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

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 2 - 3 November 1995  
Room XI

Item 10 of the Provisional Agenda : New monitoring activities  
related to the World Heritage sites

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To ensure the efficient implementation of the World Heritage Convention it is essential that all the actors involved have access to up-to-date knowledge on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties. This is not only true for the national authorities and site managers, in order to plan for preventive conservation, but also for the World Heritage Committee and its Secretariat, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, to fulfil their functions in collaborating in the preservation of properties and enhancing international solidarity as set out in the World Heritage Convention. In order to set priorities for international collaboration and emergency assistance the international community has to be kept informed of requirements at World Heritage properties.

The World Heritage Committee decided in December 1994 to introduce a system of monitoring and reporting on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties by the States Parties themselves. This was the result of a long process of consultations, discussions and practical experiences in several States Parties and regions, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, the final report of which was presented to the World Heritage Committee at its eighteenth session in Phuket in 1994. This process was initiated in 1982, involving numerous States Parties and experts, as well as the advisory bodies, and the work subsequently undertaken by the Working Group of States Parties on Monitoring and Reporting in 1987 and by the Strategic Planning Meetings held in 1992, constituted the main stages of this process, which is described in Part II of this document.

Part III of the document describes in which manner the Committee's discussions and decisions were regularly brought to the attention of the governing bodies of UNESCO.

The term 'monitoring' does not appear in the World Heritage Convention. However, the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau considered that there are several provisions in the Convention which not only make it possible for the Committee to introduce an adequate monitoring and reporting system, but which create an obligation for the Committee to do so. References to these provisions are made in Part IV of this document. In particular, the Committee considered monitoring and reporting as a scientific and technical method to undertake the studies and research mentioned in Article 11.7 of the Convention.

In reaching its conclusions, the World Heritage Committee recognized explicitly that the responsibility for the preservation of the World Heritage properties is incumbent upon the States Parties themselves. The principles of monitoring and reporting elaborated by the Committee rely on voluntary action of the States Parties which are invited to make the necessary arrangements for the monitoring of the state of conservation of the properties on their territory and to report regularly to the

World Heritage Committee, through the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

The procedures for systematic monitoring and reporting and the format for World Heritage state of conservation reports are discussed in Part V.

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 146th session in May-June 1995 the Executive Board, after having examined the draft Programme and Budget for 1996-1997 (28 C/5), recommended the General Conference that

" the proposals concerning the new monitoring activities related to World Heritage sites should be the object of a consultation process among States Parties to the World Heritage Convention and submitted for approval to the General Assembly of States Parties which will be held in 1995; meanwhile, the activities should be held in abeyance " (146 EX/Decision 4.2. paragraph 56).

2. Following this recommendation the issue of monitoring and reporting in the context of the World Heritage Convention was discussed by the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee at its nineteenth session (Paris, July 1995). The Bureau decided that

" the Chairperson and the Secretariat, in consultation with Bureau members, should jointly prepare a document (...) as a means to clarify the principles on monitoring and reporting adopted by the Committee and as a basis for future discussions at the Convention's and/or UNESCO's statutory bodies " .

3. Therefore, the present document is submitted by the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee as a working document to the Tenth General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention to be held in Paris on 2 and 3 November 1995.

## II. DECISION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE WITH RESPECT TO SYSTEMATIC MONITORING AND REPORTING

4. The issue of monitoring the state of conservation of World Heritage properties has been under discussion in the World Heritage Committee since the early eighties. On the request of the Committee, IUCN and ICOMOS started already in 1983 to submit ad-hoc reports on the state of conservation of individual sites.

5. At its tenth session held in 1986, the Committee " agreed that a more encompassing monitoring-reporting system was required as an integral part of the process of maintaining a World Heritage List " and decided that a Working Group of the Bureau would be set up to " examine procedures, including reporting, periodicity of such reporting, resources, criteria for priority setting, and other related issues " (Report of the tenth session of the World Heritage Committee, Paris, 1986, paragraph 30).

6. The Working Group, composed of representatives of Algeria, Australia, Bulgaria, India, Mexico and Zaire, held several

meetings in early 1987 under the chairmanship of the Indian Ambassador Ms. A. Ghose. In its report the Working Group proposed the principles of a system to monitor the state of conservation of cultural properties included in the World Heritage List and the procedure to be followed. The Working Group recognized that " ratification of the Convention by States Parties carried with it the obligation of providing information on the status of conservation of the sites inscribed on the World Heritage list ". It also recognized the following principles:

- a) States Parties should be the primary source and collector of information on the state of conservation of World Heritage sites and should have the sole responsibility for reporting to the Committee thereon;
- b) The system should be based on the completion by States Parties of questionnaires, the purpose of which would be to update the information provided in the nomination dossier/previous report and to help States Parties to identify dangers threatening World Heritage cultural properties;
- c) States Parties should be required to prepare reports on each of their properties every five years.

7. The report of the Working Group was presented to the Bureau and to the World Heritage Committee at their eleventh sessions in 1987. The Committee decided to implement the system as proposed by the Working Group, at least for an experimental period, following which the necessary adjustments could be made, by means of questionnaires that were to be sent to the States Parties (Report of the eleventh session of the World Heritage Committee, Paris, 1987, paragraph 13).

8. The system of questionnaires proved to be less successful than expected. In 1990 the Committee, while it " congratulated the Secretariat on the quality of its report on the monitoring of the state of conservation of world heritage properties ", accepted the Secretariat's proposals concerning the discontinuation of the monitoring system. The mailing of a third series of questionnaires was thus postponed. (Report of the fourteenth session of the World Heritage Committee, Banff, 1990, paragraphs 19 and 21). Since then, further discussions and consultations took place as outlined below.

9. The Committee, at its fifteenth session in 1991, took for the first time note of two regional initiatives to monitor on a systematic basis the state of conservation of cultural World Heritage properties: one undertaken by the UNDP/UNESCO Regional Project for Latin America and the Caribbean, the final report of which was presented to the Committee at its eighteenth session in 1994, and one undertaken by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) for sites in the Mediterranean.

10. In 1991-1992, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, an evaluation was undertaken of the successes

and failures in the implementation of the Convention. To this effect, a Task Force of States Parties was established to review the evaluation report and to design a strategy for the future implementation of the Convention. Strategic Planning Meetings of this Task Force, composed of representatives of Australia, Canada, France, Italy, Mexico, Tunisia, USA and Zaire, were held in 1992. It was on the basis of this in-depth evaluation and the recommendations emanating from it that the World Heritage Committee adopted in 1992 the following Strategic Goals for the Implementation of the Convention:

- Promote completion of the identification of the World Heritage;
- Ensure the continued representativity and credibility of the World Heritage List;
- Promote the adequate protection and management of the World Heritage sites;
- Pursue more systematic monitoring of World Heritage sites;
- Increase public awareness, involvement and support.

11. The strategic goal to "pursue more systematic monitoring of World Heritage sites", called more specifically to "define elements and procedures for monitoring and [to] cooperate with States Parties and competent authorities on regular monitoring work" (Report of the sixteenth session of the World Heritage Committee, Santa Fe, 1992, paragraphs VII.1-3 and Annex II). The Committee's report on its activities in 1992-1993, submitted to the twenty-seventh session of the General Conference of UNESCO in 1993, recorded that one of the five main goals defined by the Committee was to "pursue more systematic monitoring of world heritage sites" (document 27 C/101, paragraph 20). The General Conference took note of this report, which was also brought to the attention of the ninth General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention in 1993.

12. To implement this goal, the Committee requested the Secretariat to organize an expert meeting on methodological aspects of monitoring. This meeting was held in November 1993 in Cambridge, U.K. At its seventeenth session in December 1993 the World Heritage Committee examined the conclusions of this expert meeting. The Committee endorsed the recommendations of the experts and requested the Secretariat to convene a small working group of experts from States Parties and the advisory bodies in order, i.a., to prepare a draft text on monitoring and its procedures for inclusion in the Operational Guidelines (Report of the seventeenth session of the World Heritage Committee, Cartagena, 1993, paragraphs IX.1-8 and Annex VI).

13. Further discussions took place at the eighteenth session of the Bureau in July 1994. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to further consult States Parties, site managers and experts on the

matter (Report of the eighteenth session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee, Paris, 1994, paragraphs VI.2-17 and Annex III).

14. These consultations took place between July and December 1994, among other things in the form of a Circular Letter to individual experts and all States Parties (Circular Letter No. 4 dated 14 September 1994) requesting their comments on the introduction of a systematic approach to monitoring. Some fifteen States Parties replied. Their comments, as well as the views expressed by several States Parties during the sessions of the World Heritage Committee or at other occasions, particularly those emphasizing the responsibility of the States Parties to take the necessary actions for the preservation of the World Heritage sites, were brought to the attention of the Committee at its eighteenth session.

15. The Committee also drew upon the experiences gained in the implementation of regional and national monitoring programmes and the different models that had been applied. In some cases for example, the preparation of the reports was undertaken through United Nations activities such as the Regional Project for Cultural Heritage of UNDP and UNESCO for Latin America and the Caribbean, and a UNEP project for the Mediterranean. In other cases, the States Parties undertook the reporting by themselves (Mexico, Australia, Bulgaria), or in collaboration with non-governmental organizations such as ICOMOS and IUCN or ICCROM (United Kingdom, Sri Lanka, Norway). The Committee examined at various occasions the results of these programmes and monitoring activities and concluded that they all resulted in credible state of conservation reports.

16. As a result of the above consultations and practical experiences, proposals concerning systematic monitoring and reporting were submitted to the World Heritage Committee at its eighteenth session in December 1994. The proposals submitted by the Secretariat on the basis of the various studies and consultations mentioned above were adopted " as the general framework for monitoring and reporting ". The Committee also approved a text on monitoring and reporting for inclusion in the Operational Guidelines. The new provisions reconfirm the responsibility of the States Parties to observe and record on a regular basis the condition of the properties (the monitoring of the state of conservation of the properties) and invite all States Parties to present periodic state of conservation reports to the World Heritage Committee (the reporting i.e. the presentation of state of conservation reports on the basis of a five year cycle). The advice of external experts in this process of monitoring and reporting would only be made available with the agreement of the States Parties. (Report of the eighteenth session of the World Heritage Committee, Phuket, 1995, paragraphs IX.2-11 and XIV.6-7). The full text of the relevant part of the report of the eighteenth session of the Committee is reproduced in Annex I.

17. The decisions of the Committee were brought to the attention

of all States Parties by a Circular Letter (Circular Letter No. 2 dated 13 March 1995). Only positive replies were received from some States Parties. Furthermore, the Secretariat asked the representatives of twenty-two States Parties from Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting in Cartagena, Colombia in early May 1995, their views on the new monitoring and reporting procedures. They unanimously expressed their agreement with the decisions of the Committee.

18. Following the recommendation of the Executive Board mentioned in paragraph 1 above, the Bureau examined at its nineteenth session (July 1995, Paris), in private session, the principles of monitoring and reporting adopted by the Committee at its eighteenth session. (Report of the nineteenth session of the Bureau, Paris, 1995, paragraphs VI.2-7). The full text of the relevant part of the report of the nineteenth session of the Bureau is reproduced in Annex II.

### III. CONSIDERATION OF THE ISSUE OF SYSTEMATIC MONITORING AND REPORTING BY THE GOVERNING ORGANS OF UNESCO

19. Article 29 of the World Heritage Convention stipulates that " the Committee shall submit a report on its activities at each of the ordinary sessions of the General Conference (...)" . The report presented to the twenty-seventh session of the General Conference in 1993 makes specific reference to the strategic goals adopted by the World Heritage Committee in 1992, i.a. the <more systematic monitoring of World Heritage sites> (see paragraphs 10 and 11 above).

20. Article 14.2 of the World Heritage Convention stipulates that the Director-General of UNESCO shall have the responsibility for the implementation of the decisions of the World Heritage Committee in cooperation with the advisory bodies. The decisions of the Committee are, therefore, necessarily reflected in the UNESCO work plans and programmes.

21. The " Report by the Director-General on the reinforcement of UNESCO's action for the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage " (140 EX/13) submitted to the Executive Board at its 140th session in October 1992 recorded that the World Heritage Committee

" ha[d] set up a system of monitoring the state of conservation of property, which enables it to alert the authorities concerned to any danger threatening the property's integrity and to co-operate with them in tackling any conservation problems encountered. Reports on some 40 monitored sites are written each year and the Committee is developing this activity in a systematic way " (paragraph 32 of 140 EX/13).

22. The report also pointed out that



" the World Heritage Committee has a monitoring procedure that enables it not so much to " inspect " as to co-operate with the relevant authorities to ensure more effective protection of a particular component of the world heritage and possibly to finance the necessary safeguarding measures " (paragraph 58 of 140 EX/13).

23. The report also recalled the recommendations of a committee of experts which were to serve as a basis for the strategic orientations to be submitted to the World Heritage Committee at its sixteenth session (see paragraph 10 above). In its decision 141/EX Decision 5.5.1 (the consideration of this report had been postponed from the 140th to the 141st session) the Executive Board noted

" that the Committee [was] undertaking a revision, of the text of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the Convention, which do not form part of the Convention but ensure its proper application, taking into account the strategic orientations adopted in Santa Fe, United States, in December 1992 " (paragraph 14 of 141 EX/Decisions).

24. The decisions of the World Heritage Committee regarding the implementation of the Convention and the draft strategy for the future, adopted by the Committee at its sixteenth session (Santa Fe, December 1992), were reflected in the Programme and Budget for 1994-1995 approved by the General Conference at its twenty-seventh session (27 C/5 Approved). Paragraph 03115 of 27 C/5 Approved states that one of the functions of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre is to encourage the application of the World Heritage Convention " in States Parties by providing ongoing monitoring of the sites included on the World Heritage List, and identifying the actions to be undertaken in order to guarantee their preservation " .

25. With regard to 1996-1997, the " Preliminary proposals for medium-term planning from 1996 (28 C/4) and the Draft Programme and Budget for 1996-1997 (28 C/5) " (document 145 EX/5), submitted to the Executive Board at its 145th session (October-November 1994), stated the following:

" UNESCO bears a very special responsibility for the protection and conservation of the cultural and natural heritage. It will therefore ... [provide] encouragement for measures aimed at ensuring the long-term preservation of sites (particularly those on the World Heritage List, which should henceforth be monitored on a regular basis) ... " (paragraph 21).

26. Having considered these proposals, the Executive Board adopted the following recommendation regarding the role of the States Parties in monitoring (145 EX/Decision 4:1, paragraph 9.II.(b) (xiii)):

" the monitoring of sites on the World Heritage List should be undertaken in accordance with the Rules of the World

Heritage Convention and the guidelines that should govern its implementation, keeping in mind that Member States themselves will undertake the monitoring of their world heritage sites, in consultation with UNESCO and other specialized organizations. "

27. The Draft Medium-Term Strategy 1996-2001 (28 C/4) and the Draft Programme and Budget for 1996-1997 (28 C/5), which will be submitted to the General Conference at its twenty-eighth session, reflect the decisions concerning the monitoring and reporting system adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its eighteenth session in December 1994.

28. As for the Draft Medium-Term Strategy 1996-2001, it stipulates as follows (paragraph 124):

" States Parties should also be encouraged to set up systematic monitoring and, to the extent possible, prevention mechanisms for sites on the World Heritage List. Monitoring requires very close collaboration with national authorities, who obviously bear the main responsibility for site conservation ... "

29. The Draft Programme and Budget for 1996-1997 contains the following proposal (paragraph 03109):

" The [World Heritage] Centre will assist States Parties in strengthening preventive measures and ensuring timely intervention with a view to ensuring the integrity and conservation of the world heritage properties. In close collaboration with the advisory bodies, UNESCO's field offices and other specialized institutions, it will promote monitoring activities endorsed by the World Heritage Committee and will support national monitoring activities " .

30. During the consideration of the Draft Programme and Budget and of the Draft Medium-Term Strategy by the Executive Board at its 146th session in May-June 1995 one Member of the Board questioned the legal basis of the decisions of the World Heritage Committee to promote monitoring and reporting activities. As a result of the discussion on this subject the Board adopted the decision mentioned in paragraph 1 above concerning the Draft Programme and Budget. With regard to the Draft Medium-Term Strategy the Board adopted the following recommendation:

" The proposals for the monitoring of the World Heritage Sites should be reformulated in accordance with the relevant decisions of the 1995 General Assembly of the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention " (146 EX/Decision 4.1, paragraph 34).

#### IV. SYSTEMATIC MONITORING AND REPORTING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

31. It is obvious that neither the physical condition of World Heritage properties nor the socio-economic circumstances within or surrounding them remain static. The World Heritage Committee was convinced that the impact of these changes should be carefully evaluated so that effective decisions can be taken to ensure the conservation of World Heritage properties and to retain the values on account of which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List. Without adequate knowledge of the physical conditions and the management system of the World Heritage sites it is not feasible for the Committee to fulfil the responsibilities stated in the Convention and the Operational Guidelines regarding the establishment of the List of World Heritage in Danger, delisting of properties from the World Heritage List, priority setting for international assistance and the mobilization of extra-budgetary funds, promotion etc.

32. The World Heritage Committee voiced many concerns about the condition of World Heritage sites and questioned whether the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List retain their World Heritage values. The question what actions should be taken to ensure their proper conservation is increasingly raised by the World Heritage Committee, the scientific community and the public at large. As a consequence, the Committee has to examine at its sessions a growing number of reports on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties when it is reported that development, natural disasters or armed conflicts threaten their integrity and/or authenticity. Provisions for this kind of ad-hoc reporting on properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger and for properties that were under threat were made already several years ago by the Committee and prescribed in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

33. As a result of various studies and consultations related in Part II of the present document, in particular of the in-depth evaluation of the implementation of the World Heritage Convention undertaken in 1992, the World Heritage Committee decided in 1992, as one of its goals for the future implementation of the Convention, that a systematic approach should be developed to review the conditions of all World Heritage properties. At its seventeenth session in December 1993, it defined "to monitor the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List" as one of its four essential functions (paragraph 3 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention).

34. On the basis of a series of further consultations and discussions the Committee established at its eighteenth session in December 1994 the framework for the voluntary systematic monitoring and reporting of the state of conservation of World Heritage properties by the States Parties themselves and adopted

a set of principles of monitoring and reporting which were included in the Operational Guidelines (paragraphs 69-76). The principles adopted by the Committee were further substantiated by the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee at its nineteenth session in July 1995. The Bureau reviewed all the relevant provisions of the World Heritage Convention. It concluded that " monitoring and reporting should be considered as a scientific and technical method to undertake the studies and research mentioned in Article 11.7 " of the Convention. It further " emphasized that the principles of monitoring and reporting as defined in paragraphs 69-76 of the Operational Guidelines fully respect the sovereignty of the States Parties and that these should be implemented by the States Parties themselves on a voluntary basis ". (Report of the nineteenth session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee, Paris, July 1995, Annex II).

35. The term " monitoring " does not appear in the World Heritage Convention. However, the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau, which examined the issue of monitoring and reporting on numerous occasions, considered that there is a number of provisions in the Convention which not only make it possible for the Committee to introduce an adequate monitoring system but which create a duty for the Committee to do so.

36. In its preambular part the Convention stipulates that " it is incumbent on the international community as a whole to participate in the protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value " (clause 7) and that the intent of the Convention is to establish " an effective system of collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value, organized on a permanent basis and in accordance with modern scientific methods " (clause 8).

37. In reaching its conclusions on the issue of monitoring and reporting the World Heritage Committee also took into consideration Article 6 of the Convention which provides that " whilst fully respecting the sovereignty of the states on whose territory the cultural and natural heritage mentioned in Articles 1 and 2 is situated, and without prejudice to property rights provided by national legislation, the States Parties ... recognize that such heritage constitutes a world heritage for whose protection it is the duty of the international community as a whole to cooperate ", as well as Article 7 which stipulates that " for the purpose of this Convention, international protection of the world cultural and natural heritage shall be understood to mean the establishment of a system of international cooperation and assistance designed to support States Parties to the Convention in their efforts to conserve ... that heritage ".

38. Furthermore, the Committee took account of the various provisions calling for the undertaking of studies and research needed to further the objectives of the Convention. Article 5 (c) calls upon States Parties " to develop scientific and technical studies and research and to work out such operating methods as will make the State capable of counteracting the dangers that

threaten its cultural and natural heritage ". Studies are also mentioned in Articles 11.7, 21.3, 22 (a) and 24. At its nineteenth session (Paris, June 1995) the Bureau concluded that " monitoring and reporting should be considered as a scientific and technical method to undertake the studies and research mentioned in Article 11.7 " .

39. The World Heritage Committee did not overlook the primary and fundamental responsibility of States Parties enshrined in Article 4 of the Convention, under which " each State Party recognizes that the duty of ensuring the conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and situated on its territory belongs primarily to that State ". The principles of monitoring and reporting adopted by the World Heritage Committee explicitly underline the sovereignty of the States Parties and make a clear distinction between monitoring, defined as the assessment of the state of conservation of the World Heritage properties by the States Parties themselves, and reporting, which is to bring forward the results of this assessment to the World Heritage Committee on a voluntary basis. The monitoring and reporting principles allow the States Parties to define their own modalities for the implementation of their voluntary monitoring and reporting activities and to request expert advice if so desired.

40. In defining a set of principles of monitoring and reporting the World Heritage Committee acted within the scope of the authority which is conferred upon it by the Convention in Articles 8-26, giving the Committee a wide range of functions such as to establish and keep up-to-date the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger, to define the criteria for inscription on these lists and to co-ordinate and encourage the studies and research needed for drawing them up (Art. 11) and to carry out studies and consultations as it deems necessary before providing international assistance (Art. 13 and 21.3).

41. Article 29 of the World Heritage Convention states that "The States Parties to this Convention shall, in the reports which they submit to the General Conference (...) on dates and in a manner to be determined by it, give information on the legislative and administrative provisions which they have adopted and other action which they have taken for the application of this Convention, together with details of the experience acquired in this field." This article is in accordance with Article VIII of the UNESCO Constitution which already requires the Member States to submit to the Organization reports on the action taken upon the recommendations and conventions adopted by the General Conference. The state of conservation reports that the States Parties are invited to submit to the World Heritage Committee are of a different order and are to be considered as a scientific and technical method to undertake the studies and research mentioned in Article 11.7 of the Convention, among others.

V. PROCEDURES FOR SYSTEMATIC MONITORING AND REPORTING AND  
FORMAT FOR WORLD HERITAGE STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORTS

42. The Committee defined the objectives of systematic monitoring and reporting as follows: improved site management, advanced planning and preventive action, and improved World Heritage cooperation and decision-making. In this sense, monitoring and reporting should be considered as a dynamic, rather than a linear, process that would involve all institutions, organizations and people involved in the preservation and management of the property. It would also mean a continuous reflection on the values of the property, particularly those on the basis of which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List.

43. The procedures to be followed for systematic monitoring and reporting are laid down in paragraphs 70 to 75 of the new chapter II of the Operational Guidelines, as approved by the World Heritage Committee at its eighteenth session (text reproduced in Annex III). This text defines systematic monitoring and reporting as " the continuous process of observing the conditions of World Heritage sites with periodic reporting on its state of conservation ". It emphasizes that " it is the primary responsibility of the States Parties to put in place on-site monitoring arrangements as an integral component of day-to-day conservation and management of the sites ". It invites States Parties " to submit to the World Heritage Committee through the World Heritage Centre, every five years, a scientific report on the state of conservation of the World Heritage sites on their territories ". These reports will be examined separately by region as determined by the Committee. The choice of the regions to be examined at the following session will be decided by the Committee and the States Parties concerned will be informed at least one year in advance.

44. As requested by the World Heritage Committee, the Secretariat is preparing jointly with the advisory bodies a revised form for the nomination of properties for inscription on the World Heritage List, as well as a form for the World Heritage state of conservation reports which the States Parties will be invited to present periodically to the World Heritage Committee. These were examined by the Bureau at its nineteenth session in July 1995 (Report of the nineteenth session of the Bureau, Paris, 1995, paragraph VI.9 - VI.13 and its annexes II and III). The Committee will decide on the introduction of these forms at its nineteenth session in December 1995.

45. The basic idea is that the information contained in the nomination dossier, together with the evaluation report of the advisory body(ies) and the Committee's statement of the World Heritage values at the moment of inscription, constitute the baseline information on the site. The periodic state of conservation report would then carefully review and update information in the original nomination dossier and would recommend actions to deal with problems or threats identified.

Both forms would follow the same structure to facilitate comparison of the data contained in them.

46. Both forms include, in a re-organized way, the items of the nomination form hitherto in use. Some of them, such as description, documentation and, in particular, management and legal protection, have been expanded considerably.

47. A new item called " factors affecting the site " asks to identify potential threats to the site such as development pressure (encroachment, agriculture, urbanization), environmental pressure, natural disasters and preparedness, visitor and tourism pressure etc. It is forward looking and intends to help to identify from the outset the most appropriate actions that should be taken to preserve the values of the property. These " factors affecting the site " and the corresponding responses will be the main subject matters in the periodic state of conservation reports.

48. Another new item invites the State Party to indicate the administrative arrangements for the monitoring of the site and to indicate key indicators for measuring the state of conservation of the property (such as the number of species or population of keystone species on a natural site, or the stability or degree of movement in a particular building). These key indicators would provide the scientific basis for measuring the state of conservation of the property over time.

49. The state of conservation report will thus verify all information provided in the original nomination dossier, will identify threats to the site, recommend actions to be taken and evaluate the impact of past interventions. It will thus record significant changes in the conditions of the site, its management structure and legal protection. It will help the State Party to identify and plan conservation measures and it will help the World Heritage Committee to assist the States Parties in the efforts to conserve the World Heritage properties.

50. The Secretariat of the Convention has been requested by the Committee to collect the site-specific state of conservation reports and to present them to the World Heritage Committee. This would be done per region on the basis of a five years cycle. The first of such a regional report, the one on the Latin American region was presented to the World Heritage Committee in December 1994.

## **VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

51. Confronted with a considerable growth in the number of World Heritage properties the World Heritage Committee defined, in 1992 the observation of the state of conservation of the World Heritage properties to be one of its main functions (paragraph 3 of the Operational Guidelines). The decision taken by the

Committee in December 1994 to introduce a system of monitoring and reporting by the States Parties to the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties was the result of a long process of consultations, discussions and practical experiences which started in 1982 and in which numerous States Parties and experts, as well as the advisory bodies, were involved. The work undertaken by the Working Group of States Parties on Monitoring and Reporting in 1987 and by the Strategic Planning Meetings held in 1992 constituted the main stages of this process.

52. As reported in Part III above, the various stages by which the Committee reached this decision were regularly reported to the governing bodies of UNESCO, in view of the Director-General's responsibility for the implementation of the Committee's decisions.

53. In reaching its conclusions the World Heritage Committee recognized explicitly that the responsibility for the preservation of the World Heritage properties is incumbent upon the States Parties. The system of monitoring and reporting elaborated by the Committee relies on voluntary action of the States Parties which are invited to make the necessary arrangements for the monitoring of the state of conservation of the properties on their territory and to report on its results to the World Heritage Committee on a regular basis.

54. The implementation of the Convention is a dynamic process. Concepts of World Heritage develop over time, as do the application and the interpretation of the World Heritage Convention by its inter-governmental World Heritage Committee. For this reason, the criteria for inscription of cultural and natural properties are from time to time subject to revision. The process that is described in this document and which led to the adoption of the principles on monitoring and reporting by the World Heritage Committee in December 1994 is very likely to continue as experiences accumulate. The Committee will be very attentive to these experiences and will take the necessary decisions to improve and modify them whenever the need arises.



**Report of the eighteenth session of the  
World Heritage Committee**

**(Phuket, December 1994)**

(Extract)

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**SYSTEMATIC MONITORING AND REPORTING**

**IX.2** In introducing this item the Secretariat recalled that Article 3 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention stipulates that one of the essential functions of the World Heritage Committee is to "monitor the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List." However, provisions had been made only for regular monitoring of the sites inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger and where sites were threatened. At the request of the Committee, therefore, the Secretariat and the advisory bodies, in consultation with the States Parties and individual experts, proceeded to develop a concept and framework of systematic monitoring and reporting.

**IX.3** It was recalled that the initial discussions were held at the Committee's seventeenth session in December 1993 and that further proposals were endorsed by the Bureau at its eighteenth session in July 1994. On that occasion, the Bureau requested the Secretariat to prepare a draft text on monitoring for inclusion in the Operational Guidelines.

**IX.4** The Secretariat presented the Committee, in Working Documents WHC-94/CONF.003/6 and 003/9Rev., a detailed description of the proposed systematic monitoring methodology. The draft text on monitoring for the Operational Guidelines was presented under the corresponding agenda item (see Section XIV of this report).

**IX.5** The Committee commended the Secretariat for the progress made in defining the framework for the implementation of this important function of the Committee. It emphasized that one of the principal aims of monitoring was to assess if the values, on the basis of which the site was inscribed on the World Heritage List, have remained intact. It also stressed that a monitoring methodology should be flexible and adaptable to regional and national characteristics, as well as to the natural and cultural specificities of the sites. Furthermore, it expressed the need to involve external advice in the periodic reporting through the non-governmental advisory bodies and/or the existing decentralized UNESCO structures. The Delegate of Italy insisted on clarifying that "writing of Reports with the participation of experts should be finalized in order to ensure better the monitoring in the management of properties". The Delegate of

Italy also drew attention to the positive experiences in his country in involving the authorities from different levels and sectors as well as the civic community in the conservation and management of the sites.

**IX.6** The Observer of India informed the Committee of his Government's position that according to the World Heritage Convention's explicit stipulation it is the State Party which decides what measures are to be taken to ensure the preservation and protection of the World Heritage sites on its territory, and that monitoring procedures should not affect the decision-making prerogative of the States Parties. He also emphasized that any involvement of outside agencies in the monitoring process could be done only on the specific request and consent of the State Party concerned.

**IX.7** The Representative of ICOMOS introduced this organization's experiences in monitoring and offered its assistance in monitoring, World Heritage information management and the identification of needs for preventive action and its implementation. He drew particular attention to the need to develop guidelines for site specific monitoring and the identification of the World Heritage values of each site. He stressed that in his opinion the key to meaningful monitoring is the understanding of what impact time and circumstances have had upon these values.

**IX.8** The Representative of IUCN stressed that his organization had been monitoring World Heritage natural sites since 1983 and that, following the Operational Guidelines (para. 57), this is one of the functions attributed to it by the Committee.

**IX.9** Following the discussion, the Committee adopted the proposals presented in Document WHC-94/CONF.003/6, Section A, as the general framework for monitoring and reporting. The Committee also adopted a text on monitoring and reporting to be included in the Operational Guidelines. The adopted text is included in Section XIV of this report.

**IX.10** In order to implement its decisions regarding systematic monitoring, the Committee invited the Secretariat to undertake the following actions:

- (a) Prepare a revised nomination format for presentation to the nineteenth sessions of the Bureau and the Committee, so as to provide adequate baseline information at the time of inscription of properties on the World Heritage List.
- (b) Organize in early 1995, with the participation of the advisory bodies and other relevant institutions, a meeting of experts on World Heritage information management, in order to develop guidelines for the establishment of a World Heritage Data Base.
- (c) Inform the States Parties of the decisions of the

Committee, invite them to put monitoring structures in place and to report on the state of conservation of the property to the Committee on a 5-year basis.

- (d) Prepare workplans for and implement regional programmes to provide advice and assistance to the States Parties in setting up adequate monitoring and management systems, to promote the preparation of 5-year state of conservation reports, to handle and analyse these reports and to present 5-year Regional State of the World Heritage Reports to the World Heritage Committee.
- (e) Incorporate monitoring as a management tool in World Heritage training courses and other activities.
- (f) Report to the nineteenth session of the Bureau on the implementation of the decisions of the Committee and on the application of the new monitoring and reporting procedures.

**IX.11** Following the recommendations of Work Group 2, the Committee also invited the Secretariat in collaboration with the advisory bodies, to:

- (a) present to the nineteenth session of the Bureau a workplan for the implementation of regional monitoring programmes so that States Parties will have sufficient time to prepare the state of conservation reports;
- (b) develop a format for monitoring reporting as an aid to the States Parties and to facilitate the processing of the reports and the information contained in them through a computerized data base.

Report of the nineteenth session of  
the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee

(Paris, July 1995)

(Extract)

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**THE PRINCIPLES OF MONITORING AND REPORTING AS ADOPTED BY THE  
WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE AT ITS EIGHTEENTH SESSION**

**VI.2** The Bureau examined in a private session the recommendation made by the Executive Board of UNESCO to the UNESCO General Conference and the concerns expressed by one State Party to the Convention regarding the principles of monitoring and reporting that were adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its eighteenth session.

**VI.3** The Bureau recalled that the Committee defined the observation of the state of conservation of the World Heritage properties as one of its main functions already at its sixteenth session in 1992 and that this was reflected in the UNESCO Work Plans for 1994-1995. It also recalled that the Committee adopted the principles of monitoring and reporting only after a long process of discussions, consultations and careful consideration of several practical experiences and with reference to specific articles of the World Heritage Convention:

1. Bearing in mind the provision of Article 4 of the Convention, under which "each State Party recognizes that the duty of ensuring the conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and situated on its territory belongs primarily to that State", the Committee was of the view that the establishment of systematic monitoring, the day-to-day observation of the sites by the States Parties, in close collaboration with the site managers or the agency with management authority, constituted a meaningful, active and effective operational method capable of countering the dangers that may threaten the cultural and natural World Heritage.
2. Bearing in mind also the provisions of Article 6, which provides that "whilst fully respecting the sovereignty of the states on whose territory the cultural and natural heritage mentioned in Articles 1 and 2 is situated, and without prejudice to property rights provided by national legislation, the States Parties to this Convention recognize that such heritage constitutes a world heritage for whose protection it is the duty of the international community as a whole to cooperate" and Article 7, which provides that "for the purpose of this Convention,

international protection of the world cultural and natural heritage shall be understood to mean the establishment of a system of international cooperation and assistance designed to support States Parties to the Convention in their efforts to conserve....that heritage", also in consideration of Articles 8, 11, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26 and paragraphs 2 and 3 of Article 29, and in pursuance of the intent of the Convention as reflected in the preambular clause 8 in "establishing an effective system of collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value, organized on a permanent basis and in accordance with scientific methods", the World Heritage Committee invited the States Parties to present every five years a scientific report on the state of conservation of the World Heritage sites on their territories, and decided that, to this end, the States Parties may request expert advice from the Secretariat or the advisory bodies and that the Secretariat may also commission expert advice with the agreement of the States Parties.

**VI.4** The Bureau furthermore considered various articles in the Convention that call for international cooperation and the undertaking by the Committee of studies and research needed for the drawing up of the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger. Monitoring and reporting should be considered as a scientific and technical method to undertake the studies and research mentioned in Article 11.7.

**VI.5** The Bureau emphasized that the principles of monitoring and reporting as defined in paragraphs 69-76 of the Operational Guidelines fully respect the sovereignty of the States Parties and that these should be implemented by the States Parties themselves on a voluntary basis.

**VI.6** The Bureau unanimously decided that the Chairperson and the Secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau members, should jointly prepare a document along the lines of the above considerations as a means to clarify the principles on monitoring and reporting adopted by the Committee and as a basis for future discussions at the Convention's and/or UNESCO's statutory bodies.

**VI.7** The Bureau also considered whether it would be desirable to create a consultative body as mentioned in Article 10.3 of the Convention for the examination of technical matters such as state of conservation reports, the establishment of which would allow more States Parties to participate directly in the implementation of the Convention. As no consensus could be reached, the Bureau requested the Secretariat to look into this matter in more detail so that the Bureau can discuss it again at its next session.

Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of  
the World Heritage Convention

(WHC/2 Revised, February 1995)

(Extract)

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II. MONITORING THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF PROPERTIES INSCRIBED  
ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST

69. One of the essential functions of the Committee is to monitor the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and to take action thereupon. In the following, a distinction will be made between systematic and reactive monitoring.

A. Systematic monitoring and reporting

70. Systematic monitoring and reporting is the continuous process of observing the conditions of World Heritage sites with periodic reporting on its state of conservation.

The objectives of systematic monitoring and reporting are:

**World Heritage site:** Improved site management, advanced planning, reduction of emergency and ad-hoc interventions, and reduction of costs through preventive conservation.

**State Party:** Improved World Heritage policies, advanced planning, improved site management and preventive conservation.

**Region:** Regional cooperation, regional World Heritage policies and activities better targeted to the specific needs of the region.

**Committee/Secretariat:** Better understanding of the conditions of the sites and of the needs on the site, national and regional levels. Improved policy and decision making.

71. It is the prime responsibility of the States Parties to put in place on-site monitoring arrangements as an integral component of day-to-day conservation and management of the sites. States Parties should do so in close collaboration with the site managers or the agency with management authority. It is necessary that every year the conditions of the site be recorded by the site manager or the agency with management authority.

72. The States Parties are invited to submit to the World

Heritage Committee through the World Heritage Centre, every five years, a scientific report on the state of conservation of the World Heritage sites on their territories. To this end, the States Parties may request expert advice from the Secretariat or the advisory bodies. The Secretariat may also commission expert advice with the agreement of the States Parties.

73. To facilitate the work of the Committee and its Secretariat and to achieve greater regionalization and decentralization of World Heritage work, these reports will be examined separately by region as determined by the Committee. The World Heritage Centre will synthesize the national reports by regions. In doing so, full use will be made of the available expertise of the advisory bodies and other organizations.

74. The Committee will decide for which regions state of conservation reports should be presented to its forthcoming sessions. The States Parties concerned will be informed at least one year in advance so as to give them sufficient time to prepare the state of conservation reports.

75. The Secretariat will take the necessary measures for adequate World Heritage information collection and management, making full use, to the extent possible, of the information/documentation services of the advisory bodies and others.

#### **B. Reactive monitoring**

76. **Reactive monitoring** is the reporting by the World Heritage Centre, other sectors of UNESCO and the advisory bodies to the Bureau and the Committee on the state of conservation of specific World Heritage sites that are under threat. To this end, the States Parties shall submit to the Committee through the World Heritage Centre, specific reports and impact studies each time exceptional circumstances occur or work is undertaken which may have an effect on the state of conservation of the site. Reactive monitoring is foreseen in the procedures for the eventual deletion of properties from the World Heritage List as set out in paras. 50-58. It is also foreseen in reference to properties inscribed, or to be inscribed, on the List of World Heritage in Danger as set out in paras. 83-90.