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# World Heritage

# 34 COM

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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-fourth session**

**Brasilia, Brazil**  
**25 July – 3 August 2010**

**Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda: Reports of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies**

**5C: Roles of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies**

#### **SUMMARY**

This document examines the roles of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies as outlined by the *Operational Guidelines* and how the tasks and workloads are divided in practice. It then looks at the possible and needed division of responsibilities to clarify their respective roles.

**Draft Decision: 34 COM 5C, see point II**

## I. Respective roles of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies

### A. Background and reference texts

1. Following the Management Audit of the World Heritage Centre in 2007, the World Heritage Committee had requested the Director or the World Heritage Centre (Decision **31 COM 19, paragraph 12.d**) *inter alia* to delineate the respective roles of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies. On the basis of this decision, a result-based action plan for implementing the recommendations of the Management Audit was prepared and presented to the 16<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of States Parties (Resolution **16 GA 5**) and to the 32<sup>nd</sup> session of the Committee (Decision **32 COM 17**). The World Heritage Committee at its 33<sup>rd</sup> session (Seville, 2009) took note of the outline presented in Document *WHC-09/33.COM/5A* and agreed that this topic should be further discussed in 2010 under a separate Agenda Item.
2. The preparation of the working document on the respective roles of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies was discussed at the last coordination meeting between the Centre and the Advisory Bodies held in January 2010, and it was agreed that last year's document will serve as a basis with some agreed additional elements.
3. Chapter I.F (paragraphs 27 to 29) of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* concerns the World Heritage Centre and outlines its main tasks, while Chapter I.G (paragraphs 30 to 37) concerns the three Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee and their roles. These tasks and roles are as follows:

### **28. Secretariat's main tasks**

- a) *the organization of the meetings of the General Assembly and the Committee;*
- b) *the implementation of decisions of the World Heritage Committee and resolutions of the General Assembly and reporting to them on their execution;*
- c) *the receipt, registration, checking the completeness, archiving and transmission to the relevant Advisory Bodies of nominations to the World Heritage List;*
- d) *the co-ordination of studies and activities as part of the Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List;*
- e) *the organization of Periodic Reporting and coordination of Reactive Monitoring;*
- f) *the co-ordination of International Assistance;*
- g) *the mobilization of extra-budgetary resources for the conservation and management of World Heritage properties;*
- h) *the assistance to States Parties in the implementation of the Committee's programmes and projects; and*

- i) *the promotion of World Heritage and the Convention through the dissemination of information to States Parties, the Advisory Bodies and the general public.*
- 29.** *These activities follow the decisions and Strategic Objectives of the Committee and the resolutions of the General Assembly of the States Parties and are conducted in close co-operation with the Advisory Bodies.*

### **31. Roles of the Advisory Bodies**

- a) *advise on the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the field of their expertise;*
  - b) *assist the Secretariat, in the preparation of the Committee's documentation, the agenda of its meetings and the implementation of the Committee's decisions;*
  - c) *assist with the development and implementation of the Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List, the Global Training Strategy, Periodic Reporting, and the strengthening of the effective use of the World Heritage Fund;*
  - d) *monitor the state of conservation of World Heritage properties and review requests for International Assistance;*
  - e) *in the case of ICOMOS and IUCN evaluate properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List and present evaluation reports to the Committee; and*
  - f) *attend meetings of the World Heritage Committee and the Bureau in an advisory capacity.*
4. From the above-mentioned provisions in the *Operational Guidelines*, it results that the respective roles of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies are distinct and clear. However, the World Heritage Centre is required to cooperate with the Advisory Bodies in implementing the activities assigned to it, which makes these activities a shared responsibility. The Management Audit of the World Heritage Centre undertaken by the external auditors Deloitte underlined (in **Recommendation 4.1**) the need to clarify the division of roles and responsibilities in three specific areas: (i) Organization of joint missions; (ii) Drafting of state of conservation reports; and (iii) Management of studies and analysis requested by the Committee or extra-budgetary partners.
5. The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies have discussed these three areas and the following clarifications on the division of roles and responsibilities are proposed in paragraphs B, C and D. In addition, an additional and new task related to the Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value constitutes also an area for improvement (see E).
- B. Organization of joint missions**
6. The decision on joint missions involving the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies is taken by the World Heritage Committee. Thereafter, the World Heritage Centre ensures communication with the State Party concerned to obtain the

- invitation and finalise the timing and schedule for the mission, in consultation and agreement with the relevant Advisory Body/ies involved in the mission. It also prepares the terms of reference for the mission based on the World Heritage Committee decisions in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies, coordinates the logistical arrangements and prepares background documents as required. It is responsible for communicating the terms of reference for the mission to the State Party.
7. During the joint mission, the representative of the World Heritage Centre or UNESCO facilitates the liaison with the State Party and together with the Advisory Body representative, provides professional input into the assessment of the state of conservation. The Advisory Bodies representative is expected to provide specialized expertise in the field of conservation, protection and management and to take the lead on advice regarding technical matters relevant to the State of Conservation, protection and management of the property. The representative of World Heritage Centre or UNESCO might also be qualified to provide technical advice, specific regional knowledge and input in line with Committee's decisions. Following completion of the fact finding mission, the representatives of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies prepare jointly a draft report. The draft mission reports are then peer reviewed within the respective institutions to obtain an institutional opinion; it is at this stage that the Advisory Bodies prepare draft recommendations. The revised documents are finalised via an internal review of both the relevant Advisory Body(ies) and the World Heritage Centre to reach a common position within the report. Where necessary, different institutional views of World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies are reflected within the report.
  8. Given the short timeframe available for monitoring missions and the increasing complexity of issues dealt with, the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre recognize the added value of joint mission teams to deal with these issues. Close working relationship between the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre are maintained to ensure effective communication and efficient response to any requests and they both recognize the increasingly important role of effective monitoring activities to the credibility of the *World Heritage Convention*. Whilst there is always scope for improvement with the organization of missions (in particular with regard to advanced notification of the dates for the mission in order to allow the Advisory Bodies institutional reporting...), these issues are generally well handled in relation to the joint missions and solutions are found within the framework of the regular meetings (twice a year) between the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre.

#### C. Drafting of state of conservation reports

9. At the time of establishing the list of state of conservation reports to be presented to the World Heritage Committee, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies also agree who will be responsible for preparing the first drafts of each requested report. The World Heritage Centre also carries out pre-filling of all state of conservation reports to document the key decisions and also handles all interaction with the States Parties regarding the submission of reports requested by the World Heritage Committee. In general, the preparation of first drafts is mostly carried out by the Advisory Bodies, however where the World Heritage

Centre has a strong technical engagement with a particular site, or has recently been on mission, it will often take the lead on the draft. The drafts of the main substance of the reports are then shared for discussion and agreement to reflect a joint position wherever possible. Only in exceptional cases, for instance when there is a disagreement on analysis or recommendation, is the position of the Advisory Body and that of the World Heritage Centre mentioned separately in the state of conservation report.

10. The World Heritage Centre carries out final consistency checks, in particular after translation, and is also responsible for tracking progress throughout the process. In general, the process is strongly collegial, despite the very significant (and at present excessive) workload that the process entails. There is an ongoing dialogue between the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre regarding means to further enhance the efficiency of the process. The final review of the state of conservation reports for cultural and mixed properties by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies enables a good exchange of views and facilitates the reaching of consensus in most cases.
11. As noted by the Advisory Bodies in their submission to the discussions on the Future of the *World Heritage Convention*, and many State Party submissions, provision of adequate funding for monitoring activities is the most significant and immediate strategic issue for the *Convention* if it wishes to be a more effective instrument for conservation of inscribed World Heritage properties.

#### D. Management of studies and analysis

12. According to paragraph 147 of the *Operational Guidelines*, thematic studies are the sole responsibility of the Advisory Bodies. As requested by the World Heritage Committee or as necessary, ICOMOS and IUCN will carry out thematic studies to evaluate proposed World Heritage properties in their regional, global or thematic context. These studies should be informed by a review of the Tentative Lists submitted by States Parties and by reports of meetings on the harmonization of Tentative Lists, as well as by other technical studies performed by the Advisory Bodies and qualified organizations and individuals. As such studies are designed to contribute to the nomination of World Heritage properties, this activity is more closely aligned to the role of the Advisory Bodies (and in particular IUCN and ICOMOS) than that of the World Heritage Centre. The World Heritage Centre has sometimes relied upon the thematic studies of the Advisory Bodies or their preparatory work to develop or to expand them. Whilst the coordination of some studies by the World Heritage Centre has been taken on through expedience and sharing of workloads, improved mechanisms should ensure that lead roles and funding are provided to the Advisory Bodies to undertake the work, according to paragraph 147 of the *Operational Guidelines*.
13. The Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre have to agree on the desirability and feasibility of an initiative prior to launching it. This avoids duplication or waste of resources, and more clearly establishes priorities for studies and helps in defining respective roles and responsibilities prior to embarking on new themes.

## E. The Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

14. The Retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value (Retrospective SOUV) were not part of the Management Audit of the World Heritage Centre undertaken by the external auditors Deloitte but are worth mentioning as they constitute an additional task for both the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre. As for nominations, the World Heritage Centre checks the completeness of the draft Retrospective SOUV submitted by States Parties while the Advisory Bodies review them. The Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre remain concerned that the workload in addressing the very large number of properties not having SOUV is a challenge beyond the current capacities of the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre and the allocated resources of the World Heritage Fund. This matter needs careful and thorough planning and communication between the State Party, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies.

## F. Conclusion

15. The respective roles of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies are in general distinct and clear. Per definition, the World Heritage Centre needs to be a facilitator and is required to have a neutral attitude towards all States Parties, and the Advisory Bodies provide professional and independent advice. These roles are complementary by nature and not overlapping.

## II. Draft Decision

### ***Draft Decision: 34 COM 5C***

*The World Heritage Committee,*

1. Having examined Document WHC-10/34.COM/5C,
2. Recalling Decision **33 COM 5A**, adopted at its 33rd session (Seville, 2009),
3. Takes note of the above-mentioned document.