



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
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Organisation  
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Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

# World Heritage

## 19 GA

**WHC-13/19.GA/11**

Paris, 7 October 2013

Original: English

### UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

### NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Paris, UNESCO Headquarters

19- 21 November 2013

**Item 11 of the Provisional Agenda: Summary and Follow-up of the Director General's meeting on "The World Heritage Convention: Thinking Ahead" (UNESCO HQs, 2-3 October 2012)**

**Follow-up of the Director General's meeting on "The World Heritage Convention: Thinking Ahead" (UNESCO HQs, 2-3 October 2012)**

#### SUMMARY

On 2 and 3 October 2012, the Director-General convened a meeting entitled "The World Heritage Convention: Thinking Ahead" to give the opportunity to the Advisory Bodies, the States Parties and the Secretariat to collectively review some of the main challenges and opportunities facing the Convention. During the 36th session of the World Heritage Committee, many States Parties also welcomed this idea and felt that an open dialogue between them, the Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat would be useful in improving the implementation modalities of the Convention. This reflection was initiated in the framework of the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, which provided an opportunity to celebrate its success but also to address the overall functioning of the Convention. A summary of this meeting and follow-up actions undertaken were examined by the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee (**Decision 37 COM 5C**)

This document contains the description of follow-up actions undertaken and should be read in conjunction with Document **WHC-13/19.GA/INF.11** which contains a summary of the meeting.

**Draft Resolution: 19 GA 11, see Part III**

## **I. BACKGROUND**

1. The Director-General convened on 2 and 3 October 2012 at UNESCO's Headquarters a two-day brainstorming meeting titled "Thinking Ahead", on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention. The first day was devoted to consultations of the Director-General with the three Advisory Bodies. The results of the first day's discussions were presented at a joint meeting of the Advisory Bodies, States Parties and the Secretariat on the second day.

2. The States Parties and Advisory Bodies expressed their gratitude and welcomed this initiative of the Director-General to facilitate dialogue, communication and transparency in all processes of the Convention. Written contributions from States Parties were received prior to the meeting and many countries expressed their views at the meeting. At the request of States parties, the web page specially created for the meeting was kept open for more contributions to facilitate an ongoing dialogue; a few contributions were also received after the event. The webpage can be found at the following address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/events/957>.

A detailed summary of this meeting, including the major conclusions of the debate, is included in the Document WHC-13/19.GA/INF.11.

## **II. FOLLOW-UP**

3. A number of follow-up actions were undertaken in line with the major conclusions of the meeting. These actions are described below, keeping in mind that other follow-up actions will be undertaken as part of this ongoing process:

4. Regarding Tentative Lists, the inclusion of sites in the Tentative List is a country-driven process, therefore the recommended punctual involvement of the Advisory Bodies at that stage needs to be requested by the States Parties concerned. At every suitable occasion (such as meeting, workshop, course, etc.) the Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat emphasize the importance of regular assessment and revisions of Tentative Lists, as well as harmonization efforts at the regional level.

5. Relating to nominations, a five-day training course "Caribbean Training Course in the Preparation of Nomination Dossiers for World Heritage" was organized to strengthen professional capacities in the Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in preparing nomination dossiers and to increase the number and quality of nominations of cultural and natural heritage sites (Antigua and Barbuda 23-28 March 2013) involving 30 experts from 15 Caribbean countries and representatives of the Advisory Bodies and UNESCO. This is in addition to the ongoing training initiative for the African continent that was commenced in 2008. Support is also being provided within the framework of the "upstream" initiative. Information on the ongoing Pilot Projects to test the Upstream Process was reported to the 37<sup>th</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee in Document WHC-13/37.COM/9.

6. Regarding the conservation of properties, the recently launched online information system on the State of conservation of properties (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>) contributes to improved transparency and dialogue by all parties involved and also enables communities to participate as partners in the implementation of the Convention and enhance awareness and benefits associated with the inscription of sites on the World Heritage List (see also Document WHC-13/37.COM/7C). The World Heritage Committee at its 37<sup>th</sup> session welcomed the contribution of the State of conservation Information System to improve transparency of World Heritage Reactive Monitoring and informed decision-making processes. Furthermore, the Committee encouraged States Parties to make public the reports submitted on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties in order to

facilitate their consultation by all stakeholders and contribute to an improved transparency of the reactive monitoring process and, in this case, requests the World Heritage Centre to make them publicly accessible through the State of Conservation Information System.

7. In the framework of enhancing dialogue and cooperation between the Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat, two specific meetings are organized each year to review the state of conservation of properties (the so-called “SOC week”), analyse emerging issues and identify any supplementary information needed from the State Parties concerned before the examination of the reports by the Committee. Furthermore, three annual meetings are organized between the Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat to prepare the session of the Committee and the General Assembly and to discuss the cooperation and modalities of work of the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies. These meetings, which are held in January and September, as well as before the Committee session, provide an occasion to constantly discuss the roles and responsibilities of the Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat. In this regard, it has been decided that a specific item on this matter will be included in the agenda of the next meeting between the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre, 10-11 September 2013.

8. To facilitate dialogue, communication and transparency, a number of Delegates considered that more guidance should be given in advance of the Committee session, this was also among the recommendations of the workshop on “Decision-Making Procedures of the Statutory Organs of the World Heritage Convention” that was held in Bahrain in 2010. The Committee also decided at its 35<sup>th</sup> session in 2011 to “Develop further capacity building activities for the Chairperson, Rapporteur and Committee members, including through the systematic explanation of documents to States Parties” (Decision 35 COM 12B). In this regard, the Secretariat organized an informal orientation session for Committee members, which was held on 31 January 2013 in UNESCO Headquarters. This session focussed mainly on procedural issues and statutory processes, and discussed a number of specific points concerning nominations. Furthermore an Orientation session held prior to the 37<sup>th</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee on 16 June 2013 was well attended.

9. To address the needs identified regarding capacity building, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, in close cooperation with States Parties and relevant category 2 centres, have undertaken a number of activities that contributed directly to the implementation of the World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy (WHCBS), adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 35<sup>th</sup> session in 2011. These included programmes aimed at strengthening regional and national institutions responsible for heritage protection, training initiatives targeting professionals and youth and the development of new guidance materials.

10. The roles and responsibilities of the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre have been discussed in-depth at several sessions including by the 33<sup>rd</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Committee respectively. There were also reviewed on the occasion of the expert meeting on the decision-making procedures of the statutory organs of the World Heritage Convention (Manama, Bahrain, 15-17 December 2010). The report was provided to the Committee (Document WHC-11/35.COM/12B) and resulted in Decision 35 COM 12B. Furthermore, on specific issues, comprehensive discussions have also taken place, for example on improving state of conservation procedures during the 33<sup>rd</sup> session (Seville, 2009), which were reflected in Decision 34 COM 7C and in an international expert meeting on the challenges on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties (Dakar, 2011) which resulted in Decisions 35 COM 7C and 35 COM 12E. Further coordination took place on several issues, including the establishment of the Information System on State of Conservation to avoid any duplication of initiatives, the preparation of reactive monitoring and advisory missions and in focused drafting of state of conservation decisions, clearly recognizing the complementary roles of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in line with chapter I.G of the Operational Guidelines.

11. It should be also noted that the Secretariat is constantly looking for solutions to overcome the prevailing budgetary constraints. Indeed and whenever possible, meetings and working sessions with States Parties and Advisory Bodies are organized via Skype or video conference. Furthermore, budgetary constraints are leading to increased reliance on the generosity of the Host country for the sessions of the World Heritage Committee, which bears a large portion of the costs related to the organisation of the session.

12. The closing event of the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Convention held in Kyoto thanks to the generosity of the Japanese authorities, demonstrated the ongoing close exchange and dialogue between States Parties - including national authorities, site managers and civil society partners in World Heritage conservation- the Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat. A report on the 40th Anniversary celebrations is included in Document WHC-13/19.GA/10.

13. The implementation of agreed actions have been harmonized with the implementation plans prepared to follow-up to the recommendations of the UNESCO External Auditor report and for the Strategic Action Plan 2012-2022 which can be found in Documents WHC-13/19.GA/9 and WHC-13/19.GA/10 respectively.

14. The Summary and Follow-up of the Director General's meeting on "The World Heritage Convention: Thinking Ahead" have been examined by the 37<sup>th</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee which acknowledged the follow-up actions already undertaken and urged to pursue efforts in the framework of the implementation plans of the UNESCO External Auditor and of the Strategic Action Plan 2012-2022. The Committee also encouraged all parties concerned to further enhance and improve dialogue and communication within the framework of the implementation of the Convention's mechanisms and requests that a plan and a report on the actions taken and progress achieved be presented at its 38th session, in 2014.

### III. DRAFT RESOLUTION

#### **Draft Resolution: 19 GA 11**

*The General Assembly,*

1. Having examined Documents WHC-13/19.GA/11 and WHC-13/19.GA/INF.11,
2. Recalling Decision **37 COM 5C** of the World Heritage Committee taken at its 37<sup>th</sup> session (Phnom Penh, 2013),
3. Takes note of the Summary of the Director General's meeting on "The World Heritage Convention: Thinking Ahead" (UNESCO HQs, 2-3 October 2012);
4. Further notes the efforts undertaken in the framework of the implementation plans of the follow-up to the UNESCO External Auditor Report and the Strategic Action Plan 2012-2022;
5. Encourages all parties concerned to further enhance and facilitate dialogue, communication and transparency in all processes of the Convention.

