



Intergovernmental Committee  
for the Protection of the World Cultural  
and Natural Heritage



***RULES OF PROCEDURE***

The Rules of Procedure were last revised by the World Heritage Committee at its twentieth session in December 1996. Additional copies, and other documents concerning World Heritage are available from the Secretariat:

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SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION  
OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

Established under the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its seventeenth session on 16 November 1972

**RULES OF PROCEDURE**

(adopted by the Committee at its first session  
and amended at its second, third and twentieth sessions)

**I. MEMBERSHIP**

Rule 1

Convention  
Article 8.1

The Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage called "the World Heritage Committee" and herein after referred to as the "Committee" is composed of the States Parties to the Convention elected in accordance with Article 8 of the "Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage" hereinafter referred to as the "Convention".

**II. SESSIONS**

Rule 2. Ordinary and Extraordinary Sessions

2.1 The Committee shall normally meet once per year in ordinary session.

2.2 The Committee shall meet in extraordinary session at the request of at least two-thirds of the States members.

Rule 3. Convocation

3.1 The first session of the Committee shall be convened by the Director-General of UNESCO hereinafter referred to as "the Director-General".

3.2 Subsequent sessions of the Committee shall be convened by the Chairman in consultation with the Director-General.

3.3 The Director-General shall notify to the States members of the Committee, the date, place and provisional agenda of each session, not less than sixty days in advance in the case of an ordinary session and, if possible, not less than thirty days in advance in the case of an extraordinary session.

3.4 The Director-General shall, at the same time, notify to the States, organizations and individuals mentioned in Rules 6, 7 and 8, the date, place and provisional agenda of each session.

#### Rule 4. Date and Place

4.1 The Committee shall determine at each session, in consultation with the Director-General, the date and the place of the next session. The date and/or place may be modified, if necessary, by the Bureau, in consultation with the Director-General.

4.2 Any State member of the Committee may invite the Committee to hold a session in its territory.

### **III. PARTICIPANTS**

#### Rule 5. Delegations

5.1 Each State member of the Committee shall be represented by one delegate, who may be assisted by alternates, advisers and experts.

Convention  
Article 9.3

5.2 States members of the Committee shall choose as their representatives persons qualified in the field of cultural or natural heritage.

#### Rule 6. Organizations attending in an advisory capacity

Convention  
Article 8.3

A representative of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (Rome Centre), a representative of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and a representative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), to whom may be added, at the request of States Parties to the Convention meeting in general assembly during the ordinary sessions of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, representatives of other intergovernmental or non-governmental organizations, with similar objectives, may attend the meetings of the Committee in an advisory capacity. They shall not have the right to vote.

Rule 7. Invitations for consultation

Convention  
Article 10.2

The Committee may at any time invite public or private organizations or individuals to participate in its sessions for consultation on particular problems. They shall not have the right to vote.

Rule 8. Representatives and observers

8.1 States Parties to the Convention which are not members of the Committee may attend the sessions of the Committee as observers. They shall be consulted by the Committee on all matters in respect of which consultation is prescribed by the Convention.

8.2 The United Nations and organizations of the United Nations system, as well as, upon written request, other international governmental and non-governmental organizations and non profit-making institutions having activities in the fields covered by the Convention, may be authorized by the Committee to participate in the sessions of the Committee.

8.3 The Director-General may provisionally invite any organization referred to in Rule 8.2 subject to subsequent confirmation by the Committee.

**IV. AGENDA**Rule 9. Provisional Agenda

Convention  
Article 14.2

9.1 The provisional agenda of the sessions of the Committee shall be prepared by the Director-General, utilizing to the fullest extent possible the services of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property, the International Council of Monuments and Sites and the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in their respective areas of competence.

9.2 The provisional agenda of an ordinary session of the Committee shall include:

- a. all questions, the inclusion of which has been decided by the Committee at previous sessions;
- b. all questions proposed by members of the Committee;
- c. all questions proposed by States Parties to the Convention not members of the Committee;
- d. all questions proposed by the Director-General.

9.3 The provisional agenda of an extraordinary session shall include only those questions for the consideration of which the session has been convened.

Rule 10. Adoption of the Agenda

The Committee shall adopt its agenda at the beginning of each session.

Rule 11. Amendments, deletions and new items

The Committee may amend, delete or add items to the agenda so adopted if so decided by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting.

**V. OFFICERS**

Rule 12. Elections

12.1 The Committee, at the beginning of each ordinary session, shall elect a Chairman, five Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur, who shall remain in office until the beginning of the next ordinary session. When its December session precedes the year when the General Assembly will be held, the Committee will decide to meet very briefly in an extraordinary session at the end of the General Assembly in order to elect its new Bureau, so that this Bureau can meet the following month, prior to the Committee, in all legality.

12.2 The Chairman, the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur shall be eligible for immediate re-election for a second term of office.

12.3 In electing the Bureau, due regard shall be given to the need to ensure an equitable representation of the different regions and cultures of the world and a proper balance between the cultural and natural heritage as provided in the Convention.

Rule 13. Bureau

The Bureau of the Committee shall consist of the Chairman, the five Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur. The Bureau shall co-ordinate the work of the Committee and fix the dates, hours and order of business of meetings. The Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur shall assist the Chairman in carrying out his duties.

#### Rule 14. Replacement of Chairman

14.1 If the Chairman is unable to act at any session of the Committee, or part thereof, his functions shall be exercised by a Vice-Chairman, in the English alphabetical order of States members of the Committee.

14.2 If the Chairman ceases to represent a State member of the Committee or is for any reason unable to complete his term of office, he is replaced by a Vice-Chairman, in the English alphabetical order of States members of the Committee, for the remainder of the term of office.

#### Rule 15. Replacement of the Rapporteur

15.1 If the Rapporteur is unable to act at any session of the Committee, or part thereof, his functions shall be exercised by a vice-Chairman in the English alphabetical order of States members of the Committee.

15.2 If the Rapporteur ceases to represent a State member of the Committee or if he is for any reason unable to complete his term of office, he is replaced by a Vice-Chairman, in the English alphabetical order of States members of the Committee, for the remainder of the term of office.

#### Rule 16. Duties of the Chairman

16.1 In addition to exercising the powers which are conferred upon him elsewhere by the present Rules, the Chairman shall open and close each plenary meeting of the Committee. He shall direct the discussions, ensure observance of these Rules, accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote and announce decisions. He shall rule on points of order and, subject to the present Rules, shall control the proceedings and the maintenance of order. He shall not vote, but he may instruct another member of his delegation to vote on his behalf. He shall exercise all other functions given to him by the Committee.

16.2 A Vice-Chairman acting as Chairman shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairman.

16.3 The Chairman and Vice-Chairman, or Vice-Chairmen, of a subsidiary body of the Committee shall have the same duties with regard to the bodies over which they are called upon to preside as the Chairman and the Vice-Chairmen of the Committee.

## **VI. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS**

### Rule 17. Quorum

Convention  
Article 13.8

17.1 At plenary meetings, a quorum shall consist of a majority of the States members of the Committee.

17.2 At meetings of subsidiary bodies, a quorum shall consist of a majority of the States which are members of the bodies concerned.

17.3 Neither the Committee nor its subsidiary bodies shall decide on any matter unless a quorum is present.

### Rule 18. Public meetings

Meetings shall be held in public unless decided otherwise by the Committee or by the body concerned.

### Rule 19. Private meetings

When in exceptional circumstances, the Committee decides to hold a private meeting, it shall determine the persons who, in addition to the representatives of States members, shall be present.

### Rule 20. Consultative bodies

Convention  
Article 10.3

20.1 The Committee may create such consultative bodies as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.

20.2 The composition and the terms of reference of such consultative bodies shall be defined by the Committee at the time of their creation. The Committee shall also determine the extent to which the present Rules will apply to any such consultative body.

20.3 Each consultative body shall elect its Chairman and, if necessary, its Rapporteur.

### Rule 21. Subsidiary bodies

21.1 The Committee may establish such subsidiary bodies as it deems necessary for the conduct of its work, within the limits of the technical facilities available.

21.2 Each of these bodies shall itself elect its Chairman and, if necessary, its Rapporteur.

### Rule 22. Order and time-limit of speeches

22.1 The presiding officer shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their wish to speak.

22.2 The presiding officer may limit the time allowed to each speaker if the circumstances make this desirable.

22.3 The representatives of organizations, individuals and observers referred to in Rules 6, 7 and 8 may address the meeting with the prior consent of the Chairman.

### Rule 23. Points of order

23.1 During a discussion, any State member may raise a point of order; such point of order shall be immediately decided upon by the presiding officer.

23.2 An appeal may be made against the ruling of the presiding officer. Such appeal shall be put to the vote immediately and the presiding officers ruling shall stand unless overruled.

### Rule 24. Suspension or adjournment of the meeting

During the discussion of any matter, any State member of the Committee may move the suspension or adjournment of the meeting. Such motions shall not be debated but shall be immediately put to the vote.

### Rule 25. Adjournment of debate

During the discussion of any matter, any State member of the Committee may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. On moving the adjournment the State member shall indicate whether he moves the adjournment *sine die* or to a particular time which he shall specify. In addition to the proposer of the motion, one speaker may speak in favor of, and one against, the motion.

### Rule 26. Closure of debate

A State member of the Committee may at any time move the closure of the debate, whether or not any other speaker has signified his wish to take part in the discussion. If application is made for permission to speak against the closure, it may be accorded to not more than two speakers. The Chairman shall then put to the vote the motion for closure and, if the Committee is in favor of the motion, he shall declare the closure of the debate.

Rule 27. Order of procedural motions

Subject to Rule 23 the following motions shall have precedence in the following order over all other proposals or motions before the meeting:

- a) suspension of the meeting;
- b) adjournment of the meeting;
- c) adjournment of the debate on the question under discussion;
- d) closure of the debate on the question under discussion.

Rule 28. Working languages

28.1 The working languages of the Committee shall be English and French.

28.2 Speeches made at a meeting of the Committee in one of the working languages shall be interpreted into the other language.

28.3 Speakers may, however, speak in any other language, provided they make their own arrangements for interpretation of their speeches into one of the working languages.

28.4 The documents of the Committee shall be issued in English and French.

Rule 29. Voting

29.1 Each State member of the Committee shall have one vote in the Committee and in any subsidiary body on which it is represented.

Convention  
Article 13.8

29.2 Decisions of the Committee on matters covered by the provisions of the Convention shall be taken by a majority of two-thirds of its members present and voting.

29.3 Except where otherwise specified in the present Rules, all other decisions of the Committee shall be taken by a majority of the States members present and voting.

29.4 Decisions as to whether a particular matter is covered by the provisions of the Convention and decisions on any other matters not covered by the present Rules shall be taken by a majority of the States members present and voting.

29.5 For the purpose of the present Rules, the expression "States members present and voting" shall mean States members casting an affirmative or negative vote. States members abstaining from voting shall be regarded as not voting.

29.6 Voting shall normally be by a show of hands.

29.7 When the result of a vote by a show of hands is in doubt, the presiding officer may take a second vote by a roll-call. A vote by a roll-call shall also be taken if it is requested by not less than two States members before the voting takes place.

29.8 A decision shall be voted on by secret ballot whenever two or more States members shall so request or if the Chairman so decides.

#### Rule 30. Voting on amendments

30.1 When an amendment to a proposal is moved, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments to a proposal are moved, the Committee shall first vote on the amendment deemed by the presiding officer to be furthest removed in substance from the original proposal, and then on the amendment next furthest removed therefrom and so on, until all the amendments have been put to the vote.

30.2 If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted upon as a whole.

30.3 A motion is considered an amendment to a proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of that proposal.

#### Rule 31. Voting on proposals

If two or more proposals relate to the same question, the Committee shall, unless it decides otherwise, vote on the proposals in the order in which they have been submitted. The Committee may, after each vote on a proposal, decide whether to vote on the next proposal.

#### Rule 32. Withdrawal of proposals

A proposal may be withdrawn by its proposer at any time before voting on it has begun, provided that the proposal has not been amended. A proposal withdrawn may be reintroduced by any State member of the Committee.

#### Rule 33. Decisions and Records

33.1 The Committee shall adopt such decisions and recommendations as it may deem appropriate.

33.2 Following the closure of each session, the Secretariat shall prepare a summary record thereof which it shall transmit to the States members of the Committee, to all States Parties to the Convention and to the

International Centre for the study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property, the International Council of Monuments and Sites and the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, as well as to all other organizations invited to the session.

## **VII. SECRETARIAT OF THE COMMITTEE**

### Rule 34 The Secretariat

Convention  
Article 14.1

34.1 The Committee shall be assisted by a Secretariat appointed by the Director-General.

34.2 The Director-General, utilizing to the fullest extent possible the services of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property, the International Council of Monuments and Sites and the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, in their respective areas of competence and capability, shall prepare the Committee's documentation and shall have the responsibility for the implementation of its decisions.

34.3 The Director-General or his representative shall participate in the work of the Committee, the consultative and subsidiary bodies without the right to vote. He may at any time make either oral or written statements on any question under consideration.

34.4 The Director-General of UNESCO shall appoint an official of the Secretariat of UNESCO to act as Secretary to the Committee, and other officials who shall together constitute the Secretariat of the Committee.

34.5 The Secretariat shall receive, translate and distribute all official documents of the Committee and shall arrange for the interpretation of the discussions, as provided in Rule 28.

34.6 The Secretariat shall perform all other duties necessary for the proper conduct of the work of the Committee.

## VIII REPORTS

### Rule 35. Reports to the General Conference

Convention  
Article 29.3

35.1 The Committee shall submit a report on its activities at each of the ordinary sessions of the General Conference of UNESCO.

35.2 The Committee may authorize its Chairman to submit such a report on its behalf.

35.3 Copies of this report shall be sent to all States Parties to the Convention

## IX. ADOPTION, AMENDMENT AND SUSPENSION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

### Rule 36. Adoption

Convention  
Articles 10.1 &  
13.8

The Committee shall adopt its Rules of Procedure by a decision taken in plenary meeting by a two-thirds majority of the States members present and voting.

### Rule 37. Amendment

The Committee may amend these Rules of Procedure except when they reproduce provisions of the Convention by a decision taken in plenary meeting by a two-thirds majority of the States members present and voting, provided the proposal has been included in the agenda of the session in accordance with Rules 9 and 10.

### Rule 38. Suspension

The Committee may suspend the application of any of these Rules, except when they reproduce provisions of the Convention, by a decision taken in plenary meeting by a two-thirds majority of the States members present and voting.