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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 second Session

Quebec City, Canada

2 – 10 July 2008

**Item 10 of the Provisional Agenda: Global Strategy for a representative,
balanced and credible World Heritage List**

**INF.10 Proposal for a Reflection Workshop on the future directions of the
*World Heritage Convention***

Proposal for a Reflection Workshop on the future directions of the *World Heritage Convention*

1. The *World Heritage Convention* is considered one of the most successful international instruments for the conservation of heritage sites. Its success is demonstrated by its almost universal membership (185 out of 193 current Member States of UNESCO are States Parties) and the large number of listed properties under its protection (851 in 141 countries as of June 2008). The *Convention* is approaching two important milestones: 40 years since it came into force in 1972 and the inscription of the 1000th property to the World Heritage List.
2. The very success of the *Convention* poses a series of challenges and opportunities hardly envisaged when it came into force, including:
 - a) *Maintaining the credibility of the List:*
 - Is there a desirable limit to the number of properties included on the List if we are to maintain the credibility and value of the 'brand'?
 - How can the capacity of the *Convention* to ensure the effective conservation of inscribed properties be increased?
 - Do increasingly complex properties, such as serial national and serial transnational properties, need new concepts?
 - Should properties already inscribed be reviewed and reassessed to ensure they meet the evolving approaches and policies expressed by the Committee?
 - b) *Addressing the emerging gap between resources and needs of the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies:*
 - How might the Committee more strategically determine priorities for limited funds?
 - How can financial, technical and organisational resources be strengthened?
 - Can internal processes be made more efficient?
 - c) *Finding ways to effectively deal with an ever-increasing volume of work, while also ensuring sufficient attention is given by the Committee to policy and strategic issues:*
 - What mechanisms are available to alleviate workload pressures on the Committee?
 - Do existing governance arrangements continue to meet changing needs?
 - Should some time be explicitly set aside for considering policy and strategic issues?
3. It is timely to consider how best to respond to these present and future challenges to the *World Heritage Convention* to ensure that it continues in its mission to protect and conserve the world's properties of Outstanding Universal Value for the next 40 years and beyond.
4. A reflection workshop on the future directions of the *World Heritage Convention* is therefore proposed to draw on the accumulated experience and knowledge of the past decades of implementation of the *Convention* to address future opportunities and challenges. The workshop should seek to engage representatives of Committee members, States Parties, Secretariat and Advisory Bodies to the *Convention* to reflect on the remarkable achievements of the *Convention* to date and explore the future directions for its implementation.