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**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
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**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Thirty-eighth session

**Doha, Qatar
15 – 25 June 2014**

Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda: Reports of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies

5C.Follow-up to the Director-General's meeting on "The World Heritage Convention: Thinking Ahead" (UNESCO HQ, 2-3 October 2012)

SUMMARY

In 2012, the Director-General of UNESCO convened a meeting entitled "The World Heritage Convention: Thinking Ahead" to give an opportunity to the Advisory Bodies, the Secretariat and the States Parties to collectively review some of the main challenges and opportunities facing the Convention. By Decision **37 COM 5C**, the Committee requested the World Heritage Centre to present, at its 38th session, a plan and a report on the actions taken and progress achieved in this regard. Furthermore, this matter was examined by the 19th General Assembly of States Parties which, by Resolution **19 GA 11**, encouraged all parties concerned to further enhance and facilitate dialogue, communication, transparency and accountability in all processes of the *Convention*, and invited the Committee to explore means of improving these mechanisms.

This document contains a report on actions taken to implement the agreed measures and presents a plan for continuing efforts to enhance dialogue, communication, cooperation and transparency in the various processes of the Convention.

Draft Decision: 38 COM 5C, See Point III

I. Background

1. On 2 and 3 October 2012, the Director-General of UNESCO convened a meeting entitled "The World Heritage Convention: Thinking Ahead" to give an opportunity to the Advisory Bodies, the Secretariat and the States Parties to collectively review some of the main challenges and opportunities facing the Convention. A detailed summary of this meeting, including the major conclusions of the debate can be found at the following address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/events/957>.
2. The summary, together with a report on actions taken was presented to the 37th session, which took note and encouraged States Parties to further enhance and improve dialogue and communication within the framework of the implementation of the *Convention's* mechanisms, and requested the World Heritage Centre to present a plan and a report on the actions taken and progress achieved at the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee in 2014 (Decision: **37 COM 5C**).
3. The summary and the report were also presented to the 19th General Assembly of States Parties in November 2013 during which further discussions took place in the presence of the Director-General. The General Assembly adopted Resolution **19 GA 11**, which encourages all parties concerned to further enhance and facilitate dialogue, communication, transparency and accountability in all processes of the *Convention*, and invited the Committee to explore means of improving these mechanisms.
4. Accordingly, this document contains a report on actions taken to implement the agreed measures and presents a plan for continuing efforts to enhance dialogue, communication, cooperation and transparency in the various processes of the Convention. The report and planned further actions are presented under each of the main subject headings and action points of the summary document.

II. Report and Planned further actions

Tentative Lists and Nominations

Report

5. This is an area in which the States Parties have considered that the processes could benefit from greater transparency and cooperation. Accordingly, the Advisory Bodies and Secretariat have taken several measures to facilitate ongoing dialogue and communication with the States Parties to support their efforts. Some of the main achievements are as follows:
6. The so-called "Upstream Process" is an initiative launched by the Committee in 2010 and 2011, on an experimental basis with a set of 10 pilot projects voluntarily proposed by the States Parties concerned, which aims at reducing the number of properties that experience significant problems in the nomination process (see also Document WHC-14/38.COM/9A). This process is meant to provide assistance by the Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat at the early stages of the nomination process, to establish the feasibility of a particular nomination. This early assistance is then followed by guidance, mentoring and capacity-building throughout the process of preparing the nomination dossier. This upstream support has already resulted in the presentation of successful nominations for inscription on the World Heritage List. More importantly, such upstream support to States Parties has now extended well beyond the initial set of the 10 pilot

projects officially selected in 2011. The Operational Guidelines have been revised to recommend adoption of upstream processes via initial preparatory work, as noted in paragraph 122 of the latest version of the Operational Guidelines. Thus the Committee now has a statutory basis to encourage States Parties to adopt this new way of working.

7. Moreover, upstream support has also been provided to States Parties in Africa (since 2008) and in the Caribbean (since 2012) through specially designed programmes for training selected professionals by using a process of mentoring on the development of specific nomination dossiers, which has proved to be very useful and successful. These training courses have dual objectives: to strengthen professional capacities in preparing nomination dossiers, and to increase the number and quality of nominations to the World Heritage List from these regions. The approach in Africa has been led by the African World Heritage Fund, demonstrating a role that other category 2 centres may wish to adopt.
8. Additionally, a growing number of advisory missions are being requested by States Parties, not only through formal decisions adopted by the World Heritage Committee, but also increasingly at the request of individual countries on specific nominations. However, as long as advisory missions are constrained by availability of funding to pay for the services of the Advisory Bodies, not all States Parties can have access to such missions and advice from the Advisory Bodies on an equitable basis. Thus, improving the access of States Parties to advisory services would require mobilisation of extrabudgetary resources, including an allocation from the International Assistance part of the World Heritage Fund.
9. Since 2012, the evaluation reports of nominations to be presented at the annual World Heritage Committee session are being sent to the States Parties concerned by the Secretariat, as soon as they are received from the Advisory Bodies, i.e. before the official dispatch of the related working document which allows more time for dialogue to take place, if necessary.
10. Finally, significant work has been undertaken on the production and translation of the Resource Manuals on Preparing Nominations and Managing World Heritage sites, furthermore a range of new thematic studies on natural and cultural heritage gaps have been produced and updated that all assist in providing transparent advice for States Parties (see also Documents WHC-14/38.COM/5A, 5B and 6).

Planned further actions

11. The Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat will continue to provide support and advice to the States Parties as mentioned above, within the limits of the resources available, and note the responsibility of States Parties to follow the provisions outlined in the revised paragraph 122 of the Operational Guidelines.
12. It is proposed to the Committee to discuss the timeline for submission and evaluation of nominations, as the current system does not allow for adequate and effective dialogue to take place prior to the Committee's consideration of the nominations. A proposal in this regard is presented in Document WHC-14/38.COM/9A relating to the upstream process.
13. The Committee may also wish to consider, at its 39th session, if appropriate, the integration of provisions into the *Operational Guidelines* to incorporate and regulate the upstream process in the *Operational Guidelines* and to make it uniformly applicable to all countries in need.

Conservation of properties

Report

14. The State of Conservation (SOC) Information System: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/> established on the World Heritage Centre's website enables improved transparency, as it contains all relevant information related to the state of conservation of each World Heritage property, including SOC reports, reactive monitoring mission reports, draft decisions, final decisions, and a variety of useful statistics at the site, national and global scales. This tool is available for public access to allow all stakeholders of the *Convention* and interested parties to access this wealth of information.
15. In addition, with a view to improving transparency of the SOC process in 2014, the World Heritage Centre has started to upload on its website, with the prior consent of the States Parties concerned, all the State of Conservation reports received from States Parties, or a summary thereof, if the full report cannot be made available for public access. A majority of States Parties are agreeable to this process, which is important in terms of providing transparency in the Convention's processes.
16. As in the case of the Tentative lists and nominations, the Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat have been increasingly undertaking advisory missions in order to address any potential threats to sites at an earlier stage and to provide direct technical support to States Parties. In some cases this has resulted in a series of intensive meetings to discuss and address conservation issues at specific sites that are facing serious challenges. As mentioned above, providing this intensive level of advice and technical support needs to be supported by the availability of adequate financial and human resources.
17. A systematic process of fact checking has been instituted regarding third party information received by either the Secretariat or the Advisory Bodies in order to deal with information received on the state of conservation of particular World Heritage properties. The Secretariat liaises with the States Parties concerned to verify this information, in compliance with paragraph 174 of the *Operational Guidelines* prior to sharing it, along with the information received from the States Parties, with the relevant Advisory Bodies and preparing a SOC report for the Committee's examination whenever necessary. However if no response is received from the State Party concerned, it is reflected as such in the State of Conservation report for the Committee's consideration.
18. The level of dialogue with States Parties on the State of Conservation and other issues has considerably increased, partly owing to the second cycle of Periodic Reporting for which numerous regional and sub-regional meetings were organized. Additionally, every opportunity is used of to organize consultation, information, or expert meetings with States Parties' experts, such as during Committee sessions.
19. Prior consultation always takes place with the concerned State Party before proposing any site for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in accordance with the requirements of the *Operational Guidelines*. In addition, before proposing any site in the list of SOC reports to be reviewed by the Committee, the State Party concerned is informed by the Secretariat of the reasons it is considered necessary to present the report.
20. Advice has been provided by IUCN and ICOMOS respectively on the use of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) methodologies to encourage proactive approaches to development proposals that may impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage sites at the earliest available opportunity. These documents are being produced in both working

languages of the Committee, English and French, and are also being translated into Spanish and Arabic through the work of the World Heritage Capacity-Building Programme. A course on HIAs was also offered by ICCROM in collaboration with ICOMOS and WHITR-AP in 2012.

21. IUCN has also been developing, as reported to previous sessions of the World Heritage Committee, a new system to compile and put online monitoring information on all natural World Heritage Sites, as part of IUCN's wider work to integrate World Heritage within the IUCN Quadrennial Programme, including in relation to recognition of World Heritage in inputs to the World Parks Congress and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Planned further actions

22. The Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat will continue to provide support and advice to the States Parties on SOC issues, including through efforts to mobilize the required resources.
23. Efforts will be continued to articulate the positive aspects of the World Heritage List in Danger as to enable it to be seen as a supportive mechanism that contributes to site conservation.
24. The use of EIAs and HIAs will be encouraged on a systematic basis. A second course on HIAs will be offered by ICCROM, ICOMOS, and WHITR-AP in October of 2014.
25. A reflection will be carried out on the closing of the 2nd cycle of Periodic Reporting on opportunities for more proactive approaches to monitoring the State of Conservation of World Heritage Sites.

Capacity-building

Report

26. A large number of capacity-building activities have been implemented by the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies in all regions, see also Documents WHC-14/38.COM/5A, 5B, and 6. Initiatives for capacity-building target not only heritage practitioners, but also institutions (policy and decision makers) as well as communities and networks (i.e the civil society at large). As a follow-up to the second cycle of Periodic Reporting and the resulting Regional Action Plans, regional and sub-regional capacity-building strategies are also under development.
27. UNESCO category 2 centres on World Heritage, national and regional training institutions and experts, and relevant UNESCO Chairs are also increasingly contributing to these capacity-building efforts (see also Document WHC-14/38.COM/6).
28. Orientation and discussion sessions with Committee members are now being organized throughout the year and not just immediately prior to the World Heritage Committee session. The first orientation session for new Committee members is organized immediately following their election by the General Assembly of States Parties. An additional orientation session is organized in January, followed by another one in May in conjunction with an information session on the forthcoming session of the Committee for all States Parties and finally, on the day preceding the opening of the annual World Heritage Committee session.

Planned further actions:

29. The Secretariat and Advisory Bodies will continue to pursue the development, implementation, and fund-raising for a range of capacity-building activities through various mechanisms, including targeted activities for institutional strengthening at a national level and covering special themes such as legal systems for protecting heritage.
30. The Secretariat and Advisory Bodies will also continue to disseminate best practice examples in site conservation, in particular those illustrating the contribution of heritage conservation to sustainable development, through their respective websites, appropriate publications such as resource manuals, professional networks, etc..

Roles of Advisory Bodies and Secretariat

Report

31. Through the periodic coordination meetings between the Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat, efforts continue to be made to further clarify and maintain the distinct complementary roles of these entities, focussing on the expertise, independent technical and analytical functions of the Advisory Bodies and the regulatory and technical functions of the Secretariat who also serves as the facilitator between the States Parties and Advisory Bodies. These regular meetings also help to identify and address potential overlapping areas of work and functions.
32. The Secretariat is systematically calling attention to the *Operational Guidelines*, the Rules of Procedures and to the Committee's past decisions, during the process of discussion and decision making on various agenda items.
33. Communication and transparency in various processes have been enhanced. As mentioned above, the Advisory Body evaluations are transmitted to the States Parties concerned as soon as they are received by the Secretariat by way of advance notice. The list of factual errors noted by States Parties on evaluations is now provided as an information document for public access, together with all working documents for the Committee session. All partnership documents are available on the website and the annual reporting to the Committee includes analytical information on use of the logo, funding, and evaluation.
34. The Advisory Bodies have undertaken a series of capacity-building efforts to build their network of national and regional experts who can function as resource persons for reactive monitoring and evaluation of nominations.

Planned further actions

35. All of the above-mentioned efforts will continue to be enhanced and strengthened to enable greater clarity, transparency and dialogue among all parties concerned.
36. Dialogue and communication sessions with States Parties will be organized regularly, combined with the orientation and information sessions that are planned in January and May of each year.

Role of the Committee and governance

Report

37. The concern expressed by the States Parties about the growing discrepancy between expert advice and decisions of the World Heritage Committee is being addressed through the enhanced opportunities and processes for communication, dialogue and transparency, as described above in the sections relating to nominations and state of conservation.
38. Proposals for appropriate changes to the *Operational Guidelines* and *Rules of Procedure* are being submitted for consideration to the Committee in order to further strengthen the credibility of the statutory processes.
39. The issue of equitable geographical representation on the World Heritage Committee is being addressed by an open-ended working group established by the 19th session of the General Assembly of States Parties whose report will be considered by the 1st extraordinary session of the General Assembly to be convened in November 2014.
40. Civil society participation in the processes of the Convention is being enhanced through their involvement in the nomination and monitoring processes, participation in the governing body meetings, and in the management of properties. All Committee documents are now made available for public access at the time of their distribution to the States Parties and all sessions are webcast.

Planned further actions

41. It is proposed that these efforts be continued to further enhance and strengthen the effective governance of the Convention.

Resource constraints

Report

42. As pointed out above, many of the activities that require the Advisory Bodies and Secretariat to engage more intensively in advising and assisting the States Parties have considerable financial implications and hence, efforts are simultaneously being made to mobilize the required resources.
43. While some States Parties are making voluntary contributions to increase the resources of the World Heritage Fund, others are contributing directly by supporting and hosting various activities.
44. The 19th session of the General Assembly of States Parties adopted Resolution **19 GA 8** recommending to the States Parties to make voluntary contributions to the World Heritage Fund using one of the several options contained in that Resolution.
45. By the same Resolution, the General Assembly decided to establish a sub-account within the World Heritage Fund, to be funded from Voluntary Contributions and to be used exclusively for enhancing the human resource capacities of the Secretariat, and invited States Parties to provide voluntary supplementary contributions to the sub-account in the amount of at least US\$ 1,000,000 per year, in total.

Planned further actions

46. Efforts at resource mobilization will be continued by the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies to provide enhanced level of services to the States Parties.

47. States Parties will be expected to respond to the General Assembly Resolution by making voluntary contributions to the World Heritage Fund to increase its resources, as well as to the sub-account for enhancing the human resource capacities of the Secretariat.

III. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision: 38 COM 5C

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-14/38.COM/5C,
2. Recalling Decisions **33 COM 5A, 34 COM 5C, 35 COM 5D, 36 COM 12B and 37 COM 5C** adopted at its 33rd (Seville, 2009), 34th (Brasilia, 2010), 35th (UNESCO, 2011) 36th (Saint-Petersburg, 2012) and 37th (Phnom Penh, 2013) sessions respectively,
3. Takes note of the positive impact of the actions already undertaken, as well as of plans for further actions, and invites all stakeholders to pursue efforts to enhance and facilitate dialogue, communication and transparency in all processes of the Convention and in the framework of the Director General's meeting on "The World Heritage Convention: Thinking Ahead" (UNESCO HQ, 2-3 October 2012) as well as to address funding implications, within their respective mandates and competence, as appropriate.