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

Paris, UNESCO Headquarters
18-20 November 2015

Item 8 of the Provisional Agenda: Determination of the amount of the contributions to the World Heritage Fund in accordance with the provisions of Article 16 of the *World Heritage Convention*

SUMMARY

This document relates to Article 16 of the *World Heritage Convention*, according to which the General Assembly of States Parties to the *Convention* shall determine the amount of the contributions to the World Heritage Fund in the form of a uniform percentage applicable to all States Parties.

Draft Resolution: 20 GA 8, see Part II

I. DETERMINATION OF THE AMOUNT OF THE STATES PARTIES' CONTRIBUTIONS

1. The *World Heritage Convention* in its Article 15 established “a Fund for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of Outstanding Universal Value”, called “the World Heritage Fund” that consists mainly of “compulsory and voluntary contributions made by States Parties to this *Convention*.”
2. In accordance with Article 16.1. of the *World Heritage Convention*, the General Assembly of States Parties to the *Convention* determines every two years, in the form of a uniform percentage, the amount of contributions to be paid by States Parties to the World Heritage Fund.
3. Article 16.1. of the *World Heritage Convention* further states that “in no case shall the compulsory contribution of States Parties to the Convention exceed 1% of the contribution to the regular budget of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.” As per Article 16.4 of the *Convention*, the assessed voluntary contributions of States Parties to this Convention “should not be less than the contributions which they should have paid if they had been bound by the provisions of paragraph 1 of this Article.”
4. Considering the debates that are taking place within the Organization among the Governing Bodies on the regular budget of UNESCO for 2016-2017, the current 1% of the contribution to the regular budget for the World Heritage Fund, as stated in the *Convention*, will not allow the Fund to increase, or even maintain its current level.
5. Over the past years, a great number of States Parties, including Committee members, have expressed their concern that the World Heritage Fund has become unsustainable. The World Heritage Fund currently relies on the assessed contributions of States Parties. As it would be neither realistic and nor helpful in the short-term, States Parties are unlikely to undergo the lengthy process of renewed ratification to change the provisions of the Convention in this regard. Thus, the only possible way to ensure the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund in the long term is to increase voluntary contributions.
6. Many attempts to increase the voluntary contributions through proposals from the Secretariat or decisions from Governing Bodies over the past years have shown limited results. The General Assembly, in its Resolution **19 GA 8** paragraph 5, had also requested the Director-General of UNESCO to include in the letter to States Parties requesting payment of the assessed compulsory and voluntary contributions to the World Heritage Fund, an additional paragraph requesting for States Parties to make supplementary voluntary contributions.
7. Despite the numerous decisions of the World Heritage Committee recognizing the urgent need to achieve the sustainability of the Fund and encouraging States Parties to contribute (please refer to the recent Decisions by the World Heritage Committee on this matter: decisions [38 COM 12](#) and [39 COM 15](#)); there is no substantial result at the global level, except for the initiatives of a few States Parties. As shown in the List of other voluntary contributions for the period 1 January 2014 to 30 June 2015 (cf. Document WHC-15/20.GA/INF.7), only three States Parties have provided unrestricted contributions. One of these States Parties is Australia, which is the only State Party to have doubled its contribution each year as per Option 1 of Resolution **19 GA 8** paragraph 7.

8. Upon further research and analysis, as well as on the basis of the work carried out as reflected in Document WHC-12/36.COM/15.Rev, a new proposal is being made to the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention to increase unrestricted supplementary voluntary contributions to the World Heritage Fund. This proposal is described in the following paragraphs.
9. The Statement of Compulsory and Voluntary Contributions as at 30 June 2015 (cf. Document WHC-15/20.GA/INF.7) shows that the smallest assessed contribution to the World Heritage Fund amounts to \$33 per annum. As shown in Table 1¹, assessed contributions have been arranged in 8 categories from \$0 to \$999,999

Table 1: Categories of States Parties' contributions to the World Heritage Fund in 2015

Categories	Amount based on 2015 Annual Assessed Contribution (in USD)	N° of States Parties	Percentage of the total number of States Parties	Total contribution (in USD)	Percentage of the total contribution
A	0-499	96	50%	13 827	0,42%
B	500-999	13	7%	8 978	0,27%
C	1 000-4 999	33	17%	76 433	2,34%
D	5 000-9 999	10	5%	76 106	2,33%
E	10 000-49 999	24	13%	502 323	15,39%
F	50 000-99 999	8	4%	616 856	18,89%
G	100 000-499 999	6	3%	1 251 930	38,35%
H	500 000-999 999	1	1%	718 300	22,00%
	Total	191	100%	3 264 753	100,00%

10. Table 1 above shows that 96 States Parties out of 191 (i.e. 50%) pay an annual assessed contribution of less than \$500 to the World Heritage Fund. If annual contributions below \$5,000 are taken into consideration, this would include 46 additional States Parties, bringing the total to 142 States Parties (i.e. 74%). At the same time, seven States Parties with an assessed contribution above \$100,000 represent more than 60% of the assessment.
11. For State Parties in categories A, B and C, it is proposed to apply a minimum contribution on a voluntary basis to complement the assessed contributions so that these States Parties contribute \$500, \$1,000 or \$5,000 respectively. This would allow States Parties to participate more substantially towards the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund. In addition, it is proposed that States Parties with assessed contributions above \$5,000 increase their contributions by 50%.
12. For example, a State Party paying an assessed contribution of \$33 would, according to this formula, continue to pay \$33, but would complement it with an unrestricted additional voluntary contribution of \$467 to reach a minimum of \$500 for its category. The same would apply to the two next categories until \$5,000.

¹ As the contributions will depend on the 38 C/5 budget ceiling that will be adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO and the new scale of assessments of the United Nations, the amounts for 2016-2017 are not determined yet, and thus the analysis is based on the Statement of Compulsory and Voluntary Contributions as at 30 June 2015 (cf. Document WHC-15/20.GA/INF.7).

13. If both the minimum threshold and the 50 % increase are applied to all 191 States Parties, this would help to augment the World Heritage Fund by up to \$1,709,520 annually. The results of the different formulas applied to the categories are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Simulation of voluntary contributions complementing assessed contributions

Categories	Amount based on 2015 Annual Assessed Contribution (in USD)	N° of States Parties	Total contribution (in USD)	Threshold/ Increase per State Party	Target Contribution to receive (in USD)	Additional Contribution to be requested (in USD)
A	0-499	96	13 827	\$500	48 000	34 173
B	500-999	13	8 978	\$1 000	13 000	4 022
C	1 000-4 999	33	76 433	\$5 000	165 000	88 567
D	5 000-9 999	10	76 106	50%	114 159	38 053
E	10 000-49 999	24	502 323	50%	753 485	251 162
F	50 000-99 999	8	616 856	50%	925 284	308 428
G	100 000-499 999	6	1 251 930	50%	1 877 895	625 965
H	500 000-999 999	1	718 300	50%	1 077 450	359 150
	Total	191	3 264 753		4 974 273	1 709 520

14. In addition to the proposal above, it is reminded that each State Party may contribute to the World Heritage Fund at any time according to the options recommended by the General Assembly at its 19th session to States Parties for allocating unrestricted supplementary voluntary contributions to the World Heritage Fund (Resolution **19 GA 8**).
15. This proposal takes into account the ratio costs/benefits of the administrative process to prepare and send to responsible ministries, with copies to National Commissions and Permanent Delegations, assessment letters for contributions amounting to \$33. As bank fees applied to wire transfers can represent a significant charge for transfers of small amounts, States Parties having their Permanent Delegations in Paris often pay their contributions by cheques instead of bank transfers, leading to additional manual processing for small amounts.
16. With the approval of the General Assembly, the proposed measures could lead to a first concrete step towards achieving the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund and increasing its resources. The draft resolution presented in the next section is proposed in these terms.

II. DRAFT RESOLUTION

Draft Resolution: 20 GA 8

The General Assembly,

1. *Having examined Documents WHC-15/20.GA/8 and WHC-15/20.GA/INF.8;*
2. *Recalling Article 16 paragraph 1 of the World Heritage Convention on the determination, in the form of a uniform percentage, of the amount of the contributions to be paid to the World Heritage Fund by States Parties;*
3. *Decides to set at 1% the percentage for the calculation of the amount of the contributions to be paid to the World Heritage Fund by States Parties for the financial period 2016-2017;*
4. *Notes the status of compulsory and voluntary contributions to the World Heritage Fund as presented in Document WHC-13/19.GA/INF.8;*
5. *Decides to apply to States Parties the proposed formulas to their assessed contributions – compulsory or voluntary – to reach a minimum threshold or increase the contributions depending on the respective category of each State Party, on a voluntary basis, as unrestricted supplementary voluntary contributions to the World Heritage Fund as presented in Table 2 of Document WHC-15/20.GA/8;*
6. *Reiterates the plea of the World Heritage Committee to States Parties to the Convention to pay their annual contributions by 31 January wherever possible in order to facilitate the timely implementation of the activities financed by the World Heritage Fund.*