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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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

Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, Room XII
14-15 October 2003

Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda: Adoption of the Agenda

Revision of the *Rules of Procedure* of the General Assembly

SUMMARY

The Secretariat has recently received the following two proposals to amend the *Rules of Procedure* of the General Assembly from States Parties:

1. Written proposal transmitted by the Delegation of Algeria on 8 October, signed by 15 States Parties, requesting that permanent observer missions to UNESCO be included amongst the observers allowed to participate in the General Assembly (Rule 2.1, *Rules of Procedure* of the General Assembly).
2. Written proposal sent by the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO on 8 October, requesting that Chinese be included as a working language of the General Assembly (Rule 10.1, *Rules of Procedure* of the General Assembly).

1. On 8 October 2003 the Secretariat received a letter from the Permanent Delegation of Algeria to UNESCO requesting that an item on the revision of Rule 2.1 of the *Rules of Procedure* of the General Assembly be included in the agenda of the 14th General Assembly. This request was accompanied with a Draft Resolution. The text of this Draft Resolution is reproduced below:

Demand for admission of Palestine to the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

We ask the State parties to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage to admit Palestine as a permanent observer at the General Assembly of the present convention.

Palestine is already a permanent observer at the General Conference and the Executive Board of UNESCO, as well as at the World Heritage Committee. It would be appropriate to grant the same status to Palestine at the General Assembly of the State parties to the 1972 convention.

Our demand is justified by the fact that Palestine is listed among the countries the most concerned about the question of protection of the cultural and natural heritage.

Consequently, we invite the General Assembly of the State parties to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage to amend the rule 2.1 of its rules of procedure so as to state "The representatives of member States and observers to UNESCO..."

2. This Draft Resolution was signed by the following States Parties: Comoros, Turkey, Egypt, Benin, Oman, Qatar, Iran, Algeria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Morocco, United Arab Emirates, South Africa and Kuwait.

3. Based on the Draft Resolution presented above, Rule 2.1 of the *Rules of Procedure* of the General Assembly would read (changes are underlined):

*The representatives of Member States of UNESCO not parties to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural heritage **and observers to UNESCO** may participate in the work of the Assembly as observers, without the right to vote, and subject to Rule 7.3.*

4. It should be noted that in the Rule relating to Observers of the *Rules of Procedure* of the World Heritage Committee (Rule 8.3), the term used is "permanent observer missions to UNESCO" rather than "observers to UNESCO":

*8.3 The United Nations and organizations of the United Nations system, as well as, upon written request, other international governmental and non-governmental organizations, **permanent observer missions to UNESCO** and non profit-making institutions having activities in the fields covered by the Convention, may be authorized by the Committee to participate in the sessions of the Committee as observers. [Emphasis added]*

5. On 8 October 2003 the Secretariat received a letter from the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO (signed by Mr TIAN Xiaogang, Secretary-General) with the following text:

I am writing referring to Rule 10.1 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage which reads: the working languages of the Assembly shall be Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish. As we all know, there are six working languages for UNESCO conferences and meetings, namely, Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. In this case, the Chinese language is missing with regard to the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, which is one of the most important UNESCO meetings held during the General Conference. Therefore, with great concern, I would like to draw your attention to this issue, and request that the Chinese language be added to the working languages of the Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention.