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REPORT OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE ON ITS ACTIVITIES

OUTLINE

Source: Article 29.3 of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage ("the World Heritage Convention") stipulates that "the Committee shall submit a report on its activities at each of the ordinary sessions of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization".

Background: The Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage ("the World Heritage Committee") was established under Article 8 of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by the General Conference at its 17th session on 16 November 1972.

Purpose: This document presents the report concerning the main activities and Decisions taken by the World Heritage Committee since the 22nd session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention held on 27 and 28 November 2019. This document is an updated summary of document WHC/21/44.COM/5A that was presented to the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee (Fuzhou/online, 2021) and that is available at the following address: <u>https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2021/whc21-44com-5A-en.pdf</u>



I. Introduction

1. This document is intended to provide the UNESCO General Conference with information regarding the main activities and decisions taken by the World Heritage Committee since the 22nd General Assembly of States Parties (27-28 November 2019) in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. The main activities and decisions of the World Heritage Committee have been grouped according to its Strategic Objectives. The prevailing health situation worldwide would not allow for a session in 2020, therefore an extended 44th session was held from 16 to 31 July 2021 (Fuzhou/online).

II. Information on statutory meetings

Current number of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention

2. As of July 2021, there are 194 States Parties to the World Heritage Convention¹.

Current members of the World Heritage Committee

3. **21 members:** Australia, Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, Uganda.

4. Terms of office are: until the **end of the 41st session of the General Conference** (2021): Australia, Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, China, Guatemala, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Norway, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Spain, Uganda; and until **the end of the 42nd session of the General Conference** (2023): Egypt, Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Oman, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Thailand.

Composition of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee since the 22nd General Assembly of State Parties (2019)

5. Extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee (July 2019-July 2021): Chairperson: Tian Xuejun (China), Vice-Chairpersons: Bahrain, Guatemala, Hungary, Spain, Uganda and Ms Miray Hasaktun Wosinski (Bahrain) as Rapporteur.

6. At its extended 44th session, the World Heritage Committee elected its Bureau as follows: **His Excellency Mr Alexander Kuznetsov (Russian Federation)** as Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee until the end of the 45th session of the Committee; **Spain** and **Saint Kitts and Nevis** as Vice-Chairperson until the end of the 23rd session of the General Assembly (2021), **Thailand, South Africa** and **Saudi Arabia** as Vice-Chairperson until the end of the 45th session of the Rapporteur of the World Heritage Committee, until the end of the 23rd session of the General Assembly (2021). Thailand, South Africa and Saudi Arabia as Vice-Chairperson until the end of the 45th session of the Committee; **Ms Miray Hasaltun Wosinski (Bahrain)** as the Rapporteur of the World Heritage Committee, until the end of the 23rd session of the General Assembly (2021). Vice-Chairpersons from Groups I and III and the Rapporteur of the 45th session will be elected during an extraordinary session (November 2021). The 45th session will take place in Kazan, Russian Federation, from **19 to 30 June 2022**.

III. Information related to the Implementation of Strategic Objectives

(a) Strengthening the credibility of the World Heritage List

7. Since the 22nd General Assembly (2019), 34 properties were inscribed on the World Heritage List, and one property was delisted. At its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021) the World Heritage Committee inscribed five natural and 29 cultural properties and approved the extension of three properties already inscribed on the List.

¹

The list of States Parties to the *World Heritage Convention* is available at the following web address: <u>http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/</u>

8. The total number of properties on the World Heritage List as of July 2021 is 1,154 (897 cultural, 218 natural and 39 mixed).² These properties are located in 167 States Parties (i.e. 26 States Parties have no property inscribed on the World Heritage List).

9. The total number of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger as of July 2021 is 52 (36 cultural and 16 natural).³

10. At its extended 44th session, the World Heritage Committee, following rich deliberations, decided not to endorse the Advisory Bodies' recommendations on nominations which were presented in the Draft Decision for 15 out of 17 cases. Eight Referrals became Inscriptions, and seven Deferrals became Inscriptions.

11. The Ad-hoc Working Group established by the Committee in 2014 which meets intersessionaly examined the reform of the nomination process. The Committee, at its extended 44th session, decided to adopt the reformed nomination process (Decision 44 COM 11), which aims at restoring and enhancing the credibility and balance of the World Heritage List and the development of high quality nominations for sites which have a strong potential to succeed, through enhanced dialogue between the States Parties and the Advisory Bodies from a very early stage. The Committee also decided to extend the mandate of the Ad-hoc Working Group, in two sub-groups, to analyse and propose sustainable and innovative solutions financing of the nomination process as well as concrete proposals on ensuring long term financial sustainability and potential additional advisory service providers as well as the possibility of exploring the criteria and governance under which the Committee may cooperate with international and non-governmental organizations. The Committee will review the outcomes of the ad hoc working group at its 45th session.

In addition, International, inter-regional and regional meetings as well as workshops have been 12. organized for the implementation of the Global Strategy for a representative, balanced and credible World Heritage List. Details of all these activities are available at https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2021/whc21-44com-5A-en.pdf and an evaluation of the Global Strategy presented the extended was to 44th session, see https://whc.unesco.org/en/documents/187906 and Decision 44 COM 8.

(b) Ensuring the effective conservation of World Heritage properties

State of conservation reports of World Heritage properties examined by the World Heritage Committee since the 22nd General Assembly (2019)

13. A total of **255** State of conservation reports, including **53** reports of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, were examined during the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee (Fuzhou/online, 2021). Since the 22nd session of the General Assembly of States Parties in 2019, one property has been inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, one site has been removed from it and one site has been deleted from the World Heritage List.

Approved International Assistance (IA) from the World Heritage Fund since the 22nd General Assembly (2019)

14. An amount of more than \$1,400,000 has been approved since the 22nd General Assembly (2019). Detailed breakdown by region can be found at <u>http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2021/whc21-44com-13-en.pdf</u>

² The World Heritage List is available online at the following address: <u>http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/</u>.

³ The World Heritage List in Dager is available online at the following address: <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/danger</u>

Periodic reporting

15. Reports on the results of the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting exercise in the Arab States and in Africa were presented at the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee (Fuzhou/online, 2021). A report on the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting exercise in Africa was also presented, as well as a progress report on the implementation of the Action Plans for the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting in all regions and a progress report on the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the other regions.

Reinforced Monitoring Mechanism

16. The Reinforced Monitoring Mechanism is a constant cooperative process with the State Party concerned (Decision **31 COM 5.2**). Based on the World Heritage Committee's decisions, the Reinforced Monitoring Mechanism continues to apply to nine properties: Manovo-Gounda Saint-Floris (Central African Republic), Virunga National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Kahuzi-Biega National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Okapi Wildlife Reserve (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Timbuktu (Mali), Tomb of Askia (Mali), Temple of Preah Vihear (Cambodia), Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls (site proposed by Jordan), Medieval Monuments in Kosovo (Serbia). The Committee also decided to stop applying it to two properties: Garamba National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Salonga National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo).

(c) Promoting the development of effective capacity-building in States Parties

Capacity-building strategy

17. Over the past biennium, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, in close cooperation with States Parties and category 2 centres, have undertaken a number of activities which contributed directly to the implementation of the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy, adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011). These included programmes aimed at strengthening regional and national institutions responsible for heritage protection, training initiatives targeting professionals and youth and the development of new guidance materials. An independent results-based evaluation of the outcomes of the WHCBS, based on close consultation and a participatory, transparent, and inclusive process with the States Parties and other capacity-building stakeholders and beneficiaries, will be examined by the Committee at its 45th session.

Education activities

18. A number of international and regional World Heritage Youth Fora were organized by the World Heritage Centre or with the Centre's assistance to develop educational activities, including by the Host Country of the last sessions of the World Heritage Committee (China).

19. The World Heritage Volunteers 2020 and 2021 campaigns carried out numerous camps on several World Heritage properties and has just recently announced the selected projects of the World Heritage Volunteers (WHV) 2020 - 2021 campaign, under the theme of *Fostering Youth Commitment towards World Heritage*.

20. A detailed inventory of the activities mentioned above and others education activities can be found in document WHC/21/44.COM/5A (<u>https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2021/whc21-44com-5A-en.pdf</u>).

(d) Increasing public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage through communication

Awareness-raising

21. In 2020, the UNESCO World Heritage website (<u>http://whc.unesco.org</u>) received an average of 32,485 visits per day. The visits to the World Heritage Centre website represent 32% of the total page views.

22. Five e-newsletters, "World Heritage Information", were sent in 2020 and 2021 in French and English.

23. Articles and interviews on World Heritage have been published in response to requests by numerous national and international well-known media.

Publications

24. Between 2020 and 2021, 50,000 copies of the map were produced and disseminated in English (33,000), French (11,000) and Spanish (6,000). The Chinese version was electronic and is available online.

25. Seven issues of the quarterly magazine World Heritage (issues 93 to 99) were published between November 2019 and August 2021.

Bilateral agreements with States Parties and partnerships

26. During the reported period, bilateral agreements were concluded or continued with 14 States Parties and the European Commission.

27. During the reported period, the World Heritage Centre has established and/or extended 15 partnerships with private sector companies, foundations, and NGOs, all of which are managed in close consultation with UNESCO's Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP). Inventories of ongoing and envisaged partnerships with the private sector and foundations were presented to the Committee in documents WHC/19/43.COM/5A (https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2019/whc19-43com-5A-en.pdf) and WHC/21/44.COM/5A (https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2021/whc21-44com-5A-en.pdf).