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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL
ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD
CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Twenty-seventh session
Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, Room XII
30 June - 5 July 2003

Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda: Report of the Secretariat

DRAFT DECISION

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The World Heritage Committee,

Notes the report of the Secretariat presented in WHC-03/27.COM/5.

Dear World Heritage Committee Members,
States Parties to the *World Heritage Convention*,
Delegates, observers and invited guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Director-General, it is my pleasure to transmit to you the Report of the Secretariat to the 27th session of the World Heritage Committee.

I would like first of all to express my thanks to you for your continuous support to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre throughout the past year in accomplishing our mission: promoting the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* and of the decisions taken by the Committee.

You will find a full and detailed account of the activities of the Secretariat in your working and information documents. Throughout the week we will have the chance to present to you the many and varied aspects of the activities we conduct under your direction.

Given the limited time available at this session, I would like to focus your attention on a selection of important management issues that we are faced with and which require your attention and decision.

The process of reform that the Committee embarked upon some years ago converged with another process, that of the Periodic Reporting exercise. Periodic Reporting has brought about some fundamental changes in the implementation of the Convention by the States Parties. The Centre, in accompanying the Committee in the process of reform and the States Parties in the process of Periodic Reporting, has had to adapt to the changes brought about by these new procedures.

Periodic Reporting, now completed in the first cycle for the Arab States, Africa and Asia-Pacific, and in progress for Latin America and the Caribbean, and initiated for North America and Europe, has led to direct contact in a systematic manner between national and local authorities of the States Parties and the Secretariat, forging closer relations. What has emerged is a new solidarity as we share the same goals.

At the same time, heritage protection is slowly but surely being mainstreamed. It has benefited from major international agendas, the Stockholm Conference of 1998, mobilization in the preparation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, and now finding its place in the Millennium Agenda. We are witnessing a process of political decentralization with a new importance given to democratic and local governance, greater recognition of the civil society and civic groups, and new partnerships formed between the public and private sectors. These movements and trends in society are also impacting on heritage protection and conservation, notably through the affirmation of identity, the protection of cultural diversity and the promotion of sustainable development.

More than ever before, and on a daily basis, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre is being invited to participate in conservation actions or informed of threats to World

Heritage properties. This Committee is being requested to examine 134 state of conservation reports, however, there are many more that the Advisory Bodies, the Centre and colleagues at UNESCO have reviewed but not transmitted to the Committee in the interest of time management.

For these reasons and more, the past year has been an important period. With staff and financial resources stretched beyond limits we have grasped opportunities for growth and consolidation for the World Heritage Centre both in terms of its internal organization and its strategic planning for the future. As I look back over the accomplishments of the past year, I see a Centre that has: grown in operational capacities; successfully met important challenges; and also, finally, has some improved equipment and office space.

During the past year the Centre deployed a considerable extra effort. Not only did we organize two very important Committee sessions in Budapest (June 2002) and Paris (March 2003), and a Bureau session in Paris (April 2002), but we also organized many events worldwide for the 30th anniversary of the *World Heritage Convention*, culminating in the International Congress held in Venice last November. The success of all these initiatives proved that the Convention is more than ever a leading force in the world of conservation.

These results would not have been possible without your support and the commitment of the people who make up your Secretariat.

I am sure that all of you will join me in thanking my staff, a team of qualified and committed professionals, among the best in the world of conservation today, for their truly extraordinary efforts.

I would like to provide you with my own assessment of where we stand in the management of some critical aspects of our system, and to explain how I intend to lead the Centre in the coming year, in order to implement your decisions in the most effective way possible and to meet the challenges ahead.

The points that I will cover are:

- I. The structure and organization of the World Heritage Centre
- II. The World Heritage Fund and strategies to strengthen our financial situation
- III. The implementation of the Global Strategy for a credible, balanced and representative World Heritage List
- IV. The future development of our state of conservation and Periodic Reporting system
- V. The new World Heritage Information Management System
- VI. The changing system of International Assistance
- VII. Working methods and workloads

I. The structure and organization of the World Heritage Centre

In the last two years, the Centre's organizational structure has been defined and structured in a "matrix" form. Two Sections have been established, for Culture and Nature, and five Regional Units with responsibilities in both sections. The Culture and Nature Sections have a coordinating role, develop special projects and support the Regional Units with a small, specialized staff. As we did not have a sufficient number of professionals to staff all the Regional Units with experts in both cultural and natural heritage, I gave the Nature Section the special task of following directly the activities of those Regional Units lacking specific natural heritage capacities. Gradually, I plan to staff all Regional Units with experts in both fields.

As of today, the Regional Units for Europe and North America, Africa and the Arab States cover both fields, while Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean still require additional staffing.

In addition to the Regional Units, I have established three thematic Units, for (i) Administration, (ii) Policy and Statutory Implementation (including Statutory Documentation and Registration) and (iii) Promotion, Publications and Education.

I will in the course of the next year also establish a new Partnerships Unit, and an Information Management Unit. A Special Project Unit for Remote Sensing and Satellite Imagery will also be established and will be coordinated by the Nature Section.

Needless to say, staffing is a critical point for the effectiveness of the Centre. Although we have been able to retain all existing posts (26 posts allocated in the 31C/5 with 2 additional posts acquired during the current biennium) in the UNESCO Programme and Budget 2004 - 2005 (32C/5), there is a significant shortfall in the levels required to properly fulfill our mission.

I have deployed considerable efforts to obtain resources from States Parties and other donors to expand the staff with the result that the Centre's human resources have increased in the past two years. However, most of the growth is made up of temporary staff provided under agreements with governments or hired on Appointments of Limited Duration (ALD's) or consultant contracts. In short, the staffing situation remains critical. In particular, I feel that as our activities develop, I will need to further strengthen our Regional Units, as well as all the awareness raising activities, both for developing partnerships and for the information and education of the vast public interested in World Heritage conservation.

As we need to look ahead, it is clear that increasing the staff of our information system is a key element of our mission: outreach is becoming an increasingly complex endeavor, giving the size of our information society, but we must and we will meet the challenge.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Governments that have so generously supported us by seconding staff or supporting ALD contracts. This type of support is required on an on-going basis and I encourage those States Parties that have the capacity

to do so to provide additional staff support to the Centre in the future. It is a good investment: your professionals will be trained in the job and when they return to their home country, will be a valuable asset in your country's own implementation of the Convention.

However, the next biennium will not be an easy one from the point of view of the staff. This is why I have proposed – on an exceptional basis – to earmark for staff costs part of the additional resources that the General Conference may attribute to the World Heritage Fund as a compensatory measure to cope with the decline of the World Heritage Fund budget. I will provide more details on this issue in document WHC-03/27.COM/11 Add. These resources – should they be made available – could cover the cost of two ALDs for statutory documentation and registration, which I am sure you will agree are key functions in the management of the Convention.

II. The World Heritage Fund and strategies to reinforce our financial situation

The first and foremost issue you will find in front of you is the significant decline of the World Heritage Fund (WHC-03/27.COM/11). This decline was partially foreseen – if you look at the records of the past meetings you will see that I had already alerted the Committee of this impending situation- as we have been running expenditure higher than income by drawing on the reserves. The Committee always expressed its intention to draw on the reserves, and now they have been significantly reduced, the Contingency Reserve is in the process of being brought to zero as proposed by the Secretariat.

The second factor of the reduction is the unexpected decline in the contributions of the Member States to UNESCO, due to the re-entry of the United States of America. As the World Heritage Fund is assessed as a percentage of that contribution, the result is a loss to the World Heritage Fund of about US\$1.5 million for the coming biennium.

Fortunately, these losses have been largely compensated by the new resources the Centre was able to mobilize during the past 3 years through bilateral agreements. While this provides some relief in the overall picture, it is clear that we have to study new ways of acquiring additional financial resources in the future. Some of these actions can be conducted by the Secretariat along lines already approved by the Committee (fund raising, partnerships, etc), some require your immediate action. In particular, I would like to propose that the Committee could:

- Invite the Director-General to provide a contribution – on an exceptional basis – to the World Heritage Fund in order to compensate the losses encountered.
- Invite States Parties to contribute to the World Heritage Fund on a voluntary basis the savings obtained in the next biennium due to the reduction of their annual contributions to UNESCO.
- Propose new voluntary contributions to the next General Assembly of States Parties (14GASP), along the lines already discussed, albeit not agreed, at the 13GASP in 2001.

For our part, I intend to pursue the strategy defined in the past three years in the following areas:

- Further development of bi-lateral agreements with States Parties. In the past 2 years, 5 new agreements, with Australia, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and New Zealand, have been signed. Another, with the United Kingdom is under discussion. Two existing UNESCO-wide agreements, with France and Japan respectively, have been used to support World Heritage projects and monitoring activities. Significant earmarked contributions and donations have been received from Belgium, China, Flanders (Belgium), Greece, Norway, the Nordic World Heritage Foundation and Spain.
- Development of partnerships with multilateral organizations. While no direct cash contribution is expected to the World Heritage Fund from this type of relationship, such agreements can provide extremely important support to World Heritage properties and their conservation, especially in the most critical areas. Agreements with the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and with the UNDP-GEF Small Grants Programme, as well as some bilateral aid institutions, such as JBIC (Japan Bank for International Cooperation) are currently being finalized.
- Development of partnerships with the private sector. In addition to the existing partnership with the United Nations Foundation (UNF), by large the most important partner of the Centre and now a significant actor in the development of our overall strategy, the Centre is launching the World Heritage PaCt, our partnership initiative (WHC-03/27.COM/20C), which was welcomed by the Committee at its 26th session in Budapest (June 2002). While the World Heritage PaCt is for the moment oriented to Corporations, Foundations and major international NGOs, we are separately discussing the development of a public fund-raising programme (Friends of World Heritage) in collaboration with UNF.

These actions are all necessary responses to the current financial crisis, but they will require some time to come to full fruition. In the meantime, I have proposed a World Heritage Fund budget (WHC-03/27.COM/11) that seeks to optimize the use of the available resources according to the orientations expressed by the Committee. You will find in the new budget a stronger emphasis on regional Programmes and on our main lines of activities, such as Periodic Reporting and Reactive Monitoring. Conversely, you will also find a consistent reduction of the funds dedicated to other important chapters such as Emergency Assistance.

III. The implementation of the Global Strategy for a credible, balanced and representative World Heritage List

For almost a decade, the Committee has considered the Global Strategy a key element of its work. Universality in accession of the Convention has almost been reached, but imbalances and gaps in the World Heritage List persist despite many efforts. As you know, the Centre and Advisory Bodies have given Global Strategy actions high priority, and have been able to develop a large number of activities in this area, in all regions of the world. In very close cooperation with ICOMOS, IUCN and ICCROM, training

workshops and technical assistance have been provided to develop tentative lists and for the preparation of nominations. These efforts have yielded very important results notably in greatly improved nominations.

And yet, the gaps in the List, from a regional and thematic point of view continue to grow. This shows the need to further increase our efforts, and to link more strictly the system of international cooperation to the Global Strategy.

I think that in the coming biennium, this link will be developed even further, through the Regional Programmes, a new tool that should help us in advancing a more integrated approach in strengthening the capacities of States Parties to prepare strategic plans and actions, strengthen laws and management, prepare nominations and manage effectively the inscribed sites.

At the same time, the analysis started by the Advisory Bodies and the Centre on the List and Tentative Lists will be completed, and should guide you in defining your policies and priorities.

I see this area as a critical one for our system: unless we manage to give it a big emphasis, the risks of even greater imbalances in the List will be very high.

IV. The future development of our state of conservation and Periodic Reporting system

The reporting system on World Heritage that the Committee has established, founded on the Periodic Reporting cycle and on the reactive monitoring process, is an extremely valuable asset of the *World Heritage Convention*. This key component of our activities is tremendously important within the world of conservation. Nowhere else will you find a comparable system of monitoring and evaluation of the state of conservation of sites. Furthermore, it certainly represents a major financial and technical contribution on the part of the Convention to the overall conservation movement.

As we enter the 4th year of implementation of Periodic Reporting, it is perhaps timely to reflect on ways to make the system even more effective for the States Parties and for other governmental and non-governmental organizations.

For the present, I foresee the following priority areas for improvement:

- Integration of the data provided by the Periodic Reporting in the new Information Management System currently under implementation. This will allow us to build a system of “country profiles” that can be updated continuously, and a data bank on the situation of the World Heritage sites and on the monitoring activities being carried out by the States Parties, the Centre, the Advisory Bodies and other organizations (including UNEP-WCMC). This data bank can benefit from the collaboration with other entities working on a similar basis, such as the Council of Europe, the World Bank, or the Getty Conservation Institute.

- Dissemination of the information. We will study ways to make part or all of the information available to the public through our web site, and systems of passwords for more restricted uses.
- Publication of an annual or biennial report on the state of the World Heritage.

V. The new World Heritage Information Management System

Over the past two years, the Centre has worked to develop a new Information Management System that will rationalize our information flow and improve the quality of our service both to States Parties and to the public. I have recently taken steps to accelerate the process and to increase the resources for this area of activity, which I see as strategically important. We are completing the restructuring of the system and enhancing the web site. Significant resources have been mobilized with the support of many States Parties and other donors. Indeed, I hope to be able to increase them even further in the future, with the help of some of the most advanced Information Technology corporations.

I would like to see the work undertaken in this sphere evolve into an area of international cooperation, to enable States Parties to improve their own systems of information management on their World Heritage sites. A first example of this future strategy is the cooperation we have established within the Arab States.

Public access to our information on World Heritage should be a central part of this Information Management Strategy. In the coming months we will prepare a data access protocol. We shall keep in mind the need to limit access to some data whilst responding to the growing demand for free and public access to the information on World Heritage sites expressed by the public.

VI. The changing system of International Assistance

As you can see from the proposed budget for the World Heritage Fund (WHC.03/27.COM/11), our system of International Assistance is undergoing rapid change. The need to respond to the issues identified by the Periodic Reports has prompted the preparation of a number of Regional Programmes. Some important trans-boundary initiatives are taking shape, not to mention the Thematic Programmes already initiated.

We are rapidly moving from a system of International Assistance based on “requests” to a system based on strategic actions. The Regional Programmes will gradually integrate all the elements of our International Assistance scheme and provide an integrated approach to achieve the strategic goals, the 4 Cs - Credibility, Conservation, Capacity-Building and Communication.

I see this as a very positive step forward, underlining the long-term approach to conservation that the Committee has always supported, and the capacity of the World Heritage Centre to carry out initiatives of strategic importance in the implementation of the Convention.

Furthermore, the World Heritage Centre is increasingly called upon to take action in a variety of special situations, that require long-term investment for heritage protection and the dedication of a growing proportion of our staff time: Afghanistan, the Palestinian Territories, the Democratic Republic of the Congo are a few recent examples. Iraq has already become an area of greater attention and investment.

The proposed budget demonstrates how these changes in our working method lead to a reduction of the resources available to meet States Parties requests, a reduction made even more significant under the present budgetary constraints.

VII. Working methods and workloads

Finally, my last, and perhaps most critical point. This session of the Committee has before it more than 40 documents produced by the World Heritage Centre in the past months. Just three months ago, we had the 6th extraordinary session of the Committee. The follow-up of that session and the preparation of the 27th Committee session have, inevitably, overlapped. The result has been some delay in the transmission of documents for this session.

I think our team has done all that was humanly possible to cope with this situation, especially when you consider that the day-to-day assistance to States Parties has had to continue normally during the preparations for the Committee. The World Heritage Centre staff is fully committed to its work: you will not find another group willing to sacrifice so many evenings and weekends to get the job done.

So, I think it is important to understand where the problem that has generated this overload lies.

We are now at the end of a long cycle of reforms, started several years ago. The main purpose of those reforms was to streamline the work of the Committee, reduce the work of the Secretariat in order to free its time for assistance to the States Parties, and reduce the volume of documents.

In fact, we seem to be moving in the opposite direction. The agenda for this session has 25 items, requiring the production of more than 40 documents. This means that an ever-larger share of our time goes to document preparation and meeting organisation.

Even the reform of the Committee Report has increased our work. We must of course discount a certain time for experimentation. However, we must make sure that the new model is less, and not more, time consuming than its predecessor.

The situation in respect of the Committee's own workload is by no means less worrying. At this session, you will have to deal with 25 agenda items and all the related documents. Some of the issues to be discussed are very complex. They include 134 State of Conservation reports, 45 nominations, and the new Operational Guidelines. It will be a miracle to complete the work in the few days allocated for this session.

I am sure you will agree with me that this situation is not sustainable. I should therefore like to propose that the Committee considers the future organization of its work perhaps by increasing the number of days of the session, reorganizing the agenda, reducing the number of agenda items, the volume of documents and reports it commissions, and perhaps delegating some tasks to the Secretariat. For instance, I think that the Secretariat should be given the task to indicate which State of Conservation reports need to be discussed, and which can be just noted. This method was used in the past and should be reinstated.

The mission of the World Heritage Centre is established by the Committee: I believe that you want us, most of all, to continue to improve our capacity to serve the States Parties in the implementation of the Convention. I am confident that you will be able to guide us in the development of an increasingly efficient organization for World Heritage conservation.

I wish you the best of success in your deliberations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Bandarin', with a stylized initial 'F' and a long, sweeping underline.

Francesco Bandarin
Director
UNESCO World Heritage Centre
20 June 2003