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# World Heritage

# 21 GA

**WHC-17/21.GA/10**

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## UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

### TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Paris, UNESCO Headquarters  
14-15 November 2017

#### **Item 10 of the Provisional Agenda: World Heritage and Sustainable Development**

#### **10. World Heritage and Sustainable Development**

##### **SUMMARY**

By Resolution **20 GA 13** (UNESCO, 2015), the General Assembly of States Parties adopted the “Policy Document for the integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention” and invited the World Heritage Centre and the States Parties to continue engagement through an ongoing consultation process involving all stakeholders to enrich the Policy Document.

This Document presents the progress made in the implementation of the Policy

Document in conformity with Resolution **20 GA 13**.

**Draft Resolution: 21 GA 10**, see point III

## I. BACKGROUND

1. By Resolution **20 GA 13**, adopted the “Policy Document for the integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the *World Heritage Convention*”, hereinafter referred to as the World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy (WH-SDP), which had been prior to that endorsed by the World Heritage Committee (Decision **39 COM 5D**) and consulted with the States Parties (the text of the Policy can be found at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/20ga/>). The General Assembly invited the World Heritage Centre and States Parties to continue engagement through an ongoing consultation process involving all stakeholders to enrich it.
2. The adoption of the WH-SDP represents an important step in the history of the *World Heritage Convention* as it brings it into line with larger sustainable development policy frameworks of UNESCO and of the United Nations. The implementation of the WH-SDP will harness the potential of World Heritage to contribute to sustainable development across all its dimensions and will ensure that the conservation and management of World Heritage properties are aligned with overall sustainable development objectives. In the process, it is acknowledged that the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties should not be compromised.
3. The WH-SDP provides guidance for States Parties to mainstream sustainable development principles in their national processes related to World Heritage, in full respect of the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties. It has been noted throughout the process that to be effective the policy should be interpreted and implemented in ways that are fully consistent with the primary goal of the *World Heritage Convention* as outlined by its Article 4, i.e. the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage<sup>1</sup>.

## II. PROGRESS ACHIEVED

4. Despite the lack of resources, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, in consultation with States Parties and all relevant stakeholders, have made regular progress in the implementation of the WH-SDP and reported progress to the World Heritage Committee at its 40th and 41st sessions (Istanbul, 2016 and Krakow 2017) which can be summarized as follows, with further details included in working documents **WHC/16/40.COM/5C** and **WHC/17/41.COM/5C**:
  - A process-based approach has been applied in implementing the WH-SDP through gradual integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the Convention. At the same time, synergies with the States Parties’ engagement and efforts towards achieving the United Nations 2030 Agenda are harnessed. These efforts build on UNESCO’s and the Advisory Bodies’ broad contribution to the 2030 Agenda.
  - The mainstreaming of the WH-SDP has taken place in the framework of the Periodic Reporting exercise where a sustainable development approach was integrated into the revised Periodic Reporting questionnaire with the possibility of collecting measurable data, and a framework of monitoring indicators was developed, with a specific focus on sustainable development (Document **WHC/17/41.COM/10A**).

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<sup>1</sup> Article 4 of the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage: “Each State Party to this Convention recognizes that the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage referred to in Articles 1 and 2 and situated on its territory, belongs primarily to that State” [...].

- In the framework of the UN Statistical Commission's work to monitor the 2030 Agenda, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) has been entrusted with the follow-up of indicator 11.4.1: "Total expenditure (public and private) per capita spent on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by type of heritage (cultural, natural, mixed, World Heritage sites), level of government (national, regional, and local/municipal), type of expenditure (operating expenditure/investment) and type of private funding (donations in kind, private non-profit sector, sponsorship)." Although this indicator is intended to cover all natural and cultural heritage, it is suggested that it includes data related to World Heritage statistics.
  - Further work on the reinforcement of the World Heritage Convention's contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and to measurable indicators has been, and continues to be, carried out by the States Parties to the Convention. UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies have carried out various initiatives at policy and operational levels to demonstrate and reinforce the contribution of the World Heritage Convention to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.
  - The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies have undertaken awareness-raising, dissemination and communication actions in relation with the WH-SDP, in particular in the framework of capacity building activities, seeking to promote inclusive social development, environmental sustainability, and inclusive economic development in the protection and management practices at World Heritage Sites. UNESCO Category 2 Centres and UNESCO Chairs have provided support in this regard.
5. Since the adoption of the WH-SDP by the General Assembly of the States Parties (UNESCO, 2015), the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies observed a trend whereby States Parties pursued local social and/or economic development initiatives at the expense of environmental sustainability. Achieving the right balance between environmental, social and economic sustainability, while fully respecting and protecting the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties is a challenging but crucial endeavour which will require increased awareness raising and dialogue with States Parties.
6. In conformity with Resolution **20 GA 13**, relevant changes to the Operational Guidelines to translate the principles of the WH-SDP into operational procedures, will be proposed by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, in consultation with the States Parties and relevant stakeholders, once a clear framework is established with the adoption of the Policy Guidelines, which are currently under preparation, in accordance with the Committee Decision **40 COM 12**.

### III. DRAFT RESOLUTION 21 GA 10

*The General Assembly,*

1. *Having examined Document WHC/17/21 GA 10,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **39 COM 5D**, **40 COM 5C**, and **41 COM 5C** adopted respectively at its 39th (Bonn, 2015), 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016) and 41st (Krakow, 2017) sessions, as well as Resolution **20 GA 13**, adopted by the General Assembly at its 20th session (UNESCO, 2015),*
3. *Takes note of the follow-up activities and the progress made by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in disseminating and mainstreaming the World Heritage*

*Sustainable Development Policy (WH-SDP) into the processes of the World Heritage Convention and in operational and capacity building activities and of the support provided by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to Members States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;*

- 4. Underlines the need to achieve appropriate balance and integration between the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties and the pursuit of sustainable development objectives;*
- 5. Calls upon States Parties, in their pursuit in the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, to harness mainstreaming the WH-SDP into their national processes related to World Heritage;*
- 6. Also calls upon States Parties to provide funding for the implementation of the WH-SDP at national, regional and international levels;*
- 7. Further calls on States Parties to support capacity-building programmes and activities aimed at providing methodologies and tools for integrating heritage conservation into sustainable development frameworks and mainstreaming the WH-SDP in conservation and management activities;*
- 8. Requests the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to pursue the implementation of the WH-SDP and to report on progress to the World Heritage Committee.*