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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-eighth session

**Doha, Qatar
15 – 25 June 2014**

**Item 9 of the Provisional Agenda: Global Strategy for a representative,
balanced and credible World Heritage List**

9B. Reflections on processes for mixed nominations

SUMMARY

The present document was requested by the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee (Phnom Penh, 2013) by Decision **37 COM 8B.19**. This decision recognized that mixed nomination and the associated IUCN and ICOMOS evaluations have raised fundamental questions in terms of how the indissoluble bonds that exist in some places between culture and nature can be recognized on the World Heritage List.

This document presents an overview of the historical background and the evaluation procedures by the Advisory Bodies ICOMOS and IUCN of mixed sites nominations and presents a project in this regard currently undertaken by the Advisory Bodies.

Draft Decision: 38 COM 9B, see Point IV.

I. BACKGROUND

A. Decision by the World Heritage Committee at its 37th session

1. The Committee at its 37th session, when examining the nomination of Pimachiowin Aki, Canada (Decision **37 COM 8B.19**), recognized “that this mixed nomination and the associated IUCN and ICOMOS evaluations have raised fundamental questions in terms of how the indissoluble bonds that exist in some places between culture and nature can be recognized on the World Heritage List, in particular the fact that the cultural and natural values of one property are currently evaluated separately and that the present wording of the criteria may be one contributor to this difficulty”. The Committee also understood that “maintaining entirely separate evaluation processes for mixed nominations does not facilitate a shared decision-making process between the Advisory Bodies”. It therefore requested the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, “to examine options for changes to the criteria and/or to the Advisory Body evaluation process to address this issue” and decided to include a debate on this item on the agenda of its 38th session.

B. Evolution of nominations and inscriptions of mixed properties

1. The World Heritage Convention defines, cultural heritage in Article 1, and natural heritage in Article 2, while mixed natural-cultural heritage is not explicitly mentioned. The “works of man or the combined works of nature and man” are referred to as cultural heritage under Article 1.
2. From 1979 on, States Parties started to put forward nomination files for World Heritage Listing that included both cultural and natural values in the section “Justification for inclusion in the World Heritage List”. At its 2nd session, the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee proposed that cultural/natural sites i.e. “sites of combined cultural and natural interest [...] should be evaluated first in terms of their principal interest and their secondary interest should be considered on a complementary basis”. The Bureau also noted the possibility of future nominations that might carry “equal interest for both their natural and cultural features”. An informal policy was developed according to which ICOMOS and IUCN would provide separate evaluations on the cultural and natural values of the proposed nomination dossiers, although in some cases only one Advisory Body prepared the evaluation.
3. The first mention of “mixed cultural/natural properties” in statutory documents can be found in the Report of the Rapporteur of the 8th session of the World Heritage Committee in 1984. On that occasion, the Rapporteur, “brought up the question of mixed cultural/natural properties and rural landscapes”. The necessity of developing further guidance on that “specific type on mixed property” was highlighted and suggested that a meeting from IUCN and ICOMOS experts and geographers could be held to develop a framework for the identification of such properties. The recommendations of the resulting “Task Force”, which met in 1985, mainly focused on the specific type of mixed property of “rural landscapes”, defined as properties whose “cultural and natural elements were combined and not separate”. Discussions on this lasted until 1991, when the Committee focused on the necessity to revise the natural criteria to eliminate references to cultural values, and to propose specific criteria for “cultural landscape”.
4. Mixed sites were not specifically defined in the *Operational Guidelines* until 2005. Since then, the definition has remained unchanged, and currently reads as follows: “Properties shall be considered as ‘mixed cultural and natural heritage’ if they satisfy a

part or the whole of the definitions of both cultural and natural heritage laid out in Articles 1 and 2 of the *Convention*" (Paragraph 46 of the *Operational Guidelines*, 2013).

5. The 15th session of the World Heritage Committee in 1991 requested the Secretariat to convene an expert meeting on cultural landscapes, which met in October 1992 and recommended that slight changes to the cultural criteria for the inclusion of the category of cultural landscapes on the World Heritage List be introduced. At its 16th session in 1992, the World Heritage Committee approved these revisions to the *Operational Guidelines*. Moreover, the Committee also accepted proposals to remove cultural references from natural criteria, considered inconsistent with Article 2 of the *World Heritage Convention*. The 1992 revision to the *Operational Guidelines* made clear that "the existence of a category of 'cultural landscape' [...] does not exclude the possibility of sites of exceptional importance in relation to both cultural and natural criteria continuing to be included. In such cases, their outstanding universal significance must be justified under both sets of criteria" (Paragraph 42 of the *Operational Guidelines*, 1994).
6. Until 1992, the natural criteria included cultural values, more specifically natural criterion (iii) contained reference to "exceptional combination of natural and cultural elements" and criterion (ii) contained reference to "man's interaction with his natural environment". On a few occasions IUCN mentioned in its evaluations one of the two cultural elements present in natural criteria.
7. After the 1992 revision of the *Operational Guidelines*, which recognized cultural landscapes and removed reference to the cultural values under natural criteria, a total of 14 properties were inscribed as mixed from 1992 to 2013. Of those, 9 were also proposed and inscribed as cultural landscapes, and 3 out of the 9 were "re-nominations" under cultural criteria. Preliminary conclusions show that three phases can be distinguished.
8. While until 1992 the discussions by the Committee focused on mixed sites vs. rural landscapes, it can be noted that after 1992 there has been little discussion on the evaluation of mixed sites but rather general considerations on the difficulties of inscribing mixed sites on the World Heritage List. The main focus of the debates in the context of the Global Strategy adopted in 1994 was the lack of balance between cultural and natural properties on the List.
9. In 2005, the *Operational Guidelines* were revised to include an integrated set of 10 criteria and a provision concerning "Mixed Cultural and Natural Heritage" in Paragraph 46. Paragraph 146 clarified the evaluation procedures: "In the case of nominations of cultural properties in the category of 'cultural landscapes', as appropriate, the evaluation will be carried out by ICOMOS in consultation with IUCN. For mixed properties, the evaluation will be carried out jointly by ICOMOS and IUCN."
10. After 2000, the Committee has repeatedly referred in its discussions to the difficulties of clearly defining mixed sites, sometimes also in relation to cultural landscapes and issues related to different perspectives put forward by IUCN and ICOMOS in the Advisory Bodies' evaluations and recommendations.
11. Current distribution of the World Heritage List:

	Natural properties	Cultural Properties	Mixed Properties	Total
Number	193	759	29	981
Of which cultural landscapes	n/a	80	5	85

C. Decisions by the World Heritage Committee concerning mixed sites

12. Mixed nominations were discussed 126 times by the World Heritage Committee from 1978 to 2013. A total of 78 nomination dossiers for mixed sites were submitted for evaluation by the Advisory Bodies and consideration by the Committee. The Decisions taken concerning inscription were as follows: 29 inscribed as mixed properties, 11 inscribed as natural properties, 18 inscribed as cultural properties and 4 not inscribed. The remaining nomination dossiers were referred, deferred or withdrawn.
13. In 7 cases sites were first inscribed as natural properties, and then re-nominated on the basis of cultural criteria at a later stage: 4 of those were inscribed as mixed sites and also as cultural landscapes, in 2 cases, only as mixed, and in one case the re-nomination was not approved by the Committee. In 3 cases properties inscribed as cultural were re-nominated as natural but in 2 of them, they were not recognized for natural values and the remaining one was withdrawn.
14. The review of the Decision processes for mixed nominations reveals that, in most cases these appear to be more complex than those nominated for only cultural or natural values. Mixed sites might require more time at the stage of the preparation of the nomination, as they involve different stakeholders at the national, regional and local levels, such as Ministries for Culture and Ministries for the Environment. They also require more coordination between the Advisory Bodies. In fact, in the past, they benefitted from the former system of review of nominations by the Bureau (until 2002): in several cases, between the Bureau session (in June every year) and the Committee session (in December), several minor issues related to specific cases were resolved thus allowing the inscription of the proposed properties on the World Heritage List.

II. ISSUES RELATED TO THE PROCESSING OF MIXED NOMINATIONS BY THE WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE

15. Besides the Advisory Bodies evaluations, addressed below, the processing of mixed nominations has particular characteristics at the level of the World Heritage Centre, especially with regard to the completeness check of nominations, the re-nomination under new criteria of already inscribed properties to become mixed properties and the preparation of draft decisions.
16. In terms of completeness check, nominations for mixed sites may present different issues compared with those for a cultural or natural site. A nomination which is submitted as a mixed site should cover both the cultural and natural aspects in a balanced and comprehensive way throughout the text, including the description of the proposed site, its state of conservation, the factors affecting it, its protection and management and a selection of key indicators for measuring its state of conservation. Also, the comparative analysis of the proposed site should carefully take into account both the cultural and the natural values under which the inscription of the site is justified. All these sections should provide balanced information on both the cultural and natural aspects of the proposed site, otherwise the submitted nomination may be considered incomplete.
17. Processing a re-nomination under cultural criteria of an already inscribed natural property or a re-nomination under natural criteria of an already inscribed cultural property may raise issues in terms of the relation between the two separate nominations (the one of the already inscribed property and the renomination under new criteria) and the coherence of their content, also relating to the proposed justification for inscription and the attributes that convey the already assessed and the potential Outstanding Universal Value. Issues may also be raised concerning the management of the property that would become a mixed one.

18. A mixed nomination may present specific issues when preparing the related draft decision, which represents the basis of the examination by the World Heritage Committee. In case the recommendations of the two Advisory Bodies are discordant, it is a particular challenge to combine the two recommendations into one single draft decision, without compromising the outcome of the two separate evaluations. Furthermore, if the two recommendations by the Advisory Bodies are discordant and the World Heritage Committee decides to inscribe the property only as a cultural or as a natural one, the text of the nomination that will accompany the inscribed property will still present it as a mixed one thus creating potential confusion for the public.

III. ADVISORY BODY EVALUATIONS BY IUCN AND ICOMOS

19. As noted above, in line with the procedures defined in the *Operational Guidelines*, IUCN and ICOMOS essentially undertake parallel processes of evaluation in relation to nominations of mixed properties, and both organisations recognise that this can create difficulties. The views of IUCN and ICOMOS are that such separation of nature and of culture, based on the separate articles of the 1972 Convention, whilst providing administrative simplicity, do not represent a modern approach to heritage practice, and notably do not correspond to the ways in which many cultures, including those of traditional communities and indigenous peoples, view the relationship between humankind and nature.
20. It may be noted that the majority of inscribed mixed sites does not reflect a true symbiosis or indissoluble bond between culture and nature. For places where cultural and natural attributes have only tangential links and may not readily coincide in spatial terms, there can often be considerable difficulties in defining a common boundary and putting in place coordinated management. This raises the issue whether mixed properties should demonstrate a clear interplay between culture and nature.
21. From a practical point of view, nomination dossiers for mixed properties are in essence submitted to two independent evaluations, and interactions between natural and cultural values, where they do exist, are difficult to address or acknowledge, as the cultural and natural criteria remain separate. In addition States Parties can often find the approach to mixed sites to be particularly complicated, particularly with regard to the selection of criteria, the identification of key features and attributes, or in relation to issues such as boundaries, or the establishment of management systems. Key points include how the World Heritage criteria are interpreted, and how the upstream process could assist in addressing aspirations in relation to a particular nomination. Possible mixed sites should perhaps be a particular priority for States Parties to apply the provisions of paragraph 122 of the *Operational Guidelines*: to seek early and proactive advice from the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre.
22. The analysis of the particular case of the deferred nomination of Pimachiowin Aki occasioned the decision that has led to the present paper, and provides a clear example of a site that does reflect a symbiosis between culture and nature and a process where the disconnect that can occur is evident. IUCN and ICOMOS note that this disconnect is also evident in the nomination as submitted, not only in the evaluation process, and an advisory mission has been undertaken to consider questions of the choice of criteria, and the approach to the nomination to assist the State Party and the First Nations to consider the nomination further.
23. At the broader level, ICOMOS and IUCN, working in partnership with the German nature conservation and development agencies BfN and GIZ, the UNDP-GEF Small Grants COMPACT programme, and the Swiss Ministry for the Environment, with financial support of The Christensen Fund, have begun to reflect on their joint work on World Heritage, entitled "Connecting Practice". This project considers that the *World*

Heritage Convention is the leading international instrument for conservation that brings together nature and culture. Yet a range of obstacles to good performance exists and need to be addressed. The project is a joint initiative to explore how to form a more genuinely integrated consideration of natural and cultural heritage under the World Heritage Convention – ‘bridging the divide’ that is often observed between nature and culture – overcoming the many unintended adverse outcomes that can result. The project will be presented in a side event at the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee, and will be concluded in early 2015, so its results will be available for the World Heritage Committee to reflect on at its 39th session. Further details of the project are available via IUCN or ICOMOS.

IV. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision: 38 COM 9B

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC-14/38.COM/9B,*
2. *Recalling Decision **37 COM 8B.19** adopted at its 37th session (Phnom Penh, 2013),*
3. *Welcomes the detailed report made by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies on mixed sites and related evaluation processes;*
4. *Takes note of the project undertaken by the Advisory Bodies on evaluation procedures of mixed nominations, to be completed by 2015;*
5. *Encourages the States Parties to fully consider the potential and constraints of nominating mixed sites at the earliest stages, and to seek early and proactive advice from the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre for such nominations, in compliance with Paragraph 122 of the Operational Guidelines;*
6. *Also requests the World Heritage Centre, IUCN and ICOMOS to prepare an updated joint report on this matter for consideration by the World Heritage Committee at its 39th session in 2015.*