

**Extract of Decision adopted at the 34th session  
of the World Heritage Committee (Brasilia, 2010)**

**Item 12: Reflection on the Future of the *World Heritage Convention***

**Decision: 34 COM 12**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC-10/34.COM/12A, WHC-10/34.COM/12B and WHC-10/34.COM/14,
2. Recalling Decision **32 COM 10** adopted at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008), Decision **33 COM 14A.2** adopted at its 33rd session (Seville 2009) and Resolution **17 GA 9** adopted at the 17th General Assembly of States Parties (UNESCO Headquarters, 2009),
3. Notes that the *World Heritage Convention* is fast approaching a number of important milestones, including its 40th anniversary in 2012, the potential inscription of the 1000th property to the World Heritage List, and near universal ratification and that it is therefore appropriate to reflect on the successes of the *Convention* and on how it can best evolve to meet emerging challenges;
4. Recognizes the ongoing open-ended and inclusive participation of States Parties, Advisory Bodies, UNESCO Category 2 Centres specializing in cultural and natural heritage and non-governmental organizations in promoting and implementing the *World Heritage Convention*, including in relation to the transparent process of reflection on the future directions of the *Convention*;
5. Also notes that documents relating to the process of reflection on the future of the *World Heritage Convention* continue to be available for States Parties and other interested organizations at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/futureoftheconvention/> ;
6. Welcomes the progress made on the reflection on the Future of the *Convention* at the Committee's 34th Session (Brasilia, 2010);

[ ... ]

**IV. Working methods of statutory organs of the *Convention***

23. Notes moreover the report provided by the participants of the consultation meeting (held Manama 16-17 December 2009) on the scope and agenda of the expert meeting on the decision-making procedures of statutory organs of the *World Heritage Convention* and adopts the recommendations in Attachment D that define the scope, objectives, agenda and method of participant selection of the expert meeting on decision-making procedures in statutory organs of the *World Heritage Convention*;
24. Welcomes moreover the offer of Australia and Bahrain to host the expert meeting in Bahrain, 2-4 October 2010, on the decision-making procedures of the statutory organs of the *World Heritage Convention* to identify opportunities for increasing the efficiency and transparency of these procedures; further takes note of Document WHC-10/34.COM/14 which presents the results of a feasibility study on the possibility of holding two

annual sessions of the World Heritage Committee; requests in addition that the expert meeting study and prepare measures to optimize the work of the statutory organs of the *World Heritage Convention*; and finally requests the expert meeting to provide proposals for consideration by the 35th session of the World Heritage Committee in 2011.

25. Requests the organizers of the expert meeting in Bahrain to also include the examination of the Rules of Procedure on the conduct of and participation in World Heritage Committee Meetings, and in particular, on adoption of decisions particularly in respect of:
- a) The application of the procedure for secret ballots during the course of the adoption of decisions;
  - b) An analysis of the frequency and context of the application of the secret ballot while in the course of the adoption of decisions;
  - c) Possible implications for the interpretation of Rules 25, 26, 40, 41 and 42 and their amendments;
  - d) The participation of persons qualified in the field of cultural and natural heritage (as set out in Rule 5.2) and the transmission of their qualification (as set out in Rule 5.3);
  - e) The application of Rule 45.

**Recommendations of consultation on decision-making procedures in statutory organs of the *World Heritage Convention***

The following recommendations are aimed at defining the scope, objectives, agenda and method of participant selection of the expert meeting on decision-making procedures in statutory organs of the *World Heritage Convention* (Manama, Bahrain, 16-17 December 2009):

1. The expert meeting on the decision-making procedures of the statutory organs of the *World Heritage Convention* should be organized in Bahrain, 2 - 4 October 2010
2. The expert meeting should be open to 25-30 experts and appreciates the offer of the State Party of Bahrain to provide funding to facilitate the participation of least developed countries (LDC)
3. Participants in the expert meeting should be nominated on the basis of their experience with decision-making processes in statutory organs of the *World Heritage Convention*, and other international standard-setting instruments;
4. An invitation for nominations of a certain number of experts should be sent to the regional groups of UNESCO to ensure an equitable representation of the different regions and cultures relevant to the *World Heritage Convention*. It is suggested, that if the number of nominations exceeds the places available per regional group, the best qualified experts shall be selected in consultation by the hosting States Parties, the World Heritage Centre and the Presidents of the UNESCO regional groups observing a regional and gender balance;
5. The scope of the expert meeting aims at increasing the efficiency and transparency of the decision-making procedures. It should include inter alia: the responsibilities of statutory organs; options for streamlining procedures of statutory meetings; the conduct of meetings; options for improving the quality of decisions; the nature of meetings of an advisory character and the confidentiality of statutory meetings and documents;
6. Keynote speeches could be dedicated to:
  - a. The evolution of decision-making procedures of the statutory organs of the *World Heritage Convention*, including previously suggested innovations and the status of their implementation,
  - b. The legal framework of decision-making procedures in statutory organs of the *World Heritage Convention*, including the roles and responsibilities of the different statutory organs, their chairpersons, vice-chairpersons and rapporteurs as well as legal mechanisms/constraints to change,
  - c. A comparison with decision-making procedures in other frameworks and conventions,
  - d. An external independent analysis of the established decision-making procedures;
7. The UNESCO World Heritage Centre, in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies, should prepare the following background documentation for discussion during the expert meeting on the decision-making procedures of the statutory organs of the *World Heritage Convention*:

- a. Mapping of key issues and challenges,
  - b. Statistical analysis of decision-making by the statutory organs during the last ten years,
  - c. Mapping of all stakeholders' workload,
  - d. Distribution of expert and diplomatic members in delegations to the sessions of the statutory organs during the last ten years;
8. The expert meeting should adopt the following agenda:
- a. Welcome
  - b. Context of expert meeting and relationship with the process to reflect on the 'Future of the *World Heritage Convention*'
  - c. Keynote speeches and presentation of background documentation
  - d. Improving current processes or reengineering decision-making procedures of the statutory organs of the *World Heritage Convention*:
    - i. Responsibilities of statutory organs (roles of different statutory organs and relationships among them)
    - ii. Statutory meetings (frequency, agenda, workload, additional meetings, alternative technologies to face-to-face meetings, time management)
    - iii. Conduct of meetings (order of speakers [Committee Members/ State Party Observers/ Observers/ Advisory Bodies], role of chairperson, vice-chairpersons and rapporteur, right to speak and vote [nominations/state of conservation], voting)
    - iv. Quality of decision (consistency of decisions between and within sessions, working document needs, awareness of implications of decisions [budget, time and workload])
    - v. Meetings of advisory character and engagement of external partners to assist decision-making (expert meetings, working groups and consultative bodies, status, integration of recommendations into statutory organ procedures)
    - vi. Confidentiality of statutory meetings and documents (publication of documents, media participation in statutory meetings)
    - vii. Drafting of Recommendations for discussion during the 35th session of the World Heritage Committee in June/July 2011.
    - viii. Closing
9. The full report of the consultation meeting is available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/futureoftheconvention/>