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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE
WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

World Heritage Committee
Fifteenth Session

Carthage, Tunisia, 9-13 December 1991

ITEM 13 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA : REVISION OF THE
OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

Elaboration of criterion or criteria for cultural
landscapes

Background

1. At the eighth session of the World Heritage Committee in Buenos Aires, 1984, the Committee discussed mixed cultural/natural properties and rural landscapes. The Rapporteur described three problems: the identification of exceptionally harmonious, beautiful, man-made landscapes as epitomised by the terraced rice-fields of S.E. Asia, the terraced fields of the Mediterranean Basin or by certain vineyard areas in Europe; the evolution of such living landscapes in a similar manner as the evolution of historic towns; and the integrity of such landscapes which are seldom protected by national legislation.

2. Accordingly a task force was set up which met in Paris in October 1985 and suggested amendments to the Guidelines and to the criteria of both cultural and natural sites to accommodate the kinds of cases raised by the Rapporteur. However the Bureau at its next (tenth) session in 1986 had reservations about the recommendations of the task force concerning rural landscapes and felt it was premature to recommend any alterations to the Guidelines to include them, as no such nomination had yet come forward. The Bureau welcomed the proposal of the observer from the United Kingdom to present a draft nomination of a rural landscape for 1987 to enable the Bureau more fully to evaluate the applicability of the existing Guidelines and their proposed modifications against the criteria set out in the Convention. The Bureau considered that it would be in a better position to make recommendations on any eventual changes to the guidelines once it had the experience of one or two such draft nominations as test cases.

3. In October 1987 representatives of IUCN, ICOMOS and the UNESCO Secretariat once again discussed the question of rural landscapes. It was pointed out that the criteria developed in the Guidelines did not exactly correspond to the definition in Article 1 of the Convention. While the cultural heritage is defined in the Convention to include "the combined works of nature and of man ... which are of outstanding universal value" (Art. 1), the definition of natural heritage contains no reference to cultural elements in assessing whether or not a natural property is of outstanding universal value and, strictly within the definition, it is only natural features unmodified by human intervention which determine the acceptance of a natural site. The group noted that it was essential to ensure protection of such landscapes, not in static condition, but to conserve the harmony and significant values of the landscape in a dynamic, evolving context.

4. The nomination by the United Kingdom of the Lake District as a mixed site was considered by IUCN and ICOMOS in 1987. Although ICOMOS was in favour of its inscription, IUCN was not. The World Heritage Committee decided at its eleventh session in 1987 to defer the nomination until it had clarified its position on nominations concerning cultural landscapes of this type.

5. After discussion with ICOMOS and with the Secretariat, the United Kingdom agreed to revise the nomination so as to present it as a cultural site only. This nomination presented in September 1989 was supported by ICOMOS, but deferred by the Bureau in June 1990 "pending the results of further reflection and of a comparative study on the question of the rural landscapes which the Committee requested the Secretariat to carry out, in co-operation with ICOMOS and IUCN". At the request of the United Kingdom, the Bureau and the Committee re-examined the nomination at the fourteenth session of the Committee at Banff, Canada, in 1990 although this study had not yet been carried out. While many members showed great interest in including this site, no consensus could be reached. The Committee felt that it did not have sufficiently clear criteria to allow it to rule on this type of site. The Committee asked the Secretariat to develop a criterion or criteria for cultural landscapes and to submit this proposal to the Bureau at its fifteenth session. This would enable the Committee to consider adopting this criterion or criteria at its next session and to examine the nomination of the Lake District.

6. At the fifteenth session of the Bureau held in Paris in June 1991 a possible new criterion prepared by the Secretariat was submitted for consideration by the Bureau. These proposals were based on those suggested by the 1985 working group but are no longer related to natural criteria. The new draft criterion is more specific to "cultural landscapes" than to mixed sites

generally. The draft also identifies the most serious threats (industrialization, etc..) to the preservation of such landscapes. Thus its adoption would permit a more rigorous examination of the special features of such sites than the previous practice of considering them as "mixed" cultural and natural sites.

7. Several Bureau members welcomed the Secretariat paper on cultural landscapes noting with satisfaction that the Bureau had before it a criterion in a form which could be inserted into the Guidelines. One member noted the importance of "integrity" in relation to such sites and another inquired whether on the basis of the present wording of the criterion a man-made lake of relatively recent time would be included in the World Heritage List; the Secretariat indicated that the words "over a long period of time" in the draft text would exclude such a case. Another Bureau member noted that some landscapes in Italy still show the same forms of land use as had been made by Greek immigrants in the years B.C. which now have to be protected against industrialized architecture - the draft criterion as presented would do this.

8. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that a generally positive response to the paper had been received from English Heritage, that ICOMOS (U.K.) had made some interesting criticisms but had not developed an alternative and had set up a working group on landscapes. The representative of ICOMOS expressed appreciation of the work done and expressed the wish of his organization to participate in the next stage of development. There was general agreement that the wording could be improved and specific suggestions from several members were recorded by the Secretariat.

9. The representative of IUCN felt that the addition of such a criterion to those for cultural sites had a number of implications for natural sites and he felt that the wisdom of adding such a criterion was not accepted by all States. Since three quarters of all sites inscribed were already cultural sites, the balance would be even more uneven. It would widen the disparity in distribution, since the need to accept such sites was not being advanced by any non-European State. The new paragraph proposed would mean that almost no sites would be inscribed since the words "traditional life-style" would exclude cars and other features of modern life so that very few places would meet the criterion. Finally he felt that any working group should be international in character, since there was a risk that any national group would design a criterion with its own national sites in mind.

10. A member of the Bureau remarked that there was a natural variation in the number of potential world heritage sites in different areas of the world and that it would be artificial to imply targets in this respect. It was noted that some States such as Canada would

undoubtedly want to consider traditional landscapes in the light of such a criterion and that the view of other parts of the world were important on the draft. It was agreed that the Secretariat, in consultation with ICOMOS, should bring an improved version of the document before the next meeting of the Bureau which could then be presented to the Committee.

11. The Bureau asked ICOMOS and UNESCO to collaborate in further work on the draft. Owing to the heavy pressure of work both at UNESCO and at ICOMOS this has not yet been possible. The Secretariat, therefore, presents to the Committee in the Annex a revised version of the draft criterion which takes account of suggestions made in the discussion at the Bureau meeting. The present draft will be a basis of consideration for the Committee to which ICOMOS will present its comments directly. As stated at the meeting of the Bureau, it is desirable to consult experts from various regions. At a recent regional symposium on the preservation of cultural property in Asia and the Pacific, organized by the United States section of ICOMOS, the Secretariat described the interest of the Committee in cultural landscapes and experts from China and the Philippines expressed their interest in this work. Accordingly, a copy of this paper has been sent to those experts. Should the Committee consider it necessary, the views of further experts will be sought.

12. A seminar on the management and planning of World Heritage Sites in Britain, organized by the United Kingdom Section of ICOMOS to be held in York 6-7 November 1991, will include a discussion on cultural landscapes. Elements of significance for the draft criterion which may emerge from this meeting will be brought to the attention of the Committee.

13. In preparing the revised draft criterion the Secretariat has been guided by some basic considerations which have been stressed during the discussions in the Bureau and in the Committee, i.e. that the new criterion should :

- (a) be an elaboration of the definition in Article 1 of the Convention (quoted here for ease of reference):

For the purposes of this Convention, the following shall be considered as "cultural heritage"

Monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements of structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value

- from the point of view of history, art or science;
sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and of man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthro-pological points of view.
- (b) be independent of the evaluation of natural features untouched by human activity and enable judgment solely by standards of exceptionally beautiful and harmonious landscapes fashioned by human beings.
 - (c) contain sufficient guarantees for the safeguard of the harmonious evolution of the site.
 - (d) be drafted, at least initially, very restrictively to prevent large scale nominations (this has been mentioned several times in the previous discussions).

Draft Criterion

(revised version based on the discussions in the Bureau at its 15th Session of June 1991)

The present criteria for cultural sites as set out in the Guidelines could be amended as follows (phrases in bold type represent new text):

A monument, group of buildings or site - as defined above - which is nominated for inclusion in the World Heritage List will be considered to be of outstanding universal value for the purposes of the Convention when the Committee finds that it meets one or more of the following criteria and meets the test of authenticity or **has the potential for continued integrity as described below**. Each property nominated should therefore:

- a) (i) represent a unique artistic achievement, masterpiece of the creative genius; or
- (ii) have exerted a great influence, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture, monumental arts or town planning and landscaping; or
- (iii) bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a civilization which has disappeared; or
- (iv) be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural ensemble which illustrates a significant stage in history; or
- (v) be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change; or
- (vi) be an outstanding example of a cultural landscape resulting from associations of cultural and natural elements significant from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological points of view and evidencing a harmonious balance between nature and human activity over a very long period of time which is rare and vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change; or
- (vii) be directly or tangibly associated with events or with ideas or beliefs of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considers that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances or in conjunction with other criteria);

and

- b) (i) in the case of structures, meet the test of authenticity in design, materials, workmanship or setting (the Committee stresses that reconstruction is only acceptable if it is carried out on the basis of complete and detailed documentation of the original and to no extent on conjecture)

or

- (ii) in the case of cultural landscapes, have the potential to maintain their integrity (the Committee stresses that there should be a sufficient representation of distinctive landforms, land-uses and patterns of traditional life-style which are necessary for the maintenance of its essential values);

and

- iii) have adequate legal protection and management mechanisms to ensure the conservation of the nominated cultural property. The existence of protective legislation at the national, provincial or municipal level is therefore essential and must be stated clearly on the nomination form. Assurances of the effective implementation of these laws are also expected. Furthermore, in order to preserve the integrity of cultural sites, particularly those open to large numbers of visitors, the State Party concerned should be able to provide evidence of suitable administrative arrangements to cover the management of the property, its conservation and its accessibility to the public.

The following further paragraph giving more detailed information (as has already been done for groups of urban buildings in paras. 26-33 of the Guidelines) could be added after para. 33 (with consequential renumbering of subsequent paragraphs).

.. With respect to cultural landscapes, the Committee has adopted the following guidelines concerning their inclusion in the World Heritage List :

- (i) the existing balance between nature and human activity may only be modified in a way which ensures the continuation of this special relationship and will exclude any

major alterations to the appearance and function of the area; for example those resulting from large scale industrial, commercial and tourist developments;

- (ii) legislative protection must exist as well as practicable mechanisms for bringing the relevant institutions and individuals together to ensure the preservation of the significant harmonious balance between nature and human activity in an evolving context;
- (iii) the area nominated should be of such a size that these protective measures can seriously be expected to be effective.