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**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
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**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

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**Fuzhou (China) / Online session
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Item 10 of the Provisional Agenda: Periodic Reports

10D: Progress report on the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the other regions

SUMMARY

This document is presented pursuant to Decision **43 COM 10A** and contains a report on the overall conduct and coordination of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting including the preparation and start of the exercise in the Asia and the Pacific region. It includes information about meetings organized with the national focal points and World Heritage site managers from the region. This document presents as well as details on the preparatory steps taken by the Secretariat for the commencement of the exercise in the Latin America and the Caribbean region in September 2021. This report also presents information about activities carried out by the Secretariat to facilitate a State-Party driven approach as per Decision **41 COM 10A** and **42 COM 10A**.

The web platform of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting can be accessed at the following address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/prcycle3>.

The general web page on Periodic Reporting can be accessed at the following address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/periodicreporting/>

Draft Decision: 44 COM 10D, see point V.

I. BACKGROUND

1. At its 41st session in 2017 the World Heritage Committee launched the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting and decided to maintain the same order of regions as for the previous cycles, with one region reporting each year (Arab States, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and North America). Thereupon, in line with Decision **41 COM 10A** (Krakow, 2017), the Asia and the Pacific region started its reporting exercise in September 2020. Latin America and the Caribbean will start in 2021.
2. As per Decisions **41 COM 10A** (Krakow, 2017) and **42 COM 10A** (Manama, 2018) the World Heritage Centre was requested to ensure that, for the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting, a holistic approach across reporting regions by providing the overall coordination, analysis and facilitating a State Party-driven approach of the exercise.
3. To this end, the Secretariat has been further requested by the Committee Decision **43 COM 10B** (Baku, 2019) to continue to update and develop sets of training and guidance materials for a broad range of stakeholders in this process and to ensure its wide dissemination to encourage effective preparation and implementation of the exercise. In addition, the World Heritage Centre was also encouraged to continue the development of innovative tools and methods of analysis to facilitate the State Party-driven exercise.

II. PREPARATION OF THE THIRD CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION

4. In line with the World Heritage Committee's Decision **41 COM 10A** to maintain the same order as for the Second Cycle for the reporting by region, the World Heritage Centre proactively started preparations for the Third Cycle Periodic Reporting in the Asia and the Pacific region in 2019, ahead of the start of the exercise scheduled for the autumn of 2020 in the region.
5. A briefing meeting was held with the Permanent Delegations of the Asia-Pacific (ASPAC) Group in June 2019 at UNESCO Headquarters, and an information session on the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in Asia and the Pacific was organised by the World Heritage Centre during the 43rd session of the Committee (Baku, 2019). Additionally, several presentations were given to introduce the objectives of the exercise and key information for the Third Cycle during meetings and events held in the region of Asia and the Pacific in 2019–2020.
6. Thanks to support from the UNESCO/Republic of Korea Funds-in-Trust, a project entitled "Capacity Building Ahead of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in Asia and the Pacific" was approved in late April 2019, aiming to provide national focal points with theoretical and practical training on the Periodic Reporting exercise, using a 'training of trainers' approach so that this information can be shared with site managers in each country. The project involves close cooperation between the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies (ICOMOS, IUCN and ICCROM), UNESCO Field Offices and Category 2 Centres (C2C) under the auspices of UNESCO in the region. Additionally, the support provided by the Republic of Korea allowed for the coordination and support of the exercise at the Asia-Pacific Unit of the World Heritage Centre.
7. Between December 2019 and the summer of 2020, the World Heritage Centre sent several Circular Letters to the Permanent Delegations to UNESCO and national authorities in the region to remind them of Decision **43 COM 10A.1**, invite them to identify national focal points and World Heritage site managers for the exercise and provide the

World Heritage Centre with their contact details. States Parties were also encouraged to translate the questionnaire, Site Managers' Handbook and other guidance materials into national languages, for ease of use by all stakeholders. The World Heritage Centre organised the graphic design for a number of national language versions (provided by national focal points and UNESCO Field Offices in the Asia-Pacific region) of the Site Managers' Handbook for region, including Chinese and Nepali.

8. Together with the UNESCO Field Offices in the Asia-Pacific region, Category 2 Centres (C2C) under the auspices of UNESCO have been invited to provide support to the Periodic Reporting exercise. Several took steps to this effect, notably the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region (WHITR-AP – Shanghai/Beijing, China), the International Centre on Space Technologies for Natural and Cultural Heritage (HIST – Beijing, China), and the Centre on World Natural Heritage Management and Training for the Asia and the Pacific Region (WII – Dehradun, India) (see Document WHC/21/44.COM/6). Furthermore, the Global Research and Training Centre for Internationally Designated Areas (GCIDA – Jeju, Republic of Korea), a C2C under the auspices of UNESCO, gave an introduction on its work in relation to research and training for the improved management of multiple internationally designated areas and synergies between UNESCO Cultural Conventions and Programmes. In addition to their involvement in capacity-building activities, the C2Cs provided support to national focal points and World Heritage site managers in their areas of expertise.
9. In order to ensure that similar processes are followed across regions in terms of methods, analysis and support to States Parties, the overall coordination of the exercise is assured by a World Heritage Centre-based Periodic Reporting coordinator at the Policy and Statutory Meetings Unit working in cooperation with the Asia and the Pacific Unit.

Start of the Periodic Reporting questionnaire completion for the Asia and the Pacific region

10. The World Heritage Centre started the Periodic Reporting exercise in the region of Asia and the Pacific on **1 October 2020**. A total of 65 national focal points from the 36 States Parties to the *World Heritage Convention* in the region and 272 World Heritage site managers of the 269 World Heritage properties inscribed on the World Heritage List were invited to complete Sections I and II of the Periodic Reporting questionnaire, covering the implementation of the *Convention* at the national and property levels respectively.
11. Asia and the Pacific is the third region to carry out the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting exercise and the first region to carry out this exercise entirely online due to the global sanitary situation due to COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021, including capacity-building activities, information sessions and the accompaniment for the exercise.
12. An email with access information was sent to each national focal point and World Heritage site manager at the beginning of the exercise. Regular monitoring of access and completion rates, along with quick follow-up for incoming requests to change Periodic Reporting stakeholder access were ensured by the Periodic Reporting team.
13. As with other regions, helpdesk support is being provided by the World Heritage Centre to rapidly address questions or issues raised by the Periodic Reporting stakeholders. The reporting period is still ongoing at the time of writing this report, and the World Heritage Centre has received about 600 requests so far from national focal points and site managers, concerning technical issues, changes to the designated Periodic Reporting stakeholders, and substantive questions regarding the questionnaire itself.
14. The World Heritage Centre introduced the Periodic Reporting team for the Asia-Pacific region and continues to inform States Parties of progress throughout the exercise via a regular dispatch of letters, information notes and circular email messages, in addition to

the regular online training sessions (see below). The collaboration between the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies, C2C and independent experts has allowed to provide rapid technical advice and support to States Parties in the region, which was been greatly appreciated by the national focal points and site managers who reached out.

Online training sessions

15. The aforementioned UNESCO/Republic of Korea Funds-in-Trust project was initially approved to provide capacity-building support ahead of the Periodic Reporting exercise in the region. It was articulated around several three-day, in-person training workshops aimed at national focal points for Periodic Reporting in the Asia-Pacific region, initially scheduled to take place in China (Beijing and Shanghai) and New Delhi in 2020. The training workshops were to be carried out in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies of the World Heritage Committee and C2C under the auspices of UNESCO dealing with World Heritage in the region, including substantial in-kind support from WHITR-AP and HIST. The contents of the training workshops were discussed during meetings in 2019–2020, notably resulting in a formalised agreement reached in November 2019 between WHITR-AP and HIST to jointly host workshops in China.
16. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these meetings were initially postponed, and it was eventually decided to proceed with online training modalities only, using available materials supplemented by a series of specific online training sessions, as well as a dedicated online exchange platform for national focal points hosted on Microsoft Teams.
17. A series of 16 online training sessions has been organised between September 2020 and March 2021, accompanying the national focal points and site managers as they fill out the questionnaire and looking in-depth at specific chapters or topics raised in the questionnaire. Involving the participation of the Advisory Bodies, C2C and other World Heritage experts, the well-attended online training sessions cover (or expand upon) the contents, originally scheduled for the in-person workshops, and have included an overview of the process and questionnaire, dedicated sessions on core topics of Periodic Reporting (e.g. Outstanding Universal Value and attributes, maps and boundaries, factors affecting the properties, reporting on natural heritage, management plans, impact assessments, sustainable development, urban heritage, synergies between UNESCO Culture Conventions and programmes) and some dedicated sub-regional sessions (notably for the Pacific SIDS). Overall, by spreading the content over many weeks, these new training modalities provide an opportunity to build capacities not only for the Periodic Reporting exercise, but also for the implementation of the *Convention* across the Asia-Pacific region in general, as the training touches on many key aspects of the *Convention* that are relevant to the World Heritage-related tasks of national focal points and site managers.
18. The online training sessions use the same ‘training of trainers’ approach planned for in-person workshops, whereby national focal points get to share their knowledge with their site managers in their own language, using the materials provided during and after each session (e.g. presentations, video recordings of the sessions and supporting documents). As soon as the technical capacity of the online platform allowed for a higher number of meeting attendees, site managers were also invited to the online training sessions that relate to Section II of the questionnaire.
19. Feedback from participants has been very positive throughout the reporting period, and the training sessions have facilitated the understanding of the Periodic Reporting process and shed some light on the more complex or easily misunderstood questions identified

within the questionnaire. Participants also made good use of open Question & Answer sessions organised for each section of the questionnaire.

Early review of the Questionnaire

20. To address any difficulty before the final submission, an early review modality for the questionnaire was instituted for the Asia and the Pacific region, similarly to what was done in the Africa region in 2020. Early completion deadlines were set for 31 January 2021 and 31 March 2021 for Section I and II of the Questionnaire respectively, by which time national focal points and site managers were asked to complete as much of their sections of the questionnaire as possible.
21. After these deadlines, staff from the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and C2C have started reviewing the work in progress to identify factually incorrect or unlikely answers, verify consistency across the sections of the questionnaire and address misunderstood questions. On a case-by-case basis, they are reaching out to the Periodic Reporting stakeholders, providing guidance or requesting clarifications and helping them achieve the best possible results before the final submission deadline.
22. This additional review will eventually increase the reliability of the quantitative and qualitative data collected, allowing for a more accurate analysis of the region's priorities and needs and for more relevant (sub-)regional Action Plan(s). A group of reviewers including Culture Officers from the UNESCO Field Offices in the region and experts identified by the Advisory Bodies and C2Cs will carry out this early review according to their assigned countries/clusters and/or their areas of expertise.

National workshops and follow-up activities

23. Using the information and materials provided during the training sessions, and often with the support of UNESCO Field Offices, many States Parties in the region have organised [national workshops](#) for the Periodic Reporting exercise in order to share information and guidance with site managers and help them fill out their respective Section II questionnaires. The World Heritage Centre would like to express its gratitude for the commitment of national focal points, National Commissions for UNESCO, line ministries and agencies as well as the UNESCO Field Offices who were involved in holding these workshops despite the difficult global situation, as they have greatly facilitated engagement and the timely completion of the questionnaire.
24. The World Heritage Centre also noted with great appreciation the high level of engagement and commitment demonstrated by the national focal points and site managers involved in the Periodic Reporting process so far, despite the various restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing in their respective countries.
25. At the time of writing this report, five months before the final submission deadline, the overall average completion of the Periodic Reporting questionnaire for the Asia-Pacific region was 79% for Section I and 83% for Section II.

Next steps

26. The deadline for submission of the completed Sections I and II of the questionnaires is **31 July 2021**.
27. Following the submission of the completed questionnaires by the national focal points a preliminary analysis of the outcomes of the exercise will be prepared by a panel of heritage experts and shared with national focal points by late 2021 for input to the preparation of the draft Action Plan.

28. Action Plan meeting(s) between World Heritage Centre, Periodic Reporting experts and national focal points will be organised in late 2021 or early 2022, on which occasion the participants will jointly draft regional and/or sub-regional Action Plans as logical matrix frameworks, based on the preliminary analyses and using a Results-Based Management approach. Depending on the global situation, these meetings may be held in person, online or a hybrid of both.
29. After the review of the draft Action Plan(s) by the World Heritage Centre and the Periodic Reporting experts, final drafts will be circulated for further consultation and contribution by the national focal points ahead of their integration into the working documents for the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee, alongside the synthesis report containing analysis of the questionnaire data. A World Heritage paper series publication is also foreseen in this regard, provided that financial support is received.

III. PREPARATION FOR THE START OF THE THIRD CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING IN THE LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGION

30. In view of the commencement of reporting exercise in Latin America and the Caribbean in September 2021, the World Heritage Centre is taking a number of measures to facilitate the process. Among others, these include: carrying out a full review and update of records and contacts in the World Heritage databases, preparing Circular Letters to States Parties to identify the national focal points and World Heritage site managers who will be responsible to carrying out the reporting process in the region and setting up a helpdesk support, which will provide support during the reporting period.
31. As for the other regions already engaged in the reporting phase of the exercise, in order to ensure a holistic approach the World Heritage Centre intends to translate some of the training tool and guidance (please see points 37-39 below) into Spanish, to facilitate understanding of the questions of the questionnaire, which are to be completed in one of the working languages of the *Convention*, that is in English or in French. The Regional World Heritage Institute in Zacatecas and the Regional Heritage Management Training Centre “Lucio Costa” will be key partners for the Secretariat in the Periodic Reporting exercise in Latin America and the Caribbean region, similar to the C2C collaboration in the other regions.
32. At the time of preparation of this Document, the World Heritage Centre is identifying a series of activities to ensure similar processes and modalities of implementation as for previous regions.

IV. OTHER MEASURES TAKEN BY THE SECRETARIAT TO FACILITATE A STATE PARTY-DRIVEN EXERCISE AND TO ENSURE THAT A HOLISTIC APPROACH IS OPERATED ACROSS REGIONS

33. Further to the Committee Decision **42 COM 10A** recommending the Secretariat “to continue to ensure that a holistic approach is operated across regions”, the World Heritage Centre has carried out further improvements of the Periodic Reporting online tool with regards to the *guidance* and *note* of the questions in the questionnaire.
34. In accordance with the recommendations of the Expert Group, and in line with the Committee Decisions **41 COM 10 A** and **42 COM 10A** and its call for a State Party-driven exercise and a holistic approach across the regions, and with a view to facilitating the States Parties’ and World Heritage stakeholders’ preparations ahead of the Third Cycle,

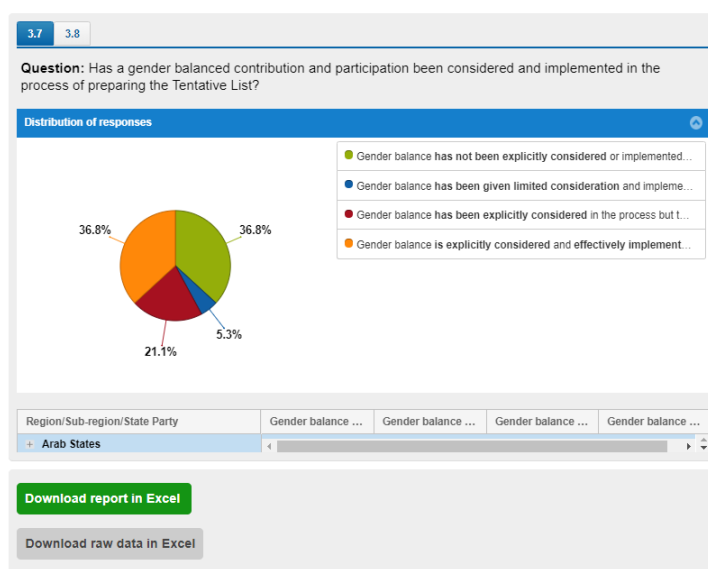
the World Heritage Centre has further updated some of the training materials, such as the Periodic Reporting curriculum, to adapt specifically the reporting regions' context.

35. The materials developed have proved to ease the States Parties' autonomy to successfully lead the Periodic Reporting exercise in their countries, providing them with tools to carry out capacity-building activities with site managers and other stakeholders. The set of training materials is adapted for use in a range of contexts and accessible to a broad audience. Designed as user-friendly and intuitive tools, their accessibility will facilitate the inclusion of Periodic Reporting in the programmes of a range of meetings and events, allowing focal points and other facilitators to carry out national training and discussion sessions. Their use across regions throughout the Third Cycle aim to provide a framework of understanding that should promote cooperation, enhance understanding of the exercise and thereby of the implementation of the *Convention*, and thus contribute to achieving the objectives of Periodic Reporting.
36. The latest development and update include:
 - The **Handbook for World Heritage site managers**, describing the objectives, process and format of the exercise to a broad range of stakeholders in a concise manner, using clear and accessible language. The handbook, initially published in English and French, was further translated into other languages either by the World Heritage Centre or through States Parties' initiatives. To date the handbook is also available in Arabic, Chinese, Nepali, Portuguese and Thai. A Spanish version of the document is foreseen to facilitate the exercise in the Latin America and the Caribbean and in the Europe and North America regions;
 - In addition to the online version (published on the Third Cycle Periodic Reporting platform: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/prcycle3/>), hardcopies were printed and distributed to site managers of the Asia and the Pacific region and will also be disseminated to national focal points and site managers for Latin America and the Caribbean;
 - Three additional Periodic Reporting training modules on Outstanding Universal Value, Sustainable Development, Synergies with other UNESCO Conventions and Programmes have been updated with the latest developments on the subject and feedback received from focal points and site managers. The training modules were developed to allow national focal points to carry out training of World Heritage site managers involved in Periodic Reporting. The curriculum brings together a large number of World Heritage resources, both pre-existing and newly developed and functions as a roadmap for those engaged in capacity building for Periodic Reporting;
 - The **index of key terms**, which supplements the guidance, provides clear definitions about World Heritage, general conservation or UN terms, based on pre-existing texts and definitions available in published sources;
 - The **Frequently Asked Questions**, on the most common issues raised during the previous cycles and further to responses feedback received from site managers and National Focal points;
 - The **Periodic Reporting brochure** giving basic reference information on Periodic Reporting and the Third Cycle, including the reporting calendar in each region, year of examination and information on tools and guidance available.
37. All training material and tools referred to above are available on the Periodic Reporting Cycle 3 web platform: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/prcycle3>. The Periodic Reporting brochure is available online at <http://whc.unesco.org/document/181945>.

38. The World Heritage Centre will continue to ensure that all relevant information in relation to Periodic Reporting is communicated to all concerned, including States Parties and other stakeholders involved in this process.

Periodic Reporting Online Tool

39. In line with the Committee's Decisions **42 COM 10A** and **43 COM 10B**, the World Heritage Centre started a first phase update and development of the Periodic Reporting online tool to continue to facilitate the State Party-driven process of the exercise. Now the Tool offers to users a clear and customisable presentation data in the form of tables and easily readable charts and exportable in spreadsheets. Users have also the possibility to sort the information using different filters, for e.g., by World Heritage property, by question type, by chapter and by sub-regions.
40. While the export of raw data in spreadsheets is still a possibility, an enhanced spreadsheet export (Microsoft Excel) has been further developed in terms of readability with clear tables and charts with indexes.



41. At the time of the preparation of this document, the World Heritage Centre is proceeding with further developments on the tool in the analytical framework of the Monitoring Indicators adopted by the Committee at its 41st session (Krakow, 2017) as well as further technical improvements which includes resolving the recurrent technical issues raised by the national focal points and World Heritage site managers. The development will also allow States Parties to access and extract their own data, which could be used for their own national reports.

V. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision: 44 COM 10D

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/21/44.COM/10D,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **41 COM 10A**, **42 COM 10A**, **43 COM 10A.1** and **43 COM 10B** adopted at its 41st (Krakow, 2017), 42nd (Manama, 2018) and 43rd (Baku, 2019) sessions respectively,*
3. *Welcomes the update and development of training tools, including the Periodic Reporting online platform as well as guidance, by the Secretariat to facilitate and improve the exercise at a local and regional levels and commends the Secretariat for the development of the Periodic Reporting online tools;*
4. *Notes with appreciation the successful start of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Asia and the Pacific region;*
5. *Thanks the Republic of Korea for the support provided via its Funds-in-Trust agreement at UNESCO, for the implementation of Periodic Reporting capacity-building activities in the region of Asia and the Pacific;*
6. *Welcomes the commitment and involvement of Category 2 Centres to facilitate this exercise in the region of Asia and the Pacific, notably the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region (WHITR-AP), the Centre on Space Technologies for Natural and Cultural Heritage (HIST), and the Centre of World Natural Heritage Management and Training for the Asia and the Pacific region (Dehradun);*
7. *Takes note of the fact that Asia and the Pacific is the first region to undertake the Periodic Reporting exercise exclusively online, commends the World Heritage Centre for adapting all scheduled activities, outreach strategies and training contents for online delivery without changing the schedule of the exercise, and thanks Periodic Reporting stakeholders in Asia and the Pacific for adapting to these new modalities;*
8. *Also welcomes the preparations undertaken by the Secretariat prior to the start of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Latin America and the Caribbean region in September 2021 and the commitment of the Regional World Heritage Institute in Zacatecas and the Regional Heritage Management Training Centre “Lucio Costa” to facilitate the reporting exercise in the Region;*
9. *Requests the World Heritage Centre to submit a progress report on the preparation of Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the regions, at its next session.*