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**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
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**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Fortieth session

**Istanbul, Turkey
10 – 20 July 2016**

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

9A. Progress Report on the Upstream Processes

SUMMARY

At its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008), the World Heritage Committee launched a process of reflection on the future of the *World Heritage Convention*.

In this framework, the Committee, aware of the challenges that exist in the process for nominating a property to the World Heritage List, proposed an initiative entitled Upstream Processes. The aim was to find options for improving and strengthening the current nomination process. In 2011, the Committee, through Decision **35 COM 12C**, took note of the selection of 10 pilot projects to explore creative approaches and new forms of guidance that might be provided to States Parties when considering nomination projects prior to the preparation of a dossier.

At the 39th session of the Committee (Bonn, 2015), the Upstream Processes were included in the text of the *Operational Guidelines*.

Further to Decision **39 COM 9A**, this document presents a report on the implementation of the pilot projects since the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee.

Draft Decision: 40 COM 9A, see Point IV.

I. BACKGROUND

1. In 2010, by Decision **34 COM 13**, the World Heritage Committee, encouraged the World Heritage Centre to “follow up on the approaches and recommendations of the Phuket expert meeting” on “Upstream Processes for Nominations”. In particular, the Committee requested the World Heritage Centre “in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies and other relevant organizations, to invite one or two States Parties from each of the UNESCO regional groups to undertake, on an experimental basis, voluntary pilot projects related to identifying options and preparing dossiers for nomination”. The UNESCO Electoral Groups subsequently selected two pilot projects per region, except Group I – Western Europe and North America – which refrained from making any proposal.
2. In 2011, by Decision **35 COM 12C** the World Heritage Committee welcomed “all the actions undertaken to improve the processes and practices prior to consideration by the World Heritage Committee of a nomination (the ‘Upstream Processes’)” and took note “of the pilot projects that have been chosen to implement this experimental approach”. In order to implement the first phase of the pilot projects, each State Party concerned was asked to select a focal point for the project and to identify options to cover the costs to undertake the necessary actions. These costs could be met through a variety of ways: the State Party itself could bear the whole or part of the costs; it could raise the required funds from donors or funding agencies; or it could put forward a Preparatory Assistance request under the World Heritage Fund. This document details project by project the progress made since the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee (Bonn, 2015).
3. In 2015, at its 39th session, the World Heritage Committee included the Upstream Processes in the text of the *Operational Guidelines*, thereby recognizing that the Upstream Processes had extended far beyond the pilot projects and had become a mainstream process considered beneficial to many States Parties.
4. It is important to emphasize that application of the Upstream Process approach does not imply that a site concerned would ultimately be inscribed on the World Heritage List. The main aim of the Upstream Processes is to reduce the number of properties that experience significant problems during the nomination process. Therefore, the objective of the selection of pilot projects was to explore creative approaches and new forms of guidance that might be provided to States Parties when considering nomination projects prior to the preparation of a dossier, as well as in relation to the nomination process itself.

II. PROGRESS MADE ON THE SELECTED PILOT PROJECTS

5. Pilot project on the **South Namib Erg**, Namibia
This project was successfully terminated as Namib Sand Sea was inscribed on the World Heritage List at the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee (Phnom Penh, 2013).
6. Pilot project on **Ancient Kano City Walls and Associated Sites**, Nigeria
Two tripartite meetings (African World Heritage Fund-World Heritage Centre-Advisory Bodies) were held respectively during the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee and in September 2015 at ICOMOS Headquarters to discuss the upstream assistance provided to the Nigerian Authorities with regard to the possibility of putting forward the Ancient Kano City Walls or the Ancient City of Kano for nomination. It was agreed to continue assisting the State Party in this Upstream Process exercise, particularly through the provision of technical assistance from the Advisory Bodies and the African World Heritage Fund.

7. Pilot project on **Gadara (Modern Um Qeis or Qays)**, Jordan
 In March 2014, the State Party informed the Centre of its decision to follow ICOMOS's advice and selected Gadara (Modern Um Qeis or Qays) instead of Pella as a pilot project within the Upstream Processes. So far, no progress has been registered concerning this pilot project.

8. Pilot project on the **Rock Drawings in the Hail region**, Saudi Arabia
 This project was successfully terminated as the Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia was inscribed on the World Heritage List at the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee.

9. Pilot Project on the **Batanes Protected Landscapes and Seascapes**, Philippines
 An advisory mission with two experts from IUCN and ICOMOS was carried out from 11 to 20 December 2014. Following the mission, the State Party was asked to conduct further research on the site. Meanwhile, the State Party has expressed its wish to refrain from submitting a nomination dossier for examination by the World Heritage Committee before its current term of office as a member of the Committee comes to a close.

10. Pilot project on **Coral Stones Mosques of the Maldives**, Maldives
 An ICOMOS Advisory Mission to the Maldives was carried out in August 2014. In November 2014, the Maldives submitted a new International Assistance Request under the World Heritage Fund, which was approved in July 2015. This 2nd phase of the International Assistance project was to implement the recommendations of the ICOMOS Advisory Mission, particularly related to the need for more research to be conducted in order to fully understand the distinctiveness of the coral mosques of the Maldives in terms of their construction techniques; the local cultural, social, political and economic context that prevailed at the time of their construction; and their wider context within the Indian Ocean zone. The main issues identified in this pilot project, before moving on to the preparation of the nomination dossier are: how to justify a selection of mosques based on adequate research and sound comparative analysis, and also how conservation plans can be prepared for the sites concerned. Up to today, however, little progress has been made in this direction, the biggest obstacle being the lack of human resources of the Department of Heritage of the Maldivian Government. UNESCO has repeatedly advised the Government of the Maldives on the importance of having a dedicated team to work exclusively on the nomination process, and this point was reiterated by the ICOMOS mission in 2014. However, this does not seem possible in view of the current government structure and available resources. A second ICOMOS Advisory Mission to the Maldives is planned for September 2016 as part of the implementation of the second International Assistance Request.

11. Pilot project on the **Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region**, Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
 The second phase of this Pilot Project for a possible extension of the mixed property into Albania, to cover the whole of Lake Ohrid and possible cultural sites along the shore, started in 2014 with the three-year project "Towards strengthened governance of the shared transboundary natural and cultural heritage of the Lake Ohrid region", financed by the European Union (EUR 1.7 million) and the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Albania (USD 240,000). The project activities cover transboundary cooperation, profiling of the potential transboundary area, capacity building for integrated management, technical assistance for the preparation of the extension file and pilot actions on the waste-awareness campaign. In cooperation with the Advisory Bodies (ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN), capacity building activities related to integrated management and other relevant thematic areas such as collaborative management, value-based promotion and sustainable development have been implemented. Capacity building activities also

include the preparation of a Baseline Assessment Report, a Draft Sustainable Development Strategy and a Draft Local Waste Management Plan, in cooperation and consultation with the relevant national, regional and local authorities. The technical assistance being provided to the Albanian authorities for the preparation of the extension nomination file is ongoing. Visibility activities accompany major project achievements and include active social media campaigns to raise awareness about the objectives of the Pilot Project within the local communities in the Lake Ohrid region.

12. Pilot project on the **Dinaric Karst Serial Nomination**, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia

Despite a good start, the Dinaric Karst Serial Nomination pilot project did not register further progress and was phased out at the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee. While the project is no longer directly followed as such, the States Parties involved have the possibility to continue the nomination project of their own accord.

13. Pilot project on the **Grenadines Islands Group**, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Technical consultations between the concerned States Parties, the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre have taken place with a view of identifying a suitable strategy to reinforce the national capacities in order to facilitate the identification of a site for nomination, particularly in the field of natural heritage. Resources to support the strategy are expected to be identified in 2016 thanks to the strong commitment of the States Parties and the active involvement and technical advice of IUCN, ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre.

14. Pilot project on the **Cultural and Industrial Landscape of Fray Bentos**, Uruguay

This project was successfully terminated as the Fray Bentos Industrial Landscape was inscribed on the World Heritage List at the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee.

15. Further to the formal inclusion of the upstream advice in the text of the *Operational Guidelines*, the experimental phase of this process could be considered concluded. In this regard, and out of the 10 pilot projects originally selected:

- 3 eventually resulted in an inscription on the World Heritage List: **South Namib Erg** (Namibia), **Rock Drawings in the Hail region** (Saudi Arabia) and **Cultural and Industrial Landscape of Fray Bentos** (Uruguay);
- 1 was already phased out at the last session of the Committee: **Dinaric Karst Serial Nomination** (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia);
- 5 are advancing at a different pace: **Ancient Kano City Walls and Associated Sites** (Nigeria), **Batanes Protected Landscapes and Seascapes** (Philippines), **Coral Stones Mosques of the Maldives** (Maldives), **Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region** (Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), and **Grenadines Islands Group** (Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines);
- 1 did not register any progress : **Gadara (Modern Um Qeis or Qays)** (Jordan).

16. Therefore, as the purpose of the selection of the pilot projects was the implementation of the Upstream Processes as an experimental approach during a pilot stage, it is suggested that the Committee examine the results of the remaining 5 pilot projects that are making progress and to phase out the pilot project of **Gadara (Modern Um Qeis or Qays)** (Jordan) that did not register any progress.

III. OPTIMIZING AND SUPPORTING THE UPSTREAM PROCESSES

17. The Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre are currently discussing the outcomes of the upstream projects and the process in general. This is necessary to draw lessons and conclusions in view of enhancing and strengthening the Upstream Processes since they have been included in the *Operational Guidelines* by the World Heritage Committee at its 39th session. These discussions will continue at the next meeting of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, scheduled for October 2016.
18. It should be noted that the positive outcomes of the pilot projects extend far beyond several successful inscriptions. They have highlighted ways in which Upstream Processes can be made more effective and become an integral part of increasing the capacity of States Parties to implement the *Convention*. They also highlighted the need for a realistic appraisal of the resources such work entails. Furthermore, they have helped to measure the scope and extent of the advice needed for complex proposals which sometimes has generated two or three phases of support, particularly in the case of serial sites, and the need for considerable resources to provide such advice.
19. It must also be noted that, beyond the selected pilot projects, States Parties have shown growing interest in the Upstream Processes over the last six years, and that the number of upstream support requests has been constantly increasing. In recognition of the way the Upstream Processes have become an accepted and integral part of the nomination process, the Committee, at its 39th session, officially integrated them in the *Operational Guidelines* by including a definition and amending Paragraphs 71 and 122.
20. More specifically, Paragraph 71 encourages the States Parties to seek, as early as possible, upstream advice during the development of their Tentative Lists. This important aspect has been repeatedly emphasized, but unfortunately only one request for upstream advice for the revision of a Tentative List has been registered so far.
21. Now that the Upstream Processes have been accepted as a key part of the way sites are selected and prepared for nomination, some further reflection is needed on how to make better use of the existing preparatory assistance within the framework of the International Assistance mechanism, in order to enhance the results of the Upstream Processes. The link between Upstream Process and preparatory assistance can be found in Article 13, paragraph 2 of the *Convention*: “Requests for international assistance under paragraph 1 of this Article may also be concerned with identification of cultural or natural property defined in Articles 1 and 2, when preliminary investigations have shown that further inquiries would be justified”, as well as in Paragraph 241 of the *Operational Guidelines*. In this regard, eligible States Parties could be encouraged by the Committee to make use of the International Assistance mechanism for requests concerning upstream support for the development or revision of their Tentative Lists or nominations. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that with the growing use of the Upstream Processes and the limited amount of the International Assistance budget, International Assistance support cannot be seen as the primary means of providing financial support.
22. In addition, it is also recalled that at its 38th session, the Committee approved a new budget line for Advisory Missions under the World Heritage Fund (2.0 “Advisory Missions” under “Action 2: Identification, management and promotion of World Heritage”) to be used to the benefit of States Parties falling under the category of Least Developed Countries, Low-Income and Lower Middle Income Countries. This budget line is also limited in terms of the number of missions that can be supported. Generally, funding for

the equitable provision of upstream support is a critical issue which requires further and urgent reflection.

23. Thus, ensuring that the Upstream Processes are equally available to all States Parties requiring such assistance remains a challenge, and especially ensuring that States Parties which lack sufficient resources can make use of this process. In more general terms, some reflection is needed on innovative ways to raise funds and cover the costs of Upstream Processes for those States Parties which cannot afford them and, in many cases, are also countries that most need such support.
24. In addition to the need for more resources, there is also a need for better targeted use of resources by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies as well as the development of a more structured response to the flow of requests in order to ensure proper follow-up and greater efficiency, transparency and accountability.
25. In this regard, a positive first step is the creation of a special unit dealing with Upstream Process requests at ICOMOS, which facilitates access to the Advisory Bodies for the States Parties. It aims to develop a range of dynamic processes to offer technical support to States Parties, such as Advisory Missions, programmed discussions via Skype, workshops, as well as Thematic studies and other forms of collaboration and generic guidance. ICOMOS is also working in partnership with some States Parties to expand its work on Thematic Studies.
26. In order to streamline and better coordinate the process, and to provide useful guidance to the States Parties wishing to request upstream support, and in view of ensuring proper follow-up, greater efficiency, transparency and accountability, the Committee may wish to request the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, to evaluate the options for an Upstream Process request form, which could become, at a later stage, an Annex to the *Operational Guidelines*. A first draft format for upstream support requests, prepared by the World Heritage Centre, is included in Annex I to this document, as a basis for discussion.

IV. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision: 40 COM 9A

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/16/40.COM/9A,
2. Recalling Decisions **34 COM 13.III**, **35 COM 12C**, **36 COM 12C**, **37 COM 9** and **39 COM 11**, adopted at its 34th (Brasilia, 2010), 35th (UNESCO, 2011), 36th (Saint-Petersburg, 2012), 37th (Phnom Penh, 2013) and 39th (Bonn, 2015) sessions respectively,
3. Also recalling the integration of the Upstream Processes in Paragraphs 71 and 122 of the Operational Guidelines,
4. Welcomes all the actions undertaken to improve the processes and practices prior to the consideration of nominations by the World Heritage Committee, including the creation of a special unit at ICOMOS; commends the States Parties of Saudi Arabia and Uruguay for the successful termination of the pilot projects in 2015 and the inscription on the World Heritage List of the Rock Art in the Hail region and the Fray Bentos Industrial Landscape respectively; and also commends the States Parties, the

World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for the pilot projects that registered progress;

5. *Recognizes the efforts undertaken by the States Parties involved, the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre and decides to phase out the pilot project of Gadara (Modern Um Qeis or Qays), Jordan;*
6. *Recalls that, in order to be effective, the upstream support should ideally take place at an early stage, preferably at the moment of the preparation or revision of the States Parties' Tentative Lists;*
7. *Notes the growing number of States Parties that request upstream advice and the lack of budgetary provisions for the appropriate implementation of the Upstream Processes, and also notes that due to the lack of such provision there is a risk of providing greater support only to those States Parties with the means to fund such advice, thus jeopardizing the universal application of the Convention ;*
8. *Recognizes therefore that adequate and equitable financing of the Upstream Processes is needed to provide technical and financial support to States Parties which are not able to identify and secure the resources necessary to request upstream support, and that such financing is needed prior to agreeing further steps to implement any policy on upstream advice, in order to avoid generating further imbalances in the List;*
9. *Also recalls that upstream support can be requested by eligible States Parties under the preparatory assistance, in the framework of the International Assistance mechanism and under the new budget line approved for Advisory Missions under the World Heritage Fund, within the limits of available resources;*
10. *In view of ensuring proper follow-up, greater efficiency, transparency and accountability as well as streamlining and improved coordination of the required actions following requests for upstream advice, takes note of the draft Upstream Process request format contained in Annex I to Document WHC/16/40.COM/9A and invites comments from the States Parties on this format and on the wider issues with the implementation of the Upstream Processes;*
11. *Requests the World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies, to further review the lessons learned in the implementation of the Upstream Processes, and the input received from States Parties, and to present harmonized proposals to ensure the effective and equitable implementation of the Upstream Processes for consideration by the World Heritage Committee at its 41st session in 2017, together with a report on the upstream activities currently being implemented by the Advisory Bodies and UNESCO.*

DRAFT UPSTREAM PROCESS REQUEST FORMAT

1. **State(s) Party(ies)**

2. **Object of the advice requested from WHC or the Advisory Bodies** (Please tick the corresponding box)
 Development, revision or harmonization of Tentative List(s)
 Potential future nomination – If applicable, name of the site(s)

3. **Availability of funds to implement the request** (Please indicate how you intend to cover the costs related to the implementation of the Upstream Process request. Please also indicate whether you plan to apply for assistance from the World Heritage Fund, if eligible (International Assistance mechanism or Advisory Missions budget line) or from another funding source).

4. **Any additional information you may wish to provide**

5. **Contact information of the responsible authorities** (name, title, e-mail, telephone)

6. **Signature on behalf of the State(s) Party(ies)**

The original signed version of the completed Upstream Process request form should be sent in English or French to:

UNESCO World Heritage Centre

7, place de Fontenoy

75352 Paris 07 SP

France

Telephone: +33 (0)1 45 68 11 36

E-mail: wh-upstream@unesco.org