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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Thirty-ninth session

Bonn, Germany
28 June – 8 July 2015

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

9B. Progress report on the reflection on processes for mixed nominations

SUMMARY

The present document was requested by the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee (Doha, 2014) by Decision **38 COM 9B**. This decision acknowledged that the decision making processes as well as the evaluation of mixed sites nominations are more complex than those for sites nominated only under cultural or natural values and might require more time at the preparatory stage of the nomination.

This document presents a progress report concerning options for changes to the criteria and to the Advisory Body evaluation process for mixed nominations.

Draft Decision: 39 COM 9B, see Point II

I. BACKGROUND

1. This document presents a progress report concerning information already provided in the Committee Document WHC-14/38.COM/9B, and the action requested in Decision **38 COM 9B**, to explore options for changes to the criteria and to the Advisory Body evaluation process for mixed nominations. The present progress report has been prepared by IUCN and ICOMOS, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre.
2. As already recalled in Decision **38 COM 9B**, mixed sites pose particular challenges in relation to implementation within the World Heritage Convention, and this paper does not seek to repeat the points made at the Committee in 2014, but rather to focus on the discussion of options for changes to criteria or to the evaluation process.
3. The Advisory Bodies welcome the submission of more and better conceived nominations of mixed sites, since there are occasions where these nominations are necessary for appropriate representation of the Outstanding Universal Value of a potential property. However, it is important to note that many problems occur when the implications of nominations of mixed sites are not fully considered, and thus whilst the Advisory Bodies can take their role in improving the evaluation processes, this will not be able to compensate for situations where States Parties produce nominations that are not well adapted to the requirements of a nomination under both natural and cultural criteria.
4. IUCN and ICOMOS note that suggestions to changes in the wording of criteria is part of range of possible mechanisms for improving the consideration of mixed site nominations, especially for those that are located in the territories of indigenous peoples where there is an inseparable relationship of people with nature. There has been concern raised as to whether the criteria as currently worded enable this relationship to be considered adequately, and it has been noted that earlier versions of the World Heritage criteria had included the relationship of people and nature within what is now criterion (ix). The reasons for those changes relate to past harmonisation of the criteria with Articles 1 and 2 of the World Heritage Convention. At present, there is no evidence that the wording of the criteria created difficulties for the evaluation of mixed sites. It appears that there have been issues in applying the criteria to make a justification for Outstanding Universal Value for some mixed sites under evaluation, and problems have arisen due to the separate processes followed in relation to natural and cultural criteria. For these reasons, it is not suggested that the wording of the criteria offers a fruitful means to address the issues with mixed sites, and no proposals are made to the Committee for consideration in this regard. Only if there was compelling evidence that regular problems were occurring due to the wording of the criteria should amendments to the criteria be considered, and such changes would need very thorough consideration, since they would have very significant implications for the functioning of the *Convention*, as well as for properties that are already inscribed on the World Heritage List.
5. Conversely, there are a range of needs to increase connections in the IUCN and ICOMOS evaluation processes that are capable of improvement, but which would require amendments to the current evaluation processes and confirmation that resulting budgetary implications could be met. These are being considered as one aspect of an active project between IUCN and ICOMOS entitled "Connecting Practice" that is scheduled for completion in May 2015, and will provide further lessons regarding future approaches, but which are not yet available to inform fully

the present document. Despite this project not being completed, it is already indicated that IUCN and ICOMOS specialists have substantially adopted common approaches to field work and that changes in the approach to mixed sites could be relatively easy to agree. A report of the closing workshop of the “Connecting Practice” project will be available at the 39th Session, and will be presented in a side event at the Committee meeting.

6. ICOMOS and IUCN consider that the following amendments in the table below could be made to the evaluation process for mixed sites:

Action	Current status	Resource implications	Comments
Tentative Listing: Where upstream advice is requested on potential mixed nominations, IUCN and ICOMOS should work together to provide coordinated advice.	Not current practice	Moderate/High	States Parties are encouraged to seek upstream advice for mixed nominations. Coordinated advice from IUCN and ICOMOS at this stage could avoid some of the commonly observed problems. This work deserves a significant priority and appropriate planning and resourcing.
Briefings and communication with States Parties: for mixed sites in order to undertake a shared evaluation process, all communication with the nominating State Party should be coordinated, including letters or other communications	Mostly current practice.	Low	
Joint missions: The current practice that all evaluation field missions to nominated mixed properties should be undertaken jointly between IUCN and ICOMOS should be continued.	Current standard practice.	None	
Joint briefing of mission teams: Mission teams should be briefed jointly by IUCN and ICOMOS prior to their field visits to the nominated property.	Mostly current practice.	Low	

<p>Mission team itineraries: The itineraries for missions to mixed properties should be devised jointly by the nominating State Party, IUCN and ICOMOS. The experts should spend the large majority of their time on the mission together, and should not have separate itineraries during the mission.</p>	Mostly current practice.	Low	States Parties need to understand and respect this request.
<p>Requests for supplementary information on nominations: All requests for supplementary information from States Parties from IUCN and/or ICOMOS should be agreed jointly between the Advisory Bodies.</p>	Mostly current practice.	Low	More time in the evaluation process is needed to fully implement this without reducing time for dialogue with the nominating State Party.
<p>Desk reviews: Desk reviews should be sought according to a common approach and should be shared between IUCN and ICOMOS.</p>	Not current practice.	Low	Implementation would need time for reflection and design and harmonisation of standardised review forms.
<p>Harmonization of approaches to mission reports: To the extent possible, IUCN and ICOMOS should seek to harmonize their mission reports.</p>	Not current practice.	Moderate	Implementation would need time for reflection and design as well as an harmonised system. There may be some limits to harmonization due to the diversity of mixed sites.
<p>Interaction of IUCN and ICOMOS World Heritage Panels: All mixed site evaluations should be preceded by a joint briefing of both Panels on the results of the missions and reviews.</p>	Mostly current practice, but could be further elaborated and formalized.	Moderate	Full implementation of this requires at least additional dedicated professional time for mixed sites nominations, and ideally an increase in resources to support Panel meetings in both IUCN and ICOMOS.

<p>Possible joint IUCN/ICOMOS Panel for mixed sites. Ideally for mixed sites (and perhaps also other sites where nature/culture interaction is notable) a joint IUCN/ICOMOS Panel could be envisaged either to address the whole evaluation, or to complete the evaluations after the first IUCN and ICOMOS Panels in December.</p>	<p>Not current practice.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>This would likely need more time in the evaluation process to work effectively. Changes in Annex 6 of the OG would be needed if this was implemented.</p>
<p>Harmonised decisions. IUCN and ICOMOS should produce a single jointly agreed decision for mixed site evaluations.</p>	<p>Not current practice, except at the end of the evaluation process.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>This is currently managed between IUCN and ICOMOS officers, working with the World Heritage Centre, but only at the end of the two Panel processes. This could be amended to involve harmonisation being discussed between the first and second panel meetings.</p>

7. As already noted above, and in the Committee's consideration of mixed sites at its 38th Session, a frequent cause of problems can be lack of consideration of the pertinence of mixed site nominations, and the particular requirements that are attached to them, by the nominating State Party. The World Heritage Committee has already advised States Parties that mixed site nominations should be a priority for seeking upstream support from the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre, well before a nomination is prepared. In circumstances where such advice is not sought, and mixed site nominations then run into difficulties during evaluation, the Committee may wish to consider postponing consideration to ensure that advice can be provided to the State Party by IUCN and ICOMOS before the nomination is considered by the Committee. All actors within the Convention, including the States Parties, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies should promote the consistent use of the upstream process for mixed sites, whilst recognising that the responsibility to seek such advice rests with the nominating State Party.
8. The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies also note that the 39th Session of the World Heritage Committee will also consider proposals for updating of the *Operational Guidelines*, and the proposals of the *ad-hoc working group* established by Decision **38 COM 13** on amendments to evaluation processes. As the final outcomes of this *ad-hoc working group* are not available at the moment of the preparation of this document, it will be important to consider how any proposals related to mixed site evaluation processes are harmonised with these other items, and also the priority to mixed sites that is advised by the *ad-hoc working group*.

II. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision: 39 COM 9B

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC-15/39.COM/9B,*
2. *Recalling Decision **38 COM 9B** adopted at its 38th session (Doha, 2014),*
3. *Welcomes the report of the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies on proposals to improve the preparation and evaluation of mixed World Heritage nominations;*
4. *Reiterates that due to the complexity of mixed site nominations, and their evaluation, States Parties should ideally seek prior advice from IUCN and ICOMOS if possible at least two years before a possible nomination is submitted, in compliance with Paragraph 122 of the Operational Guidelines;*
5. *Takes note of the proposals of IUCN and ICOMOS to improve evaluation processes for mixed sites presented in the above mentioned document, and requests IUCN and ICOMOS to implement those proposals, subject to available time and resources and in coordination with the World Heritage Centre, and to report back on progress at the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee, in 2017.*