomination of properties to the World Heritage List, for the understanding and implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* and related instruments
- increase public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage through *communication* and
- enhance the role of *communities* in the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*.

The five C's provide a general and fundamental framework for the implementation of the Convention. The *Draft Strategic Plan for the Implementation of the Convention 2012-2022* builds on the orientations set by the '5C's' by identifying World Heritage Goals, Priorities and Actions which will help to achieve these long term strategic objectives.

Structure of the Strategic Action Plan



The Futures process identified a broad policy agenda for the future of the *Convention*. States Parties identified the need to develop World Heritage Goals (for 2012 – 2022) to assist the Committee in structuring the work of the World Heritage Centre:

World Heritage Goal 1: Value: The Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage sites is maintained

World Heritage Goal 2: Credibility: The World Heritage List is a credible selection of the world's cultural and natural heritage

World Heritage Goal 3: Quality: World Heritage maintains or enhances its brand quality

World Heritage Goal 4: Strategic: The Committee can address policy and strategic issues

World Heritage Goal 5: Effective: Decisions of statutory meetings are informed and effectively implemented

In addition, the Futures Process identified *Priorities* to orient *Actions* under each World Heritage Goal over the next decade. Each World Heritage Goal, Priority and Action relates to one or more of the long-term strategic orientations identified in the 5C's. World Heritage Goals four and five are primarily corporate or operational goals. Carrying out work under the five World Heritage Goals will support the long term *credibility of the World Heritage List*. Improving the *conservation of World Heritage properties*; building the *capacity* of States Parties as well as improving *communication* and *community* engagement will give credibility to the World Heritage system as a whole.

Implementation arrangements for each World Heritage Goal, Priority and Action remain to be detailed in comprehensive implementation plans to be developed by the World Heritage Centre and updated biennially. Implementation plans should specify timeframes (short, medium or long term), financial and human resources required, roles and responsibilities and measurable outcomes.

5. Draft Strategic Plan for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention 2012-22

Priority	Action	Outcomes
World Heritage Goal 1: The Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage sites is maintained		
1.1 Statements of OUV	Finalise Statements of OUV for all WH properties	SoOUV are basis for protection and management
1.2 Conservation and sustainable development	Evaluate social and economic impact of inscription on WHL and strategies for investment before and after inscription	Increased consideration of sustainable development through connecting conservation to communities
1.3 Monitoring mechanisms	Simplify monitoring mechanisms, strategically select properties for SOC reports and default to 2 year report time	Focus on critical sites while allowing States Parties time to implement recommendations
1.4 Clear and systematic conservation requirements	Develop global standards for site management and an annotated list of existing conservation guidance	Requirements for conservation of OUV are implemented transparently and consistently
1.5 Training and research	Increase capacity to address conservation needs, including those identified through Periodic Reporting	Capacity needs of communities and agencies met
1.6 Mitigation of serious threats	States Parties have clear guidance to manage serious threats	Requirements for removal from the In Danger List or WHL are applied consistently
World Heritage Goal 2: The World Heritage List is a credible selection of the world's cultural and natural heritage		
2.1 Strategy for representative, balanced, and credible WHL	Update and implement Global Strategy for next decade	Activities under Global Strategy reflect agreed priorities
2.2 Nominations	Provide early feedback and increase assistance to States Parties to develop credible nominations	High quality nominations fully meet requirements for WHL set out in the Operational Guidelines
World Heritage Goal 3: World Heritage maintains or enhances its brand quality		
3.1 Awareness raising	Promote Convention as a flagship for heritage conservation	WH widely recognized as highest standard of heritage and conservation
3.2 Public image	Develop a clear brand strategy	World Heritage value, credibility and quality understood
World Heritage Goal 4: The Committee can address policy and strategic issues		
4.1 Policy development is part of Committee agenda	Create a framework and agenda space for inclusive and systematic strategic direction and policy development	Time is allowed to address strategic and policy issues in a consultative manner
4.2 Consistency with UNESCO objectives	Increase synergy with UNESCO's broader objectives, programmes and other relevant international instruments	Increased cooperation with related international instruments
World Heritage Goal 5: Decisions of statutory meetings are informed and effectively implemented		

5.1 Decision making	Improve decision-making quality and consistency and oversight of implementation	Decisions are informed, consistent and implemented
5.2 Workload	Review working methods, priorities and available resources	Reduced workload while maintaining quality
5.3 Secretariat support	Implement the WH Centre's Audit Report and follow mandated roles	Strengthened secretariat support to the Committee
5.4 Implementation Plan	Develop implementation plans for the Draft Strategic Plan	Actions linked to priorities and available budget, and outcomes monitored and reviewed
5.5 Budget	Improve budgetary prioritization and oversight; link to UNESCO cycles; increase WH funding	Decisions are costed, reporting considers all sources of funding and funding reflects agreed priorities

6. Implementation

This plan is a living document. The World Heritage Centre will develop an initial implementation plan to ensure the actions identified are realized, to be updated biennially. 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 Draft Strategic 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 World Heritage Goal on a two-yearly basis to receive feedback from members, discuss Actions and their targets, set timelines for their implementation and ensure the highest standards of delivery.