



UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION
CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Unesco Headquarters (Paris), 9 November 1989

Ways of ensuring equitable representation of the different regions and
cultures of the world on the World Heritage Committee

1. The sixth General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (30 October 1987) requested the Chairman of the World Heritage Committee 'to see to it that the procedures for the election of the Committee members be reviewed in order to ensure the universal and cultural representation within the Committee foreseen by the Convention'. This request was made after the elections to the World Heritage Committee and after several delegates had declared that 'without putting into question the results of the voting, it was possible to note a lack of balance in the distribution of seats to the different geographical groups'.

If the present membership of the Committee is examined in the light of the criteria for regional distribution laid down at Unesco for the execution of regional activities, the following situation emerges:

Africa	2 representatives
Latin America and the Caribbean	3 representatives
Asia and the Pacific	4 representatives
Arab States	3 representatives
Europe	8 representatives

2. At its eleventh session held in December 1987, not long after the sixth session of the General Assembly, the Committee discussed the matter and 'agreed that there was a need to ensure an equitable representation of the different regions and cultures of the world, as is stated in Article 8, paragraph 1, of the Convention'. The Committee requested the Secretariat 'to present the Bureau and the Committee with proposals which would respond to this need and which could eventually be adopted by the seventh General Assembly of States Parties in 1989'.

3. It will be remembered that at its twelfth session held in Brazilia (December 1988), the Committee opted for the organization of a better rotation of its members at each election, being of the opinion that this already represented a step towards improving the balance.

Many States Parties have in fact been members of the Committee for more than ten, and sometimes 15, years continuously.

The Committee then gave favourable consideration to the possibility of recommending that the General Assembly should adopt a procedure under which, before elections of States to the Committee, its Chairman would ask the States

which had come to the end of their mandates to consider waiting for a time before putting themselves forward again for a new mandate.

The Committee's members had, however, expressed the opinion that efforts should also be made to increase the participation in its sessions of the States Parties to the Convention.

4. At its thirteenth session (27-30 June 1989), the Bureau of the Committee considered different ways of ensuring the equitable representation of all regions.

5. After abandoning the idea of revising the Convention in order to increase the number of Committee members to 36, and (like other governmental committees) of establishing quotas of seats to be filled by region, the Bureau decided to suggest that the Committee should amend its Rules of Procedure to include a paragraph in Article 8 setting up a new category of observers i.e. the outgoing States (the manner of whose participation it would define), for a period of four years. If the Committee adopted this decision, it would permit the active participation, as from 1991, of 35 States Parties comprising the 21 members of the Committee and the 14 outgoing members, bearing in mind that from December 1989 this participation - subject to a decision by the Committee at its thirteenth session - might involve 28 States Parties.

6. The Bureau also suggested that the present General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage should consider the possibility of adopting a resolution drawing the attention of the States Parties to the importance of ensuring the equitable rotation of the Member States of the Committee and requesting the Committee to envisage amending its Rules of Procedure in order to enable a new category of observers to be associated with its work, as mentioned above.

7. The General Assembly might perhaps consider it appropriate to adopt a resolution which could be drafted as follows:

The General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage,

Recalling Article 8, paragraph 2, of the Convention which stipulates that 'election of members of the Committee shall ensure an equitable representation of the different regions and cultures of the world',

Considering that for this purpose it is important to observe the practice of rotation in the representation of States Parties on the Committee,

Invites the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, whose mandates in the Committee expire at the present session, to consider waiting for six years before standing for re-election;

Requests the Chairman, at each election, to invite the States Parties to take account of this resolution;

Invites the World Heritage Committee to amend its Rules of Procedure at its thirteenth session in order to enable the States Parties whose mandates in the Committee have just expired, to remain associated with its work for a period of four years.