

Czech Republic contribution:

The Czech Republic recalls the long-term and recurring need to respect the highest standards of integrity and transparency of working methods within the process of decision-making of the Governing bodies of the Convention.

The Czech Republic also supports the common aim of the collective responsibility of all stakeholders – States Parties, World Heritage Centre, World Heritage Committee and its Advisory Bodies – to uphold the integrity and the credibility of the Convention and, as such, to conduct themselves according to the highest ethical standards of professionalism, equity and transparency.

The Czech Republic appreciates the Sweden submission shared in advance of the 2nd open-ended working group meeting. We consider it a good, clearly formulated contribution to the discussion.

The Czech Republic considers the proposed “core principles” of integrity, objectivity and impartiality of all parties highly topical and needful. Many of the principles presented in the *Non paper on Code of Conduct* are already set out in *Operational Guidelines of the 1972 Convention* and for all stakeholders – States Parties, World Heritage Centre, World Heritage Committee and the Advisory Bodies – it does not introduce new rules. Nevertheless, along with the Swedish position we acknowledge that the Proposed Draft Code of Conduct makes clear cross-references to the key documents concerned: the World Heritage Convention, its Operational Guidelines and the Rules of Procedure of the World Heritage Committee which brings the ethical principles to the fore.

The Czech Republic particularly supports the key recommendation **point 11** concerning the Committee decision making process of new nomination for inscription on the World Heritage List. The Committee Members should avoid making a decision that is moving more than one step from the draft decision as recommended in the Advisory Body technical evaluation. The Czech Republic considers it essential that Committee decisions do not deviate from Advisory Bodies advice and overlooking provisions of the Operational Guidelines.

The Czech Republic support without further amendments the wording of these principles concerning the Committee described in **points 2, 3, 4 and 5** (with suggestion to fuse points 4 and 5), **6, 7, 8, 10, 14**, points **15** concerning the Advisory Bodies and the **points 19 and 20** concerning the State Parties to the Convention.

The Czech Republic also supports the spirit of following points; nevertheless it would be welcomed clearer wording for better understanding.

Point 9 concerning the Committee: “*Strictly observe that any new draft decisions, fundamental proposals or amendments should be submitted at least 24 hours before the discussion of the agenda item concerned.*” The original wording of the Rule 23.3 *Rules of Procedure* is sufficient in its principal: “*New draft decisions/proposals and amendments thereto should, whenever possible, be submitted to the Secretariat at least 24 hours before the discussion of the agenda item concerned.*” Nevertheless the rule of “submission 24 hours before the discussion of the agenda item concerned” should rather be related to the “new draft decisions and fundamental proposals or amendments”. During the session, the Committee should still be able to make further amendments in order to openly discuss and transparently react just during the session in the spirit of *Rules of Procedure* and *Code of Conduct* when working on the consensual final wording of a draft decision.

Point 21 concerning the State Parties to the Convention: “*Voluntarily be restrictive with new nominations to ensure a more representative and balanced World Heritage List ~~where the State Party is already well represented on the World Heritage List.~~*” The Czech Republic proposes to delete the second part of the recommendation, as a number of already inscribed properties of the State Party is not a proper criterion, variety of heritage typology differs; the representative and balanced World Heritage List should be achieve through different tools e.g. thematic studies and filling the gaps.

In addition to the current wording of the *Non paper on Code of Conduct*, the Czech Republic also consider following *Code provisions* regarding the World Heritage Committee and its Chairperson, Advisory Bodies and Secretariat:

The Chairperson of the Committee

- his/her role and mandate should be more precisely defined, particularly in leading and moderating discussions, following the *Code of Conduct* during the Committee meeting and especially in the case of the possible conflict of interest of any Committee member, in line with the provision 22.5., 22.6 and 22.7 of the *Rules of Procedure*

The Advisory Bodies

- should make publicly available more comprehensive description of their methodology for assessing criteria, for selection of the field mission experts and for the panel experts and advisors
- at each stage of the nomination process, they should publish and more clearly refer to their existing policies of evaluation of the nominations, with a view of their possible amendments so as to increase the transparency and better understanding by the State Parties of reasoning behind their conclusions and recommendations

The Secretariat to the Convention

- its role should be more precisely defined, so as to act as a facilitator in process of more intensive dialog among Advisory bodies and States Parties during the nomination process
- in line with Rules of Procedure (the Rule 45) “*the documents relating to the items on the Provisional Agenda of each session of the Committee shall be distributed at the latest six weeks before the beginning of the session*”, and in order to increase the transparent, better understanding and preparedness of the Committee and the State Parties to the Committee session, the Secretariat should distribute (even if successively in several sets) working documents such as reports, progress reports, follow-up documents, general policy statements or scientific and/or thematic studies that follow some requirement of previous decision or resolution, etc. for Committee session as soon as they are available and not wait with their distribution to the latest date.

15. 4. 2021

End of document