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## UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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

Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, Room II  
28 - 29 October 1999

#### SUMMARY RECORD

1. The twelfth session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage was held in Paris, at UNESCO Headquarters on 28 and 29 October 1999 during the thirtieth session of the General Conference.
2. One hundred and thirty-eight States Parties to the Convention were represented at this meeting.
3. The representatives of the three advisory bodies to the World Heritage Convention (ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN) also participated in the twelfth General Assembly of States Parties.
4. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre provided the Secretariat for the Assembly.

#### Opening of the session

5. In his opening address, the representative of the Director-General, Mr Crespo-Toral, Assistant Director-General for Culture, spoke of the incontestable success of the Convention which has been ratified by 157 States, and the World Heritage List which now includes 582 cultural and natural properties. He stressed the fact that the List does not yet include all the categories of properties, notably living traditions and modes of land-use – which determine the material and spiritual life of human groups and their relationships with their environment. He also evoked the categories of properties still under-represented on the List as, for example the cultural landscapes and routes.

6. He stressed the importance of item 8 of the agenda concerning the “Ways and means to ensure a representative World Heritage List” and suggested that the Convention was possibly a victim of its success. He emphasised the growing number of nominations and the concerns of the advisory bodies in this regard

The advisory bodies have often expressed their concerns in view of the growing number of nominations. They feel that the current rate of new nominations:

- threaten the credibility of the List,
- require the availability of additional financial and human resources that could weigh on the already modest World Heritage funds,
- will result, for lack of time, in a reduction of the activities that should be devoted to conservation reports, strategic planning, thematic studies, and the strengthening of existing capacities,
- create difficulties in managing the timetable of the meetings of the Bureau and the World Heritage Committee, and also that the prolongation of the sessions will lead to additional financial outlay.

7. The Assistant-Director-General for Culture observed the imbalance in the List had deteriorated since 1994, in spite of the efforts of the Committee and the Secretariat, and the adoption of the Global Strategy by the Committee at its eighteenth session, because many States do not have the necessary conservation infrastructure that would allow them to prepare nominations at a sufficiently sustained rhythm to improve the representativity of the List.

8. Considering that the 1972 Convention main characteristic is to be an instrument for international co-operation, he requested the General Assembly to examine and approve the draft resolution presented under item 8 of the agenda, so that in the future the List will not only be associated with limited categories of properties mainly situated in States with a solid conservation record to the exclusion of those States which devote an important part of their resources to health, education and the fight against poverty. He stated that it behoved the General Assembly to take a historical decision in this regard.

### **Election du President of the General Assembly, Vice-Presidents and Rapporteur**

9. The General Assembly elected by acclamation H.E. Mr L.J. Hanrath (The Netherlands) as President of the General Assembly, the representatives of Grenada, India and Yemen as Vice Presidents, and Mr I. Monsi (Benin) as Rapporteur.

10. In his speech, the President of the General Assembly promised that he will do his very best to make the twelfth General Assembly a success which would be paramount to the prestige of the Convention. He recalled that it is the most visible activity of UNESCO. He referred to the problems which could jeopardise its success mainly: the growing number of

nominations, the imbalances of the List, and emphasised the need to tackle these problems not just with words, but also with political will. He referred to a Note Verbale sent by the French

Delegation to all the UNESCO Delegations which announced the withdrawal of their candidature to the Committee "for the sake of the system of rotation". He also referred to a written declaration of the Italian Delegation in which it pledged that if re-elected, it would resign after two years. He declared that this type of commitment and political will provided food for thought and were good examples for other Delegations. He announced that he would "come back to the French Note Verbale and Italian declaration under agenda item 8 "Ways and means to ensure a representative World Heritage List".

11. He recalled that his own country, The Netherlands, had ratified the World Heritage Convention in 1992, and had never been a candidate to the Committee. Nevertheless, as an observer, the Netherlands had been working in the spirit of changes that were needed. He referred to the "Amsterdam meeting" in March 1998, which brought together natural and cultural heritage experts to define a holistic approach of the "Global Strategy". He pointed out that in the last eight years, his country had submitted five nominations to the World Heritage List which all fall in under-represented categories of heritage.

12. Before thanking the General Assembly once again for his election he vowed to enhance the prestige and reputation of the Convention by working towards a change.

### **Adoption of the agenda**

13. The agenda was adopted without amendments.

### **Report by the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee for the period 1998-1999**

14. The President welcomed Israel as the 158th State Party. He asked if the Committee, composed of only 21 members, could continue to orient the implementation of the Convention in the name of the growing number of States Parties. He expressed his personal opinion that the time had come to study the possibility of increasing the number of representatives of States Parties within the Committee.

15. He referred to the fundamental issue of the representativity of the List and to the ongoing discussions (since 1992) to improve the existing imbalances in the framework of the Global Strategy. He stressed that during his mandate as Chairperson, he had not only drawn up action plans, but had tried to translate recommendations into concrete actions. He cited a Japanese proverb: "Even dust, if gathered together, can be transformed into a mountain", and evoked the draft resolution that had been prepared by a working group he had created during the twenty-third session of the Bureau in July 1999.

16. He then referred to the five essential functions of the Convention:

The first function is to identify cultural and natural properties of "outstanding universal value" for inscription on the World Heritage List. He noted that the number of nominations submitted had increased exponentially over the past few years, taxing the ability of the

Secretariat to process them, the advisory bodies to evaluate them and the Committee to decide on these cases with the attention and scientific rigour that each case merits. He appealed to the States Parties to support the objectives of the Global Strategy in the identification and nomination of sites to enhance the representativity of the World Heritage List.

17. As for the second task, which is to monitor the state of conservation of inscribed sites in co-operation with the States Parties concerned, he referred to similar pressures: during the past two years, over 200 state of conservation reports have been presented to the Bureau and the Committee.

18. When mentioning the third task of the Committee, which concerns the inscribed properties to include on the List of World Heritage in Danger he referred to natural calamities, man-made disasters, ill-planned public tourism which are among the most frequent causes of ascertained and potential threats to World Heritage sites. Many of these sites discussed by the Committee have not been inscribed on the List of World heritage in Danger. The ongoing examination of the Kakadu National Park in Australia is a case in point. The complexity of this case required the Committee to consider a wide range of issues: from uranium mining technology, to social and economic issues, wetland conservation and the fundamental rights and spiritual beliefs of indigenous peoples.

He congratulated his predecessor, Professor Francesco Francioni, for the exemplary manner in which he initiated the process of evaluation of Kakadu, and for his personal commitment in heading the UNESCO fact-finding mission. He referred to his decision to hold an extraordinary session of the Committee, devoted entirely to the case of Kakadu. Despite the considerable financial and human resources this implied, he believed that the credibility of the Committee was enhanced by the thoroughness of its examination and its decision.

19. He underlined the fourth task of the Committee which is to determine the most effective use of the World Heritage Fund to assist States Parties in protecting their properties. During his term, the budget was further increased by another 14% to US\$ 4,676,000 for 1999. Noting the absence of clear guidelines in the approval process to enable prioritization of the requests, he suggested the linkage of preparatory assistance and training grants to Global Strategy and to give priority to requests from Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Least Industrialized Countries (LICs) which will be put before the Committee for their endorsement. He announced that the Government of Japan had made an exceptional contribution of US\$ 300,000 for preparatory assistance to LDCs and LICs. He emphasized as Article 5 of the Convention states, that adoption of a general policy to give cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the Community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes, remain the key to World Heritage protection.

20. This brought him to the fifth task of the Committee, and perhaps the most important of all tasks, that of public-awareness building and education for World Heritage conservation. This task calls all to invest in intelligence. For without the understanding and support of the public at large, without the respect and daily care of the local communities, which are the true custodians of World Heritage, no amount of funds or army of experts will suffice in protecting the sites. In this connection he expressed his satisfaction that the Committee during his Chairmanship accepted the validity of traditional management regimes as a protection mechanism required in the fulfilment of the conditions for inscription.

21. He praised the efficiency and energy of the Secretariat of the Convention and impressed upon the General Assembly the Committee's deep appreciation for the excellent work of the Secretariat, particularly the Director and the staff of the World Heritage Centre. He said that the World Heritage Centre needs to be strengthened with more staff and financial resources. He recalled that a Draft Resolution on the strengthening of the World Heritage Centre has been submitted to the General Assembly.

22. In concluding his report, he said that in this year as Chair of the World Heritage Committee, he has strengthened his conviction that it is not money that makes the world turn, but pride and dignity. His speech is attached in **Annex I** to this report.

23. The President of the General Assembly congratulated Ambassador Matsuura and expressed general satisfaction for the work accomplished during his mandate. It took note of the written and oral reports presented.

### **Examination of the Statement of Accounts of the World Heritage Fund**

24. The representative of the Bureau of the Comptroller presented Document WHC-99/CONF.206/3a concerning the statement of accounts of the World Heritage Fund for the financial period 1996-1997, certified by the Auditor General, as well as the accounts of the Fund for the year 1998 approved by the Comptroller, and the tables included in this document. The General Assembly approved the accounts for 1996-1997 and took note of the 1998 accounts.

The Delegate of Thailand asked for an explication on the amount of the expenditure mentioned in Table 1.1 entitled "Table of funds engaged and expenditure for the biennial exercise ending 31 December 1997", under the item "Secretariat Support", i.e. US\$ 358,650. The Director of the Centre indicated that this amount concerned the 1996 salaries of six staff members of the Centre who were paid until 1 January 1997 from the budget of the World Heritage Fund, and thereafter from the budget of the Regular Programme of UNESCO.

### **State of Contributions by States Parties**

25. The representative of the Bureau of the Comptroller presented document WHC-99/CONF.206/3b.rev giving the state of mandatory and voluntary contributions to the World Heritage Fund as at 22 October 1999. He then informed the General Assembly of all the other voluntary contributions and funds in trust received in 1999 by the World Heritage Centre. The Deputy Director of the Centre then announced the list of the other contributions expected, including the financing of the posts in the framework of the programme of associate experts.

26. The representative of the Bureau of the Comptroller, after making an oral update of the state of the contributions as at 28 October 1999, indicated that many States Parties had paid their contributions and that other payments were being made and would be accepted until the announcement of the first ballot. The Director of the Centre recalled that the States that were candidate to the Committee should be paid up with their dues.

27. The Delegate of Bolivia, reiterating his country's candidacy, expressed disappointment that its contribution was not mentioned in the revised document. The President indicated that Bolivia's contribution has not been received for the current year, and therefore it could not present its candidacy for the Committee.

28. The Delegate of Indonesia was surprised not to see his country on the revised list of States that were not paid up. He declared that Indonesia had recently paid its contribution and, in support of this, presented to the President a letter and a copy of the bank transfer dated 25 October 1999. The President informed the Delegate of Indonesia that, in accordance with the UNESCO Rules and Regulations, his country could only present its candidacy if the amount of this transfer appeared on the Chase Manhattan Bank's list of amounts received by UNESCO before the first ballot. He also gave him a note from the Bureau of the Comptroller dated 29 October reflecting this position.

**Determination of an amount of the contributions to the World Heritage Fund in accordance with the provisions of Article 16 of the Convention**

29. In accordance with item 7 of the agenda, the General Assembly unanimously decided that the amount of mandatory contributions to the World Heritage Fund for the period 2000-2001 would be maintained at 1 percent of contributions made by States Parties of the Regular Programme of UNESCO, according to article 16, paragraph 1 of the Convention, as had been decided by previous General Assemblies.

**Ways and means to ensure a more representative World Heritage List**

30. Before introducing this point, the President referred to the notes sent to UNESCO delegations by France and Italy and wished to give the floor to the heads of the delegations of these countries so they could present their position. The Delegate of Lebanon, referring to Article 11 of the Rules of Procedure, raised a point of procedure relating to Resolutions and Amendments. The President then tabled working document WHC-99/CONF.206/5.

31. He recalled that at its twenty-second session, the World Heritage Committee inscribed this item on the provisional agenda of the twenty-third session of the Bureau. The document informs the General Assembly of the implications and development of the Global Strategy. It was examined and approved by the Bureau at its twenty-third session (Paris, 5-10 July 1999). He underlined its paramount importance because it addresses the issue of the Global Strategy.

32. He said that since the adoption of the *World Heritage Convention* in 1972, innumerable discussions have been conducted as to the means of ensuring the representative nature of the World Heritage List. He underlined that since 1979, disparities and imbalances have been pointed out. The predominance of western European monumental architecture in comparison to non-monumental architectural heritage of other regions has also been highlighted. The need to strengthen the protection of past and continuing interactions between humans and the environment has been stressed.

33. He referred to the June 1994 expert meeting organised by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS which established a methodology to remedy such disparities. The expert group defined a "Global Strategy", a thematic methodology to redress the geographical, temporal,

and spiritual imbalances of the List. The expert group also identified the following areas or themes whose investigation would help to improve the representativity of the List:

- Human coexistence with the land (movement of peoples, settlements)
- Human beings in society (human interactions, spirituality and creative expressions).

34. In December 1994, the **Committee** adopted the report of the expert group and it revised the criteria for inscription of cultural properties. The scope of the Global Strategy was extended from cultural heritage to include natural and mixed properties. He referred also to the category of cultural landscapes and recalled that the World Heritage Committee, aware of the changing definition of cultural heritage, had defined this category which is still under-represented on the World Heritage List.

35. He mentioned also that every year since 1995, the Committee has approved the organization by the World Heritage Centre of regional and thematic Global Strategy meetings and studies. A list of background documents concerning these Global Strategy meetings can be found in document WHC-99/CONF.206/INF.5. The advisory bodies (IUCN, ICOMOS) have contributed to the preparation of these meetings and publications.

36. He defined the objectives of the Global Strategy as follows **“The Global Strategy is a framework and methodology for the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*. It relies on regional and thematic definitions of categories of heritage that have outstanding universal value. Its aim is to ensure a more balanced and representative World Heritage List. It encourages countries to become States Parties to the *Convention*, to prepare tentative lists and to harmonise them, and to prepare nominations of properties from categories and regions currently under-represented on the World Heritage List”**.

37. He then gave the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre who presented the process set in motion at the twenty-second session of the Committee, under the Chairmanship of Japan to “move from recommendations to action”.

38. The Director of the Centre recalled that by letter of 22 September 1999, he had transmitted all the working documents to the States Parties, requesting them to send him written comments on the draft Resolution. He referred to the only letter received, that from the Czech Delegation, dated 26 October 1999, of which he had acknowledged receipt. He then presented the main points of the draft project, stressing the following considerations:

- It is in the interest of all States Parties and advisory bodies to preserve the authority of the 1972 Convention, by improving the representativity of the World Heritage List, which should reflect the diversity of all cultures and ecosystem of all regions.
- Since the adoption of the Global Strategy by the World Heritage Committee in December 1994, to improve the representativity of the list, this objective has not been attained, despite the efforts of the Secretariat and the States Parties concerned.
- To address these continuing deficiencies, the Bureau in July 1999 prepared the Draft Resolution for consideration by the General Assembly of States Parties.

39. He recalled that the 1972 Convention is a framework for international co-operation, he reaffirmed the sovereignty of States Parties, and underlined the importance of moving from recommendations to action, as decided by the Committee at its twenty-second session. He highlighted the following paragraphs of the Draft Resolution which had been prepared by a working group at the Bureau composed of the following members of the Bureau: Benin, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Morocco, Republic of Korea; the following members of the Committee: Canada, Finland, France, Zimbabwe; the following observers: Belgium, United Kingdom and the Secretary-General of ICOMOS.

**A. The General Assembly invites all States Parties to:**

- Integrate the protection of cultural and natural heritage into comprehensive planning programmes (Art.5 of the Convention)
- Prepare or re-examine tentative lists by focusing on under-represented heritage
- Prioritise categories highlighting interaction between humans and their environment, and humans in society

**B. Invites States Parties with a substantial representation of sites on the World Heritage List to,**

**On a voluntary basis,**

- Space voluntarily their future nominations; and/or
- Propose only properties in the under-represented categories; and/or
- Link their nominations with those of another State Party with under-represented heritage; or
- Decide to suspend the presentation of new nominations; and
- Inform the Committee of their choices.

**C. Invites States Parties with under-represented heritage to:**

- Prioritise nominations and tentative lists
- Initiate regional partnerships based on the exchange of technical expertise
- Encourage bilateral and multilateral co-operation to increase their expertise
- Maximise their participation in World Heritage meetings

**D. Invites the Advisory bodies to:**

- Pursue programmes of thematic studies and classification of themes
- Observe the greatest scientific rigor while evaluating nominations
- Develop mechanisms to deliver training to experts in under-represented regions to prepare and evaluate nominations

**E. Invites the World Heritage Committee to:**

- Continue its actions within the Global Strategy framework

- Provide necessary resources from the World Heritage Fund to support the efforts of States Parties whose heritage is under-represented
- Adopt regional and multi-year action plans to implement the Global Strategy
- Evaluate, with all States Parties, progress in the Implementation of the Global Strategy

**F. Invites the Secretariat of the Convention to:**

- Support States Parties with under-represented heritage in the preparation of tentative lists and nominations
- Ensure that sufficient human resources are allocated for the implementation of the regional Action Plans

**G. Invites the international community and the donor agencies to:**

- Support the protection of natural and cultural heritage and the 1972 Convention
- Prioritise actions directed to the implementation of the Global Strategy in States Parties with under-represented heritage

40. Thirty-eight (38) States participated in the debate. All the speakers expressed satisfaction with the text adopted by the Bureau at its twenty-third session. They thanked the Chairperson of the Committee, the Chairperson of the working group and the States Parties. They stressed the pertinence of the draft resolution, its structure that identifies the responsibilities of each of the partners involved in the implementation of the Global Strategy, and the choice of the measures proposed which aim to improve the representativity of the World Heritage List.

41. Moreover many countries, following France which had been the first speaker in the debate, declared that the principles set out in the draft resolution, when adopted, can only take effect if they are supported by the political will of the States. Indeed, the draft resolution requests the States that already have a substantial number of sites inscribed to limit the rate of new nominations, to make a concentrated effort to help strengthen the co-operative mechanisms and international solidarity, and to assist countries without sufficient capacity to prepare their nomination files and ensure the management of their properties.

42. France's opinion that a strategy must be developed with three main components: (i) definition of the objectives, (ii) establishment of action plans with timetables, and (iii) an evaluation procedure, found an echo amongst the speakers who affirmed the need to move from recommendations to action.

43. Although Austria and France were the only States to declare, for the former, that it had limited the rate of nomination proposals to one site per year, and for the latter, that it had decided to abstain from presenting new sites in 2000, many States whose heritage is still under-represented stressed the importance of international co-operation and, referring to activities for which they had received assistance from States with substantial conservation capacities, they thanked the donor countries.

44. During the debate, certain States put forward the principle of rotation within the Committee and congratulated France for having withdrawn its candidacy. The large majority

of the speakers stressed the discrepancy between the number of States Parties (157) and the number of Committee members (21). Some speakers referred to Article 8.2 of the Convention “*Election of members of the Committee shall ensure an equitable representation of the different regions and cultures of the world*”, and requested an equitable representation within the Committee. Certain speakers evoked the possibility of reducing the length of the mandate of the Committee members.

45. At the end of the debate a draft resolution was adopted by consensus and without modification (the full text is contained in **Annex II**).

46. The President felt that a possible increase in the number of States members of the Committee, fixed at twenty-one, according to Article 8 of the Convention could make it necessary to revise this important legal instrument. He therefore invited the Legal Advisor to explain the procedure for modifying the Convention

47. Taking the floor, the Legal Advisor referred to Article 37 of the Convention which states that :

*“1. This Convention may be revised by the General Conference of the United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Any such revision shall, however, bind only the States that shall become Parties to the revising convention.*

*2. If the General Conference should adopt a new convention revising this Convention in whole or in part, then, unless the new convention otherwise provides, this Convention shall cease to be open to ratification, acceptance or accession, as from the date on which the new revising convention enters into force.”*

48. Taking account of the clarifications of the Legal Advisor and the debate on an equitable representation within the Committee, the President presented the following draft resolution that the General Assembly adopted by consensus:

***“The General Assembly of States Parties:***

*Underlining the importance of an equitable representation of the World Heritage Committee and the need to increase the number of its members,*

*Taking into consideration the intervention of the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee on this subject,*

***Requests the World Heritage Committee:***

- a) to set up a working group to study this question and to submit proposals to the thirteenth General Assembly of States Parties,*
- b) to request the inscription of an item on the agenda of the thirty-first General Conference concerning this issue.”*

**Elections to the World Heritage Committee**

49. Under item 9 of the agenda, the General Assembly was called upon to elect seven members of the World Heritage Committee, to replace the following seven members whose mandate would expire at the end of the thirtieth session of the General Conference: Brazil, France, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Niger, United States of America. The list of candidates was read out to the General Assembly: Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Egypt, Guatemala, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Mongolia, Portugal, Slovakia, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Vietnam. Nigeria and Syria announced the withdrawal of their candidatures. The President decided that Indonesia, whose contribution had not been received by the Bureau of the Comptroller at 10:00 a.m. on 29 October 1999, a few minutes before the first ballot, could not present its candidature, in accordance with Article 16.5 of the Convention. The Legal Advisor announced that the vote by secret ballot had to be carried out in conformity with Article 13.1 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly.

50. The results of the first ballot were as follows:

Number of States Parties eligible to vote: 156

Number of voters: 134

Number of abstentions and invalid papers: 0

Majority required: 68

Algeria (21 votes); Argentina (49); Armenia (11); Austria (28); Belgium (72); Cameroon (10); China (52); Colombia (86); Egypt (46); Guatemala (42); Italy (53); Jamaica (15); Japan (29); Jordan (14); Lebanon (44); Mongolia (9); Portugal (73); Slovakia (19); South Africa (64); Tunisia (32); Uganda (9); United Kingdom (52); United Republic of Tanzania (16); Vietnam (40).

The President declared Belgium, Colombia and Portugal as elected.

51. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the second ballot was to be limited to those States having obtained the greatest number of votes, provided that the number of States did not exceed twice the number of seats remaining to be filled.

The results of the second ballot were as follows:

Number of voters: 136

Abstentions: 0

Invalid papers: 2

Majority required: 69

Argentina (57); China (74); Egypt (65); Guatemala (49); Italy (69); Lebanon (46); South Africa (85); United Kingdom (61).

The President of the Assembly declared China, Italy and South Africa as elected.

52. One seat remained to be filled and a third ballot was organized with twice the number of candidate States, these being Egypt and the United Kingdom which had obtained the highest number of votes. Before the third ballot, the United Kingdom requested and was granted the permission to make the following statement:

“The UK is very grateful for the considerable support it has received from so many countries towards its candidacy for the Committee. That support has been most generous and gratifying.

The UK, since rejoining UNESCO in 1997, has been a very strong supporter of the Convention and has enthusiastically taken part in the debates which have taken place about the need for greater representativity both in the World Heritage List itself, and in the procedures of the Convention.

The UK has observed that on this occasion three Western European countries have already been selected to the Committee, but only one representative each of Africa, Asia and Latin America, and none from the Arab States.

The UK believes strongly in the need for rotation and a proper balance of representation in the work of the Committee. It accordingly feels that it would now be wrong to press its own candidature further on this occasion. In doing so, it asks all those who would have voted for it to instead support the election of Egypt, a country from the Arab States which is well-qualified to serve on the Committee, as this will ensure a better degree of balance in the Committee’s representation.

The UK nevertheless wishes to express its continuing support for the Convention and the important work of the Committee. It hopes to be able to continue to play a prominent part, even as an observer, and it declares now that it will certainly wish to put itself forward again for election to the Committee on the next occasion.

May I end by thanking all of those whose support for the UK’s candidacy has been so valuable and by asking them to now support the course of action which was believed to be right”.

53. This statement was favourably welcomed by the General Assembly which thus elected Egypt by acclamation. To close this agenda item on elections, the President of the General Assembly congratulated the new members of the Committee (Belgium, China, Columbia, Egypt, Italy, Portugal and South Africa) and announced its new composition.

### **Other business (item 10)**

54. The Director of the Centre tabled document WHC-99/CONF.206/INF.7, and referred to the decision of the twenty-third session of the Bureau to submit the following draft resolution concerning the Centre’s needs and resources to the twelfth General Assembly for it to take note.

55. The General Assembly took note of the draft resolution addressed to the Director-General.

*«The Bureau of the World Heritage Committee*

*Noting that the true nature of the functioning of the Convention concerning the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage implies a regular growth in the annual activities relating to its implementation.*

**Pointing out** that the staff of the World Heritage Centre who ensures the Secretariat of this Convention are funded by UNESCO, as well as its operating costs,

**Considering** that the resources of the World Heritage Centre, notably its staff, have to respond on a regular basis to the workload resulting from its functions relating to the Convention,

**Reaffirming** the interest of all States Parties to the Convention for its efficient implementation, in conformity with the undertakings of the General Conference of UNESCO and its Director-General,

**Taking note** of all the efforts already undertaken by the Director-General of UNESCO to secure the necessary resources,

**1. Requests the Director-General of UNESCO**

to request the General Conference of UNESCO, during its approval of the Programme and Budget for 2000-2001 of the Organization, to take into consideration the needs and resources of the World Heritage Centre so that it may ensure the implementation of the Convention for the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage,

b) to take the above into consideration during the implementation of the approved Budget and Programme.

**2. Expresses the wish** that the States Parties support the need to reinforce the working capacity of the World Heritage Centre to the Executive Board and the General Conference of UNESCO."

**Closure of the session**

56. The President thanked the Secretariat, the tellers and the interpreters for their efficient work. He noted that the States had adopted a resolution of historical importance concerning the ways and means to ensure a representative World Heritage List, the implementation of which would be determinant for the future of the Convention. He requested the States Parties to take into account at a national level the commitments they had just made. He then declared that this twelfth General Assembly had been a success, and closed the session.

**List of annexes:**

Annex I	Speech of the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee
Annex II	Resolution on the ways and means to ensure a representative World Heritage List.

## Annexe I/Annex I

### **Discours du Président du Comité du patrimoine mondial à la 12ème Assemblée Générale des Etats Parties à la Convention concernant la protection du patrimoine mondial, culturel et naturel**

### **Speech of the Chair of the World Heritage Committee to the 12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention for the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage**

M. Koichiro MATSUURA

(Paris, 28 octobre 1999)

Monsieur le Président,  
Monsieur le Représentant du Directeur Général de l'UNESCO,  
Monsieur le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial,  
Excellences,  
Mesdames et Messieurs,  
Et chers amis,

En vous présentant aujourd'hui les activités du Comité du patrimoine mondial pendant les deux dernières années, j'ai une lourde responsabilité envers le Professeur Francesco Francioni qui m'a précédé au poste de Président du Comité, les membres du Comité, le Secrétariat, mais plus particulièrement envers vous, les Etats parties de la Convention.

Au début, j'ai commencé par me poser un certain nombre de questions. Quelles activités, parmi toutes celles mises en oeuvre au nom de la Convention, pourrais-je choisir d'évoquer en priorité ? Quel problème soulever, parmi les centaines qui menacent les sites du patrimoine mondial ? Comment le Comité peut-il, en votre nom, s'assurer de l'application effective de la Convention pour la protection du patrimoine mondial ? Enfin, comment le Comité et les Etats parties, à titre individuel ou collectif, peuvent-ils renforcer les efforts de l'UNESCO en tant que Secrétariat de la Convention, de telle manière que la charge de travail du Comité soit bien gérée, et que les décisions du Comité soient appliquées avec toute l'attention et la compétence techniques requises ?

Convient-il de présenter ces questions devant l'Assemblée générale ? Certes, le rôle statutaire de l'Assemblée générale est avant tout d'élire les membres du Comité du patrimoine mondial, et de déterminer les contributions des Etats parties au Fonds du patrimoine mondial. Mais ces Etats Parties souhaitant de plus en plus être associés aux nouvelles orientations de la Convention, le rôle de l'Assemblée générale a sensiblement évolué ces dernières années.

Avec l'adhésion récente d'Israël, à qui je souhaite la bienvenue, le nombre des Etats signataires est passé à 158. Le Comité de 21 membres peut-il continuer à orienter la mise en oeuvre de la Convention au nom d'un nombre croissant d'Etats ? C'est une question à laquelle nous devons réfléchir. A titre personnel, il me semble que le moment est venu d'étudier la possibilité d'accroître le nombre des représentants des Etats membres au sein du Comité.

Pour la première fois, une question d'ordre opérationnel a été soumise à l'approbation de l'Assemblée générale, lors de sa 11ème session, en 1997 : elle concernait les rapports périodiques sur l'état de conservation des sites inscrits, en application de l'article 29 de la Convention. Après des années de débats qui ont animé les sessions annuelles du Comité, la confiance dans la sagesse collective et l'engagement pour une cause commune l'ont finalement emporté, atténuant les craintes de certains pays d'être atteints dans leur souveraineté nationale. A cet égard, je suis heureux de vous informer que le Comité a approuvé une périodicité de six ans et un format « type » pour les rapports sur l'état de conservation des sites, lors de la session du Comité à Kyoto que j'ai présidée l'année dernière.

Mesdames et Messieurs, cette 12ème session de l'Assemblée générale soumet à votre attention une question fondamentale pour la Convention, relative à la représentativité de la Liste du patrimoine mondial. La « Stratégie globale », élaborée à l'occasion du 20ème anniversaire en 1992, a permis d'identifier certains déséquilibres d'ordre géographique, chronologique et spirituel, de la Liste. En 1994, au cours de sa 18ème session, le Comité a adopté la « Stratégie globale » pour corriger ce déséquilibre. Plusieurs réunions d'experts ont eu lieu dont le compte rendu détaillé figure dans le Rapport du Comité qui vous a été transmis. La participation active des membres du Comité et d'autres Etats Parties, et les réflexions mises en oeuvre pour promouvoir une représentativité équilibrée, sur le plan géographique et par rapport au type de sites inscrits, ont abouti à l'élaboration de plans d'actions régionaux et thématiques.

La réflexion sur la « Stratégie globale » a pu se développer grâce au Fonds du patrimoine mondial et aux contributions extra-budgétaires des Etats parties. De plus, un nombre croissant d'Etats parties contribuent à cette entreprise par la mise à disposition de leurs meilleurs spécialistes. Néanmoins, les déséquilibres s'accroissent, creusant les écarts. Il ne suffit pas d'avoir conscience de ce problème de déséquilibre des sites inscrits sur la Liste : il faut désormais agir rapidement, si l'on souhaite réellement inverser cette tendance qui s'accroît d'année en année.

Comme l'indique le document de travail qui vous a été remis, 42 des Etats parties n'ont aucun site inscrit au patrimoine mondial et 64 autres en ont entre un et trois. Ceci signifie que d'un côté, deux tiers des Etats parties sont sous-représentés, tandis que 54% des sites sont situés dans 20 pays, en majorité en Europe de l'Ouest et en Amérique du Nord.

La question de la répartition géographique des sites n'est, cependant, qu'une partie du problème. Notre recherche d'une représentation universelle pour tous les Etats ne doit pas ignorer le fait que la nature et les réalités géopolitiques ont doté certains d'entre eux d'une plus grande diversité que d'autres. L'un des objectifs les plus importants de la Convention est d'enrichir les catégories de sites de la Liste, afin d'illustrer la richesse et la diversité du patrimoine ethno-culturel et biogéographique de notre planète.

Monsieur le Président, durant mon mandat comme président du Comité, je ne me suis pas seulement contenté d'élaborer des plans d'actions, mais je me suis surtout efforcé de traduire les recommandations en actions concrètes. Comme le dit un proverbe japonais : « Même les poussières, une fois rassemblées, peuvent se transformer en montagnes. ». C'est dans cet esprit que j'ai mis en place un groupe de travail, qui a élaboré un projet de Résolution, sur la base des propositions formulées par différents Etats parties depuis plusieurs années. Ce projet est aujourd'hui soumis à votre lecture et à votre éventuelle approbation.

Ce texte, adopté par le Bureau lors de sa 23<sup>ème</sup> session au mois de juillet dernier, souligne le fait que la représentativité de la Liste du patrimoine mondial ne pourra se faire indépendamment de la mise en oeuvre de la Convention du patrimoine mondial. Il souligne également l'importance du processus de conservation du patrimoine mondial, c'est-à-dire : l'identification des sites par les Etats parties, sa nomination sur la Liste, la procédure d'évaluation, la formation nécessaire pour s'assurer qu'une protection juridique adéquate, et des compétences pour la gestion et la conservation des sites soient disponibles dans les Etats parties. Ce processus prévoit également l'élaboration de rapports sur l'état de conservation des sites, et la mise en oeuvre de mesures qui sensibilisent le public sur la conservation de leur patrimoine. Je vous demande, en tant que membres de l'Assemblée générale, d'adopter cette Résolution, qui permettra de renforcer la capacité d'action des Etats membres.

Mr President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Having drawn your attention to the need to place the representativity issue within the overall context of the Convention, allow me at this juncture to refer to the five essential functions of the World Heritage Committee.

The first function is to identify cultural and natural properties of “outstanding universal value” for inscription on the World Heritage List. In fulfilling this task, the Committee is naturally dependent on the sites nominated by the States Parties. The number of nominations submitted has increased exponentially over the past few years, taxing the ability of the Secretariat to process them, the Advisory Bodies to evaluate them and the Committee to decide on these cases with the attention and scientific vigour that each case merits. In respecting the sovereign right of each State Party, we count on you, the States Parties, to support the objectives of the Global Strategy in the identification and nomination of sites in your country to enhance the representativity of the World Heritage List.

Now I go on to the second task of the Committee, which is to monitor the state of conservation of inscribed sites in co-operation with the States Parties concerned. This task has also created similar pressure. During the past two years, over 200 state of conservation reports have been presented to the Bureau and to the Committee. The increasing number of cases being brought to the attention of the Committee is an indication of the growing reach of the Convention and the authority of the Committee. The Committee's knowledge of conservation problems at sites is essential in mobilizing international co-operation for their safeguard. However, given the time constraint inherent in the Committee's current method of work, how seriously can the Committee treat each case?

This brings me to the third task of the Committee, that of deciding on which of the inscribed properties to include on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Natural calamities, man-made disasters, ill-planned public and private works, and natural resource extraction, particularly mining activities, are among the most frequent causes of ascertained and potential threats to World Heritage sites. Recent cases of in-depth examination for In-Danger listing include: Kathmandu Valley, Yellowstone National Park, Potsdam-Sansoucci, Donana National Park, Virunga National Park, Galapagos Islands, Macchu Picchu, El Vizcaino..... But these are only a few of the well-known cases widely reported in the mass media. The cases are abundant.

Many of these sites have not been inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. However, the objective of initiating corrective measures has necessitated more and more attention, and higher and higher levels of technical and legal knowledge, to address these problems responsibly. The on-going examination of the Kakadu National Park in Australia, is a case in point. The complexity of this case, required the Committee to consider a wide range of issues: from uranium mining technology, to social and economic issues, wetland conservation, and the fundamental rights and spiritual beliefs of indigenous peoples, namely aboriginal people.

In this regard, I wish to congratulate my predecessor, Professor Francesco Francioni, for the exemplary manner in which he initiated the process of evaluation of Kakadu, and for his personal commitment in heading the UNESCO fact-finding mission. To ensure a thorough examination, the Committee under my chairmanship decided to hold an extraordinary session of the Committee, devoted entirely to the case of Kakadu. Despite the considerable financial and human resources this implied, I believe that the credibility of the Committee was enhanced by the thoroughness of its examination and its decision.

The credibility of the Committee also depends on its ability to provide tangible support to States Parties, especially to those who do not have the technical and financial means to take corrective measures on their own.

Now I take up the fourth task of the Committee, which is to determine the most effective use of this World Heritage Fund to assist States Parties in protecting their properties. This is of vital importance. The Committee increased the annual budgetary allocation from the Fund by nearly 19 % for 1998 under the chair of my predecessor. During my term, the budget was further increased by another 14 % to US\$ 4,676,000 for 1999. But despite this, international assistance to States Parties proved inadequate to meet the growing number of requests and their amounts. By June this year, the international assistance budget for cultural properties was literally exhausted. Noting the absence of clear guidelines in the approval process to enable prioritization of the requests – the rule that is applied now being « first come, first serve » – I suggested the linkage of preparatory assistance and training grants to Global Strategy and to give priority to requests from Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Low Income Countries (LICs). The Bureau at its 23<sup>rd</sup> session supported my suggestion, and a draft revision to the Operational Guidelines, to this effect, will be put before the Committee for their endorsement. In the meanwhile, to respond to requests of assistance from under-represented States Parties, particularly of LDCs and LICs, my Government made an exceptional contribution of US\$ 300,000 for preparatory assistance.

Financial resources are indeed vital to initiate timely action. Yes, fund-raising efforts need to be strengthened by multiplying donor sources. But no matter how successful we become in obtaining additional funds, the raising of the budget ceiling is not a sustainable option, given the scope and nature of the problems before us. The Committee's resources will always be limited and the Committee will never have an army of conservation experts for rapid deployment to every trouble spot. If World Heritage sites are increasingly threatened by forces of development, the only strategy is to address the root cause and focus our efforts on the mitigation of risks.

Addressing the root cause has never been popular, for human rights, or for environmental problems. But I ask myself, what holds for the future without the political will and courage of the custodians of international conventions to look at the problem at its source, other than the

demise of the principles contained in these international instruments and the “banalization” of the acts of destruction?

Heritage protection and conservation cannot and must not ignore the valid quest for development and modernity that nations and their citizens demand. One after another, issues of fundamental importance to conservation and development, that together form the quality of life, need to be addressed. I have therefore asked that the issue of World Heritage and mining be presented to the forthcoming sessions of the Bureau and the Committee. As Article 5 of the Convention states, the adoption of a general policy to give cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes, remain the key to World Heritage protection.

This then, brings me to the fifth task of the Committee, and perhaps the most important of all tasks, that of public awareness-building and education for World Heritage conservation. It calls for us all to invest in intelligence. For without the understanding and support of the public at large, without the respect and daily care of the local community, who are the true custodians of World Heritage, no amount of funds, no army of experts will suffice in protecting the sites. In this connection, I am happy that the Committee during my chairmanship accepted the validity of traditional management regime as a protection mechanism required in the fulfilment of the conditions for inscription.

To facilitate the work of the States Parties and the Secretariat in the production and dissemination of educational and information material on World Heritage, the Committee, also during the last session, reached a consensus on a set of general guidelines and on a strategic orientation on public information and fund-raising issues. Again, I hope that these guidelines, as tools for action, will enable all of us to take full advantage of both traditional and locally-based means of community education, as well as new information technologies which are revolutionizing our society. Democratization of access to knowledge and the strengthening of civil society are part of the World Heritage conservation process.

Mr President, the ability of the Committee in fulfilling these tasks, you will agree, depends on the efficiency and energy of the Secretariat. Therefore, I would be remiss if I failed to impress upon the General Assembly, the Committee’s deep appreciation for the excellent work of the Secretariat, particularly the Director and the staff of the World Heritage Centre. I have myself witnessed how hard the Centre has had to work during the Bureau and Committee meetings. If the Committee has managed to accomplish its work only through the suppression of coffee breaks, the prolongation of sessions, and even the organization of an extra-ordinary session, the Secretariat has had to work even later into the night, even without meal breaks, to ensure the smooth deliberation of the Committee.

This situation cannot continue. The working method of the Committee needs to be reviewed so that it can continue to meet the challenges responsibly. And the World Heritage Centre needs to be strengthened with more staff and financial resources. In this connection, I wish to remind the representatives of the States Parties, that a Draft Resolution on the strengthening of the World Heritage Centre has been submitted to the General Assembly. I hope that you will all agree that the importance of the Centre’s work merits every support we can provide.

Lastly, I would like to express, on behalf of the World Heritage Committee, our sincere gratitude to the Royal Government of Morocco for its generosity in hosting the forthcoming

session of the Committee in Marrakesh. I hope that the session will be attended by as many States Parties as possible – both as members and as observers.

Mr President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In concluding my report, I would like to say that this past year as Chair of the World Heritage Committee, has strengthened the conviction that I had gained during my years of diplomatic service covering all five continents of the world. That is the conviction that it is not money that makes the world turn around, but pride and dignity. Pride over one's inherited and acquired possessions, whether individual, communal or national, and the recognition by others of this value, I believe, are both the source of human dignity and the motivating force for creativity. Because we cherish, we protect, and to protect, we share...

Thank you for your attention.

## ANNEX II

### RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE Paris, 28 - 29 October 1999

#### THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- **Considering** that the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, referred to here under as the 1972 Convention, is a general framework for international co-operation,
  - **Underlining** the importance of finding the correct balance between the various activities linked to the implementation of the Convention, in particular nominations of properties on the List, reporting on the state of conservation, training of specialists, and improving public awareness to safeguard the heritage of humankind,
  - **Noting** that the representative nature of the World Heritage List has been the subject of numerous debates by the World Heritage Committee since 1979,
  - **Recognizing** that since the adoption of the Global Strategy by the World Heritage Committee at its eighteenth session in December 1994 with a view to improving the representativity of the List, this objective has not been attained, despite the remarkable efforts of the Secretariat and States Parties concerned,
  - **Noting** that at present **two-thirds** of the States Parties have fewer than three sites on the List and that their heritage of outstanding universal value is still under-represented or not represented,
1. **Agrees** to give its full support for the implementation of the Convention, in the States Parties whose heritage is still under-represented on the List,
  2. **Recognizes** the interest of all the States Parties and the advisory bodies in preserving the authority of the 1972 Convention, by improving, through appropriate means, the representativity of the World Heritage List which must reflect the diversity of all cultures and ecosystems of all regions,
  3. **Endorses** the objectives of the Global Strategy while **reaffirming** the sovereign rights of the States Parties and the sovereign role of the General Assembly,
  4. **Shares** the will expressed by the World Heritage Committee at its twenty-second session in December 1998 "to move from recommendations to action" and to improve the representativity of the List, and therefore:

**A. Invites all the States Parties to:**

- i) Give the highest priority to the *"adoption of a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes"*, according to Article 5 of the 1972 Convention,
- ii) Take measures to redress the imbalance and improve the representativity of the World Heritage List, in order to reinforce the authority of the 1972 Convention,
- iii) Prepare or re-examine their tentative lists in the light of the methodology developed and regional and thematic definitions by focusing on categories of heritage which are still under-represented on the List,
- iv) Rigorously establish the outstanding universal value of properties when preparing the tentative lists,
- v) Give priority to the submission of nominations resulting from regional consultations in the categories under-represented that highlight notably the interaction between human beings and their environment and human beings in society, expressing the diversity and richness of living or past cultures.

**B. Invites the States Parties that already have a substantial number of sites inscribed on the World Heritage List to:**

- i) Apply paragraph 6 (vii) of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention:
  - a) by spacing voluntarily their nominations according to conditions that they will define, and/or
  - b) by proposing only properties falling into categories still under-represented, and/or
  - c) by linking each of their nominations with a nomination presented by a State Party whose heritage is under-represented, or
  - d) by deciding, on a voluntary basis, to suspend the presentation of new nominations,and  
to inform the Committee of the measures taken,
- ii) Initiate and encourage bilateral and multilateral co-operation with States Parties whose heritage is still under-represented in the List within the framework of the preparation of tentative lists, nominations and training programmes,
- iii) Give priority to the re-examination of their tentative lists within the framework of regional consultations and to the preparation of periodic reports.

**C. Invites the States Parties whose heritage is still under-represented on the List to:**

- i) Give priority to the preparation of tentative lists and nominations,
- ii) Initiate and consolidate at regional level, partnerships based on the exchange of technical expertise,
- iii) Encourage bilateral and multilateral co-operation so as to increase their expertise and the technical capacities of institutions in charge of the protection, safeguard and management of their heritage,
- iv) Participate, as much as possible, in the meetings of the World Heritage Committee.

**D. Invites the advisory bodies to:**

- i) Pursue their collaboration with the Secretariat for the preparation and co-ordination of regional consultations,
- ii) Pursue their programmes of thematic studies and the classification of the themes into sub-themes, on the basis of the tentative lists prepared by States Parties and the recommendations of the regional experts meetings,
- iii) Observe the greatest scientific rigour during the evaluation of the proposals for inscription, so that the decisions of the Committee can reflect more systematically the positive results of the implementation of the Global Strategy,
- iv) Develop mechanisms that would give experts of the regions under-represented on the List the necessary training to prepare and evaluate nominations and ensure the state of conservation of properties.

**E. Invites the World Heritage Committee to:**

- i) Continue its actions undertaken within the framework of the Global Strategy,
- ii) Provide the necessary resources from the World Heritage Fund to support the efforts of the States Parties whose heritage is still under-represented on the List, in order to increase the number of their nominations,
- iii) Adopt a regional and multi-year Action Plan for the implementation of the Global Strategy, as a follow-up to the Action Plan adopted in 1999,
- iv) Evaluate the progress in the implementation of the Global Strategy Action Plan with the participation of all States Parties and define, should the need arise, adjustment measures to fulfil its objectives.

**F. Invites the Secretariat of the Convention to:**

- i) Pursue its collaboration with the advisory bodies in the framework of regional consultations,
- ii) Support in particular the efforts of States Parties whose heritage is still under-represented on the List in the preparation of their tentative lists and nominations,
- iii) Ensure that the human resources allocated to the implementation of the Action Plan are consistent with its objectives,
- iv) Submit to the General Assembly a progress report on the implementation of the regional and multi-year Action Plan.

**G. Invites the international community and more particularly the donor agencies to :**

- i) Support, in co-operation with the advisory bodies and the Secretariat, the protection of cultural and natural heritage and the implementation of the 1972 Convention,
- ii) Give priority to the actions directed towards the implementation of the Global Strategy, undertaken in States Parties whose heritage is still under-represented on the List.

**The General Assembly invites all States Parties, the advisory bodies and the Secretariat to transmit this resolution to the concerned agencies.**