



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



World
Heritage
Convention

**Information Meeting on the
Second Cycle of the Periodic Reporting Exercise
in Europe and North America**

**Side Event at the occasion of the
38th Session of the World Heritage Committee**

Thursday, 19 June 2014 – 13.45 p.m.-14.45 p.m.

Qatar National Convention Centre, Doha

SUMMARY

Focus of the meeting:

- **Presentation of current status of the Periodic Reporting Exercise**
- **Presentation of the results Group A**
- **Presentation of an Outline of the Periodic Reporting Publication**

Welcome

The Chief of the Europe & North America Unit opened the meeting by presenting the meeting agenda as well as the speakers.

Current Status of the Exercise

The Coordinator for the Second Cycle Periodic Reporting for Europe and North America Unit began by presenting the current status of the Periodic Reporting Exercise, specifically with regard to Group B, for whom the Exercise is still ongoing. She reminded the State Parties of the statutory deadline of **31 July 2014** for the submission and validation of the questionnaires.

The Coordinator also reminded the States Parties of two important tools: the *Periodic Reporting Handbook for Site Managers* (available [online](#) and in print) and the *Frequently Asked Questions* publication for the Second Cycle of the Periodic Reporting Exercise.

The States Parties were also informed of the current status of the preparation of retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value (rSOUV) and their adoption by the World Heritage Committee. The main lessons learnt over the last two years (arising from 159 rSOUV finalised, agreed, and adopted) include:

- the crucial importance of using the “track changes” function;
- avoiding time-bound references whenever possible;
- using gender-neutral language.

The Coordinator further informed participants that the next batch of Statements reviewed by Advisory Bodies would be made available in October 2014, and that the deadline for agreeing upon drafts between the States Parties and the Advisory Bodies for 39 COM will be **1 March 2015**.

The Coordinator also reminded the Focal Points about the main points discussed during the Mid-Cycle Review meeting at UNESCO in November 2013:

- the Periodic Reporting exercise should become an increasingly State-Party driven process;
- the Exercise provides the States Parties with data that they are encouraged to use at the national level as soon as it becomes available, to which end the national Periodic Reporting data sets are sent to the Focal Points;
- funding from States Parties is crucial to ensure the proper implementation of the current and future Periodic Reporting Cycles.

Lastly, she informed the participants that the Short Summary Reports for Group A are already available online, and proposed to proceed similarly for Group B. Unless an objection is received by the World Heritage Centre at the time of submission of the PR Reports by the 31 July 2014, the Short Summary Reports for Group B will be available online by September 2014.

In response to a question, the **Coordinator** clarified that the Short Summary Reports also included the comments by the State Parties on the questionnaire.

The **Coordinator** encouraged the State Parties to use the online Periodic Reporting database to enrich and update their management plans and national strategies.

The Chief of the Europe & North America Unit presented the next steps for the Europe region including the preparation of the Europe Periodic Report and the Action Plan which will be presented to the World Heritage Committee at its 39th session.

The Representative of Finland invited all Focal Points in the Europe region to the Final Europe Periodic Reporting Meeting on, to be held at the Fortress of Suomenlinna, Helsinki in the first week of December 2014 (tentative dates: 1-2 December 2014).

The Chief of the Europe & North America Unit welcomed Finland's initiative and thanked the State Party for hosting this important meeting.

Presentation of the North American Report

The Periodic Reporting Focal Points for Canada, Ms Rebecca Kennedy, and the United States of America, Ms Phyllis Ellin, shared the outcomes of the Second Cycle for the North America region. They emphasized that in comparison to the Europe sub-region, 60% of the North American properties are natural, some having gained international reputation as iconic sites before the inscription on the World Heritage List, and that the awareness about the World Heritage status is sometimes lacking.

Besides, many of the cultural sites also exhibit characteristics that are specific to North America, i.e. they reflect the heritage of aboriginal populations or reflect the European colonial experience, thereby sharing themes and attributes with properties in Latin America and the Caribbean Region.

They also noted that the total number of World Heritage properties is relatively low, taking into consideration the size of the continent of North America. The Focal Points stated that future nomination projects will aim to address some of the gaps identified also through the PR exercise in North America.

They briefly shared their experience filling out Section II of the PR questionnaire and highlighted some discrepancies in the way each site manager interpreted the questionnaire, in particular concerning the factors affecting the properties.

Presentation of Trends and Insights from Group A Questionnaires

Mr Christopher Young gave a presentation on the *Trends and Insights from the Group A Periodic Reporting Questionnaires*. He explained that it is difficult to compare the First and Second Cycles, given the different sample size (93 in the First Cycle, 170 alone for Group A), as well as the differences between the two questionnaires. Mr Young recalled the main results as a follow-up of the First Cycle, including the drafting or adoption of retrospective Statements of OUV for many properties, and the improvements with clarified boundaries of World Heritage properties.

Regarding **Section I** of the Second Cycle, he noted the positive progress made by States Parties with their inventories, but noted that some considered their legislation inadequate, and that further improvements in the enforcement of existing legislation is called for. He also noted that the implementation of the *Convention* remains complex for most States Parties, and that the strategies for capacity-building, education, and awareness-raising could be improved. The factors with the greatest negative impact on natural World Heritage properties include: illegal activities; impacts of tourism/visitors/recreation; effects arising from transport infrastructure; solid waste; erosion; and siltation/deposition. The top negative factors

affecting cultural properties include: impacts of tourism/visitors/recreation; effects arising from transport infrastructure and ground transport infrastructure; housing; and deliberate destruction of heritage.

Regarding the statistical data for **natural and mixed properties**, it was difficult to draw any firm conclusions at this stage due to the limited number of sites (18) in this category. However, it was found that protection measures and the definition of boundaries for most of the natural properties were found to be adequate, but invasive species seem to be a major issue in oversea islands. There were some adverse factors affecting the natural and mixed properties, which however were found to be mostly under control.

For cultural properties, main findings include the need for World Heritage policies at national level, and the need to clearly define buffer zones. It was also noted that management is adequate but there is often a need for more effective integration of different legal systems and agencies at national / local level. In terms of capacity-building, a particular need was identified for developing new partnerships at local level. Finally, it was noted for the cultural properties that the monitoring systems need to be developed.

The **main conclusions** drawn from the analysis of Group A include the need to improve basic data to support the management of properties. However, the following areas also have potential for improvement: the revision process for rSOUV; the implementation of the legislative framework; and efforts towards capacity-building, awareness-raising, community involvement and education. Lastly, regarding the main threats, Mr Young also noted visitor and development pressure, as well as the impact of climate change.

Mr Young noted that special attention ought to be paid to transnational, transboundary and serial properties (cultural, natural and mixed).

Moreover, he pointed out the difficulties encountered for the categorization of the World Heritage properties as a basis for a more thematic approach to the analysis of the PR data. It was noted that with the current resources, a categorisation of all the World Heritage properties in the Europe region has not been found feasible.

Presentation of an Outline of the Periodic Reporting Publication

Mr Young presented a possible outline for the Periodic Reporting publication, aimed at a wider audience than the Report presented to the Committee. He proposed a few key themes to focus this short publication:

- The effectiveness of the definition of Outstanding Universal Value, including Integrity and/or Authenticity, and property boundaries and buffer zones; possibilities for adjusting criteria (and SOUV) with a simplified procedure (without a full re-nomination);
- Factors affecting the properties and commonalities across the region and sub-regions: what are the main threats?
- The effectiveness of protection, management and monitoring systems;
- Sub-regional differences and similarities;
- Natural/ cultural differences and similarities;
- Specific needs of serial, transnational and transboundary properties.

He also reminded the participants that those themes would be discussed in further detail at the meeting in December, and invited them to think whether they would wish to add specific aspects or revise the balance of this outline.

Points Raised During the Q&A Session

The Chief of the Europe & North America Unit confirmed that there is currently no procedure in place for the modification of an adopted retrospective Statements of OUV and that the next revision of the *Operational Guidelines* might be an opportunity to introduce such a procedure and invited the States Parties to actively participate in the relevant working group.

It was also noted that a Reflection Year at the end of the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting is planned and that the Helsinki Meeting may be a good opportunity to start the reflection process on the improvement of the Periodic Reporting exercise as a whole for the Third Cycle.

Mr Young highlighted a few key points for the Reflection Year. First, he proposed to improve the online database. Second, he suggested that the Centre limit changes in the questionnaire to make it easier to track trends across cycles. Finally, he suggested that specific regions may need 'tailor-made' sections to address their specific regional needs.

The Chief of the Europe & North America Unit thanked the participants for their attention, and brought the meeting to a close, reminding all involved that the next meeting would be the Final Meeting for the Periodic Reporting Exercise in the Europe and North America Region and would take place on 1-2 December in Helsinki.