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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Thirty-eighth session

Doha, Qatar

15 – 25 June 2014

Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda: State of conservation of World Heritage properties

7. State of conservation of World Heritage properties

SUMMARY

This document presents an overview of the reactive monitoring process, the purpose of which is to ensure that World Heritage properties are all in a satisfactory state of conservation and provides insights on the selection of the properties which are examined by the World Heritage Committee and the elaboration of the reports.

It also provides information on emerging conservation issues and other strategic matters, which the Committee may wish to discuss and take a decision, if required.

Draft Decision: 38 COM 7, see Point IV.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Reactive monitoring is defined in Paragraph 169 of the *Operational Guidelines* as being "the reporting by the World Heritage Centre, other sectors of UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of specific World Heritage properties that are under threat". Reactive monitoring is foreseen in the procedures for the inclusion of properties in the List of World Heritage in Danger (Paragraphs 177-191 of the *Operational Guidelines*) and for the removal of properties from the World Heritage List (Paragraphs 192-198 of the *Operational Guidelines*).
2. The properties to be reported upon are selected, among all those inscribed on the World Heritage List, according to the following considerations:
 - Properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger (see Agenda Item 7A) (Note that this is also in line with Paragraph 190 of the *Operational Guidelines*, which requests the World Heritage Committee to annually review the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger);
 - Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List for which state of conservation reports and/or reactive monitoring missions were requested by the World Heritage Committee at previous sessions (see Agenda Item 7B);
 - Properties which have come under threat since the last session of the World Heritage Committee and which require urgent actions (see Agenda Item 7B) in addition to the consultations and discussions which normally take place between the State Party, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in order to address the threat;
 - Properties where, upon inscription, follow-up was requested by the World Heritage Committee (see Agenda Item 7B).
3. Since the 31st session of the World Heritage Committee (Christchurch, 2007), the draft decisions prepared by the World Heritage Centre, jointly with the Advisory Bodies, reflect an attempt, wherever possible, to establish a two-year reporting cycle. This provides States Parties with a more realistic timeframe to take the actions requested by the World Heritage Committee and to report on the progress achieved. This approach for a two-year cycle was strongly recommended by the experts meeting on the decision-making procedures of the statutory organs of the *World Heritage Convention* (Manama, Bahrain, 15-17 December 2010) and was subsequently formally adopted by the Committee at its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011) (see Decision **35 COM 12B** para.10), "except for cases of utmost urgency", when special circumstances demand a shorter timeframe.
4. The World Heritage Centre (often in collaboration with UNESCO Field offices and other Programme Sectors) and the Advisory Bodies review throughout the year a considerable amount of information on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties. At their bi-annual meetings (January and September), critical cases are reviewed and a decision is taken as to whether a report should be presented to the World Heritage Committee. In many cases a report is not required, as issues are resolved through consultations and discussions with the State Party concerned, or through expert advice provided on a specific project, following the submission of any relevant documents in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*. In some cases, States Parties decide to invite an advisory mission to review a specific issue potentially affecting the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property.

5. It is important to ensure that States Parties are provided with adequate and timely advice on the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*. As the conservation of World Heritage properties for future generations is a core activity under the 1972 *Convention* and plays a key role in its implementation, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies are at the disposal of States Parties, and their local authorities and site managers, to assist in protection and conservation processes through all means at their disposal, including written advice, advisory missions, international cooperation and Funds-in-Trust projects.

A. ELABORATION OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORTS

6. The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies review all information available on the state of conservation reports (SOC) foreseen for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its next session: SOC reports submitted by the State Party, information received from third parties, press articles, mission reports, comments and feed-back on these by the State Party, etc.
7. The major source of information are the SOC reports submitted by the States Parties concerned before the statutory deadline of **1 February** of any given year upon request by the World Heritage Committee (Paragraph 169 of the *Operational Guidelines*) or a request for information on specific issues by the World Heritage Centre. This report is the opportunity for a State Party to bring all relevant information to the attention of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies. States Parties are also encouraged to submit detailed information on development projects which can impact on the OUV to inform the World Heritage Centre, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*.
8. To enhance institutional memory, improve transparency of processes and easier access to the relevant information by the largest number of stakeholders, the World Heritage Committee encouraged all States Parties to make public the reports submitted on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties through the World Heritage Centre's State of conservation Information System (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>) (Decision **37 COM 7C**). For the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee in June 2014, two thirds of the reports submitted were made public (over 85% if the one-page executive summaries provided by States Parties for public upload are also taken into account).
9. As indicated above, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies also receive information from other sources than the State Party (NGOs, individuals, press articles, etc.). In such cases, in accordance with Paragraph 174 of the *Operational Guidelines*, the information received is communicated to the State Party to verify the source and content of information and get clarification on the reported issue. The State Party's response is then reviewed by the relevant Advisory Bodies and integrated in the SOC report if the threat is confirmed.
10. The draft SOC report is then prepared jointly by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies and presented for examination by the World Heritage Committee.
11. In conclusion, it is to be noted that States Parties can contribute to ensuring the accuracy of the SOC reports through several "entry points":
 - State Party's report on the state of conservation to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre,
 - Specific information submitted in advance by the State Party, in application of Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*,

- State Party's reply to World Heritage Centre's letters regarding specific information received from other sources, in application of Paragraph 174 of the *Operational Guidelines*,
 - Information provided by the State Party during a reactive monitoring mission,
 - Comments by the State Party to the reactive monitoring mission report.
12. As an example of such dialogue, due to a development project, which would potentially have an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, the World Heritage Committee decided to send a reactive monitoring mission (Decision **37 COM 7B.100**) to the Archaeological Site of Panamá Viejo and Historic District of Panamá (Panama). This mission was carried out in November 2013, and the detailed report (available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/790/documents>) was transmitted to the State Party for its consideration. The Committee shall then be informed when the requested major boundary revision will be processed.

B. STRUCTURE OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION DOCUMENTS

13. Decision **27 COM 7B.106.3** requested that the reports are categorized as follows:
- Reports with recommended decisions which, in the judgment of the World Heritage Centre in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, require discussion by the World Heritage Committee,
 - Reports which, in the judgment of the World Heritage Centre in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, can be noted without discussion.
14. Since the adoption of this decision, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies have refined the selection process for the properties to be discussed by the World Heritage Committee, taking into account the procedures and statutory deadlines as set out in the *Operational Guidelines*, the different monitoring tools at the disposal of the Committee and the ever growing number of properties to report on at World Heritage Committee sessions within Agenda items 7A and 7B. They have agreed that the following state of conservation reports should be brought to the Committee's attention for discussion:
- if deletion of the property from the World Heritage List is proposed,
 - if inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger is proposed,
 - if removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger is proposed,
 - if the property is subject to the Reinforced monitoring mechanism,
 - if the property presents serious conservation issues of utmost urgency,
 - if significant new information regarding the property has been received after the document was issued, requiring a revision of the draft Decision.
15. World Heritage Committee members can still decide to discuss in detail a state of conservation report which is not proposed for discussion, provided a written request is made to the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee, indicating the reason why the report is requested to be opened for discussion. **In agreement with the Chairperson, all requests to open new items should be received prior to the deadline indicated in Document WHC-14/38.COM/INF.7.**
16. To facilitate the work of the World Heritage Committee, a standard format is used for all SOC reports presented for examination by the Committee. This format was designed taking into account Decision **27 COM 7B.106** para 4, as well as Decisions **29 COM 7C** and **35 COM 12E** para. 13.

17. As mentioned previously, the most important source of information is the SOC report submitted by the States Parties concerned, which according to the *Operational Guidelines*, need to be submitted before the statutory deadline of **1 February**. The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies point out that **the respect of this deadline is crucial to allow for a professional assessment of the reports** and avoid delays in the preparation of working documents for the Committee. In this sense, at its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011), the Committee requested States Parties to consider refraining from providing additional information regarding state of conservation issues “*after the deadlines indicated in the Operational Guidelines*”, as this information cannot be evaluated by the Advisory Bodies (Decision **35 COM 12B.16**).
18. Delayed reports inevitably lead to more SOC reports being included in the Addendum documents. Therefore, in spite of the major efforts made to include the delayed reports in documents WHC-14/38.COM/7A and WHC-14/38.COM/7B, and considering the further delays due to late missions or late receipt of complementary information, an important number of reports (72) are included in the Addendum documents (7A.Add and 7B.Add).

II. ISSUES EMERGING FROM THE 2014 STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORTS

A. CRITICAL ISSUES REPORTED IN THE 2014 SOC REPORTS

19. In December 2012, the World Heritage Centre launched an online tool focusing on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties and the factors having a negative impact on their OUV as reported to the Committee since 1979. Besides centralizing all information available on the state of conservation of a property on 1 single page, one of the strengths of this tool is its user-friendly advanced search facility, which allows users to formulate specific queries for information and/or statistical purposes. For example, users can easily extract and rank all the factors affecting the properties reported on in 2014 (see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>).
20. The table below shows the 15 threats most often reported in the SOC reports to be examined by the Committee at its 38th session in 2014. It should also be noted that, on average, each property reported to the Committee in 2014 is affected by 4 different factors, often interrelated (e.g. civil unrest+encroachment+poaching+influx of refugees; or construction of a road+major accommodation project+impact of tourism; etc.).

Specific factors affecting the properties reported in 2014	Percentage of reported properties concerned
Management system / management plan	65.3
Housing	35
Illegal activities	28
Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation	20
Management activities	16.6
Legal framework	16.6
Ground transport infrastructure	16
Land conversion	16
Mining	14
Major visitor accommodation and associated infrastructure	11.3
War	10
Financial resources	9.3
Civil unrest	9.3
Water infrastructure	8.6
Oil and gas exploration/exploitation	8

21. The following sections of this document provide further insight on the current above-mentioned factors as well as updates on factors reported to the Committee over the past few years.

A.1. Management Systems / Management Plans

22. A factor which has clearly been steadily on the increase since 1979 and which remains one of the major sources of concern is related to Management Plans or Systems (including inadequate/lack of Management Plan or System, or lack of implementation thereof). This factor is reported in 65% of all the SOC reports in 2014.
23. The lack of a well formulated Management Plan which will illustrate how the Outstanding Universal Value will be protected from existing and potential threats has emerged as a root cause for many of the SOC reports. Furthermore, the lack of monitoring measures for effective management actions contributes to the need for SOCs. In the working documents for the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee, the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies have recommended the finalization of 39 Management Plans for review, the updating or revision of 16 management plans, and the implementation of 3 management plans.
24. The World Heritage Committee requires the development of management plans or other management systems at the time of nomination of the property to the World Heritage List. The process for developing management plans should ensure participation of all relevant stakeholders, identify attributes reflecting OUV and any existing or potential threats to their protection, as well as identify opportunities with a view to delivering conservation benefits to the society. The process should also provide indications of necessary resources for long term protection of the property. While new nominations require that Management Plans or other management systems be in place at the time of inscription, it is clear from the number of properties which are in the reactive monitoring process for management related issues, that more attention needs to be given to building capacities within States Parties at the national and site levels to adequately manage and protect World Heritage properties.
25. New Resource manuals for both cultural and natural heritage have provided guidance for management planning and management systems as well as the measurement of management effectiveness. These manuals have been produced in English, French, and Spanish.

A.2. Development projects which may have a negative impact on the OUV

26. Development projects can be of various nature (housing, roads and bridges construction, development of dams, large scale urban development projects, etc...) and may have a significant negative impact on the OUV of World Heritage properties. Cumulatively, 59% of the properties reported in 2014 are affected by at least one of such development projects. Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines* invites States Parties to submit to the World Heritage Centre detailed information on any such development project which can impact on the OUV. This notification should be given as soon as possible and “before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse”.
27. In the last several years, Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) have become important tools in helping States Parties protect the Outstanding Universal Value of their World Heritage properties through the early assessment of development projects. These assessments are intended to identify, evaluate, avoid and mitigate the potential environmental, cultural and social impacts of development proposals before a decision on their funding or implementation is taken. These assessments are also intended to review alternatives to development proposals, including the “no project” option, in order

to recommend the least environmentally damaging, and most sustainable, option to decision-makers.

28. In order to aid States Parties, local authorities and developers in carrying out HIAs/EIAs/SEAs, a number of guidance tools have been prepared. ICOMOS produced Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties in 2011, and IUCN produced World Heritage Advice Note: Environmental Assessment in 2013. Through the World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy, these advice notes can now be accessed by States Parties in English, French, Spanish, and Arabic. In addition, ICCROM in partnership with WHITR-AP and ICOMOS offered a training course on HIA in China in 2012. A second course will take place in Viet Nam in October 2014. The Asian Academy, a partnership of universities in the Asia-Pacific Region, UNESCO, and ICCROM will also be offering a course on HIA during 2014. As these assessments are important in all regions of the world, it will be very useful to find sponsors to be able to replicate these courses more widely in the future.
29. For the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee, the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies have recommended 22 HIAs, 22 EIAs, and 7 SEAs, 1 SESS (Strategic Environmental and Social Study), and 3 ESIAs (Environmental and Social Impact Assessments) be carried out by States Parties to assess impacts of development projects.
30. As the HIA Guidance prepared by ICOMOS states, the purpose of an HIA is, “to evaluate effectively the impact of potential development on the OUV of properties”. IUCN’s note on EIA states that, “An Environmental Assessment for a proposal affecting, or with the potential to affect, a natural World Heritage site should ensure that the proposal’s likely impacts on the OUV of the site are fully considered in land-use planning decisions with the objective of preserving these exceptional places for future generations. The assessment should also consider the site’s links with the surrounding landscape as a natural World Heritage site cannot be considered separately from the wider ecosystem.”
31. First and foremost, HIA/EIA/SEA should be seen as tools for States Parties and other decision-makers to assess the impact of potential development projects and other major changes at World Heritage properties on their OUV. Ideally such assessments would be commonly and systematically used in assessing projects before they reach a point where the World Heritage reactive monitoring process comes into play.
32. Secondly, HIA/EIA/SEA can be used as a tool by the World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies, and the World Heritage Committee, to assess projects which are within the reactive monitoring process. It is not necessary or even desirable that the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies evaluate every single HIA/EIA/SEA carried out by a State Party since it is primarily meant as a tool for the State Party decision-makers. It will be necessary, however, for such an evaluation to take place within the reactive monitoring process specifically in regard to impacts on OUV. In particular, it will be important to ensure that an HIA/EIA/SEA carried out at World Heritage properties adequately assess the impacts on OUV in addition to other environmental, cultural, or social impacts that may be covered as part of the larger process.
33. The increasing use of HIA/EIA/SEA within the reactive monitoring process does have significant resource implications for States Parties, the World Heritage Centre, and Advisory Bodies. It will be important to ensure that processes can be streamlined as much as possible in order to ensure that it is feasible to use these valuable tools in assessing impacts of development projects on OUV.

A.3. Disaster Risk Reduction

34. One issue that emerges consistently from the analysis of the state of conservation reports is the need to better prepare against emergency situations, be they associated to natural disasters or conflicts. In 2014, nearly 10% of the reported properties, mostly cultural, were said to be exposed to risks or were victims of disasters. Experience suggests that this figure is not representative of the real extent of the issue, since understanding of the risks affecting World Heritage properties and of the possible effects of disasters and conflicts, is generally poor. Most management plans and systems for World Heritage properties still do not include a proper disaster risk component. At the same time, the importance of protecting heritage and the positive contribution of a well-preserved cultural and natural heritage to strengthening resilience against disasters and climate change is still not sufficiently recognized within national disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies and programmes.
35. To address these issues, considerable efforts are being made in the framework of the World Heritage Convention with a view to develop evidence-based policy options that illustrate the role of heritage in disaster risk management and assist States Parties at site level. Numerous capacity building initiatives have been also carried out targeting site managers and administrators in all regions of the world, building on the Strategy for Reducing Disaster Risks at World Heritage properties (adopted in 2007) and on the publication in 2010 of the resource manual on “Managing Disaster Risks for World Heritage”.
36. In March 2015, in Sendai (Japan), the international community will gather for the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR), ten years after the Kobe Conference that adopted the so-called Hyogo Framework for Action, or HFA, the key international policy in the field of DRR. At the Sendai Conference, the world is expected to establish a new policy framework (tentatively called Hyogo Framework for Action-2, or HFA2) on resilience and disaster risk reduction. Sendai provides thus a unique opportunity to ensure that a concern for heritage is integrated into the HFA2 (which is not the case for the current HFA), and thus promote DRR policies and programmes at national level that include consideration of heritage and harness its potential for strengthening the resilience of communities.

A.4. Tourism pressure

37. Tourism development in and around World Heritage properties is a key issue for their management, both for its potential socio-economic benefits and for its possible negative impacts on the properties' state of conservation. This is again reflected in the state of conservation reports to be examined by the World Heritage Committee at its 38th session. A significant number of these reports (28.6%) highlight concerns and potential impacts associated with tourism-related infrastructure (such as in Pirin National Park, Bulgaria, or Western Caucasus, Russian Federation), visitor management (such as in Dubrovnik, Croatia), or mobility/transportation modes (such as in Venice, Italy).
38. Such negative impacts from tourism on the tangible and intangible attributes of World Heritage properties as well as on their communities are likely to grow as countries continue to develop their tourism industry. The degradation of World Heritage properties not only constitutes an irreversible loss for all humanity, but also an economic loss linked to the intense global competition between destinations as the attractiveness of their heritage values decreases.
39. Sustainable planning and management of tourism are essential to address these pressing challenges and ensure the conservation of the World Heritage properties. The World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme, adopted by the World Heritage

Committee in 2012, has been set up to support States Parties and World Heritage properties in identifying viable solutions that are adapted to local context and needs, where protection, preservation and safeguarding go hand in hand with the sustainable development of tourism and where planning is harmonized. In response to the issues identified in this year's state of conservation reports, it is therefore suggested to work with the States Parties concerned and the site managers in particular to provide the necessary tools and know-how to effectively manage tourism to minimize its negative impacts. As part of the People Protecting Places Programme, a 10-module, World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Online Toolkit has been developed and is currently being tested. This toolkit is part of a larger capacity building programme to support sites to develop sustainable tourism initiatives. When it has been finalized, this important capacity building tool will be put online on the World Heritage website.

A.5. Poaching and wildlife crimes

40. Illegal activities continue to represent a clear threat to 28% of the properties examined in 2014, with however a stronger impact on Natural properties. Indeed, illegal logging, poaching, and wildlife crimes have an impact on over 50% of the Natural properties reported in 2014.
41. The trend of increasing poaching pressure, in particular affecting African elephant and rhinoceroses, as reported at the 37th session, is continuing, due to a growing illicit trade, particularly in Asia. In 2014, significant losses are reported in the populations of these species in a number of properties, including a dramatic decline of 81% of the elephant population in Selous Game Reserve (Tanzania) since 2005, and the loss of 7 Greater one-horned rhino in Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (India), out of a population of 24 adult rhinos, all of which were re-introduced or rehabilitated since 2006.
42. In follow-up to Decision **37 COM 7**, the World Heritage Centre has continued its dialogue with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) on strengthening cooperation. As part of the next phase of the Africa Nature programme, it is planned to develop a capacity building programme in cooperation with CITES for natural World Heritage properties in Africa to strengthen law enforcement monitoring through the introduction of "SMART" (Special Monitoring and Reporting Tool see <http://www.smartconservationsoftware.org/>). In order to raise awareness on the poaching problem, the Director General of UNESCO together with the Secretary General of CITES published in July 2013 an Op-ed in Jeunes Afrique on "Wildlife Crime is robbing the future of Africa" (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1063>). The Director General also published a statement in March 2014 at the occasion of the first edition of World Wildlife Day (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1111>).
43. In addition to poaching of wild animals, illegal logging of precious timber species is also continuing to affect certain properties. A resumption of illegal logging of rosewood (*Dalbergia sp.*) is reported in Marojejy and Masoala national parks, both components of the Rainforests of the Atsinanana (Madagascar), and illegal logging of Siamese rosewood (*D. cochinchinensis*) in Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex (Thailand) is escalating both in intensity and violence, creating life-threatening conditions for the park rangers who are charged with the protection of the property.
44. The growing illegal trade in wild species of fauna and flora, and their products, is fuelled by dramatically increasing prices for ivory, rhino horn, rosewood and other wildlife products, with an increasing involvement of organized crime. Strong cross-sectoral and high level international cooperation and coordination is required to ensure effective international action on the growing threat to the integrity of World Heritage Sites from illegal wildlife trade.

B. UPDATES ON PREVIOUSLY REPORTED ISSUES

B.1. Threats from extractive industries

45. As shown in the table above, mining and oil exploration and exploitation activities continue to be an important threat to many natural World Heritage properties. As follow up to Decision **37 COM 7**, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN continued the dialogue with extractive industries on extending the commitment made by the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) and Shell to not explore or develop oil, gas and mineral resources within World Heritage properties to other companies and parts of the industry. A major breakthrough was the commitment made by the oil company TOTAL on 4 June 2013, not to explore or exploit oil or gas inside sites inscribed on the World Heritage List at that date (see <http://total.com/fr/societe-environnement/environnement/impacts-locaux/biodiversite>).
46. This commitment was confirmed by TOTAL to the World Heritage Centre in a letter dated 9 January 2014. With this commitment, TOTAL answered positively to the appeal launched by the World Heritage Committee in its Decisions **37 COM 7A.4** and **36 COM 7A.4**. Similar appeals launched by the Committee to the companies SOCO (in the same decisions), and TULLOW (in Decisions **37 COM 7B.4** and **36 COM 7B.3**) have not yielded a positive response, although TULLOW replied that they are considering the issue.
47. The World Heritage Centre and IUCN were also invited to participate in the Biodiversity and Ecosystems working group meeting of the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA) in October 2013. Representatives of 11 oil companies participated in the meeting. The meeting provided an opportunity to provide more information on the working methods of the *Convention*, the position which has been taken by the World Heritage Committee on cases related to extractive industries and World Heritage properties and the “No go commitment” taken on by parts of the extractive industry.
48. In addition, more investment banks are adopting specific policy to regulate their investments related to World Heritage properties. In March 2014, one of the leading investment banks in the world, HSBC, announced as part of its approach to sustainability risks a new policy on World Heritage properties and Ramsar wetland sites (see <http://www.hsbc.com/citizenship/sustainability>). According to this policy, HSBC will make appropriate enquiries where aware that customers support projects within, immediately adjacent to, or potentially impacting World Heritage properties and will ensure not to knowingly provide financial services to support projects which threaten the special characteristics of these sites. The policy acknowledges that risks are particularly high in major projects related to forestry, agriculture, mining, energy, urban and infrastructure development.

B.2. Cooperation with the International Olympic Committee (IOC)

49. In its Decisions **32 COM 7B.25** and **35 COM 7B.24**, the World Heritage Committee requested the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to develop a dialogue with the IOC with a view of putting in place an agreement to ensure that future Games will not impact on the OUV of World Heritage properties. These decisions were motivated by possible impacts of the Sochi Winter Olympic Games on the Western Caucasus World Heritage site.
50. On 17 April 2014, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN had a constructive meeting with a delegation from IOC to follow up on these decisions. The IOC Delegation was headed by Mr Gilbert Felli, IOC Executive Director for the Olympic Games. The possibility was discussed to put in place a mechanism that would allow identifying

potential impacts on World Heritage sites early on in the process of attributing the Games. This would allow the IOC to request bidding countries to take the necessary measures to avoid such impacts. Mr Felli has sent a letter to IUCN confirming that the IOC President, Mr. Thomas Bach, is in favour of IUCN and IOC continuing a dialogue and to envisage an eventual framework that could formalise the partnership.

B.3. Cooperation with other Conventions

51. For the past few years, the World Heritage Centre has developed a number of synergies with other Conventions, both in the field of cultural heritage through the Cultural Conventions Liaison Group (CCLG) and natural heritage through the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG). Amongst the areas of progress in cooperation with other Conventions in the past years has been the cooperation with the Ramsar Convention, including joint reactive monitoring missions to Doñana National Park (Spain) in 2011 and to Virunga National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo) in 2014.
52. Updates on these synergies with other Conventions are presented to the Committee in the World Heritage Centre's report on its activities and the implementation of the World Heritage Committee's Decisions (see Document WHC-14/38.COM/5A, Section VIII).

B.4. Conflict situations

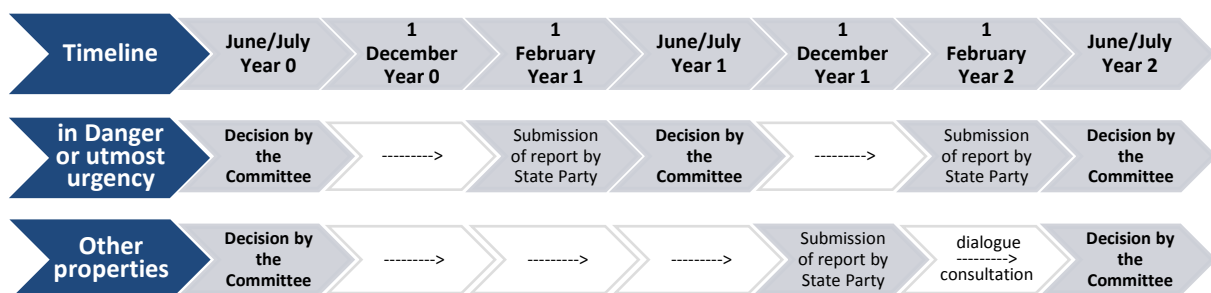
53. Conflicts continue to represent a threat to World Heritage properties. In 2014, as much as 16.6% of the reported properties are located in conflict areas (either wars or civil unrest) and are at risk. Actions are being undertaken to safeguard and/or rehabilitate this heritage.
54. As mentioned in Document WHC-14/38.COM/5A, Section VI, a number of activities have taken place to safeguard World Heritage properties located in conflict areas. For example, rehabilitation works have started in Mali, in March 2014, in line with the Action Plan for Safeguarding Mali's Cultural Heritage, elaborated in 2013 (for further details, also see Document WHC-14/38.COM/7A.Add).
55. In addition, over the last year, the World Heritage Centre elaborated a project and raised funds for the "Emergency safeguarding of Syrian Cultural Heritage". The project foresees mitigation measures, awareness raising, technical assistance and capacity building for the six Syrian World Heritage properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger (for further details, also see Document WHC-14/38.COM/7A.Add).

III. STRATEGIC ISSUES RELATED TO THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES

56. As indicated in Paragraph 169 of the *Operational Guidelines*, the statutory deadline for States Parties concerned to provide the World Heritage Centre with their reports on the state of conservation of properties is **1 February** of each year.
57. Following receipt of those reports, they are shared with the relevant Advisory Bodies for review. The individual SOC reports are jointly prepared by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies and presented to the World Heritage Committee at its session in June/July of the same year. In conformity with Rule 45 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Heritage Committee, these SOC reports need to be made available to Committee members 6 weeks prior to the beginning of the session. This timeframe provides the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies an effective period of approximately 3 months to review all the information available, liaise with the States Parties and prepare the final reports in the two official languages of the *Convention*. In

practice, this period is usually shorter as not all reports reach the World Heritage Centre by the **1 February** statutory deadline (only 51% in 2014, 56% in 2013 and 34% in 2012 for example). This reduced timeframe often does not provide States Parties with a sufficient amount of time to satisfactorily respond to any request for supplementary information by the World Heritage Centre or the Advisory Bodies.

58. At its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011), the World Heritage Committee decided to “*default to a minimum two-year cycle for the examination of state of conservation reports for individual properties on the World Heritage List, and for the discussion of those inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, except for cases of utmost urgency*” (Decision **35 COM 12B**). Considering this new cycle of reporting, it is suggested to revise the statutory deadline for the submission of SOC reports by States Parties and establish **1 December** of the year preceding the Committee’s session at which the SOC report is to be presented as revised deadline, except for properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger and for cases of utmost urgency, for which the deadline would remain 1 February. This modification would however require a revision of Paragraph 169 of the *Operational Guidelines*.
59. Combined with the two-year cycle, the 1 December deadline would provide more time to the States Parties to implement the corrective/mitigation measures identified and prepare their reports (minimum of 18 months after the relevant Committee’s decision) and would also provide more ample time for consultation between the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and the States Parties concerned, should clarification or supplementary information be necessary. The revised timeline would therefore be as follows:



60. It is recommended that the World Heritage Committee adopt this proposed new deadline with immediate effect and further address the matter during the next revision of the *Operational Guidelines*.

IV. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision: 38 COM 7

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-14/38.COM/7,
2. Recalling Decisions **35 COM 12B**, **35 COM 12E** and **37 COM 7C** adopted at its 35th (UNESCO, 2011) and 37th (Phnom Penh, 2013) sessions respectively,

Issues emerging from the 2014 state of conservation reports

3. *Noting with regret that issues related to Management Plan / System remain a serious cause for concern, requests all States Parties to ensure that all World Heritage properties are managed in such a manner that their Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is not put at risk and, whenever necessary, develop/update and fully implement Management Plans or Systems;*
4. *Taking note of the benefits to States Parties of systematically utilizing Heritage and Environmental Impact Assessments in the review of development projects, recommends that States Parties use these tools in assessing projects before they reach a point where the World Heritage reactive monitoring process comes into play;*
5. *Also noting that tourism development in and around World Heritage properties is a key issue for their management, strongly encourages States Parties to ensure sustainable planning and management of tourism at World Heritage properties and to contribute to the implementation of the World Heritage Centre's World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme;*
6. *Reiterating its utmost concern about the continued impacts on World Heritage properties due to the rising pressure from poaching, particularly of elephant, rhinoceros, and valuable timber species, linked to a growing illicit trade, and the increasing involvement of organized crime in this lucrative business, reiterates its request to the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to strengthen their cooperation with the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to assist States Parties to implement the measures taken by the 16th Conference of the Parties of the CITES, and urges States Parties to ensure strong international collaboration and coordination to control the illicit trade in flora and fauna and their products;*
7. *Takes note with concern of the continuing threat posed to World Heritage properties by disasters and conflicts, of the widespread lack of adequate preparedness, and of the need to integrate a concern for heritage within international policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction, and calls on States Parties to ensure that their delegations to the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR), due to take place in March 2015 in Sendai (Japan), are sensitized to this question and promote heritage as an essential consideration in disaster risk reduction;*
8. *Also requests that States Parties with an interest in the promotion of capacity building on the issues of management, impact assessments, disaster risk management, sustainable tourism management, and poaching and wildlife crimes to liaise with the Advisory Bodies, World Heritage Centre, and UNESCO Category 2 Centres, and support regional or international courses, workshops, and other capacity building activities to improve the capacity of States Parties and site managers to develop and implement these important planning instruments;*

Updates on previously reported issues

9. *Welcomes the commitment made by TOTAL in June 2013 not to explore or exploit oil or gas inside sites inscribed on the World Heritage List as well as the new policy on World Heritage Sites adopted by the investment bank HSBC not to knowingly provide financial services to support projects which threaten the special characteristics of World Heritage properties and, also taking note of the discussions held between the World Heritage Centre, IUCN and International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA), calls on other companies in extractive industries*

and investment banks to follow these examples to further extend the “No go” commitment;

10. Also welcomes the progress in the dialogue between the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and encourages the development of a mechanism that would allow to identify potential impacts of future Olympic Games on World Heritage properties early on in the process of attributing the Games in order to ensure that these impacts can be avoided or adequately mitigated by the organizing country;

Strategic issues related to the state of conservation of World Heritage properties

11. Also recalling that States Parties concerned shall submit by **1 February** to the Committee through the Secretariat, their reports on the state of conservation of specific properties (Paragraph 169 of the Operational Guidelines),
12. Acknowledging that the established minimum two-year cycle for the examination of state of conservation reports for individual properties (except for cases of utmost urgency and for properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger), associated to a postponed deadline for the submission of the States Parties' reports would provide an opportunity for improved dialogue between the States Parties, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, decides that States Parties concerned shall submit their state of conservation reports to the World Heritage Centre by **1 December** of the year preceding the examination of the property by the World Heritage Committee, with immediate effect, except for properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger and for cases of utmost urgency, and further requests the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to draft a proposal in view of including this new statutory deadline in the Operational Guidelines, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 39th session, in 2015;
13. Reminds States Parties of the importance of submitting their state of conservation reports to the World Heritage Centre in one of the working languages of the World Heritage Convention, English or French;
14. Notes with appreciation the high number of States Parties which have authorized the public upload of their state of conservation reports, facilitating their consultation by all stakeholders of the Convention and contributing to an improved transparency of the reactive monitoring process, and reiterates its encouragement to all States Parties to continue do so in the future.