



**Third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group
in relation to Resolution 23 GA 11
concerning Climate Change and World Heritage**

**23 November 2022
10.00am-1.00pm / 2.30pm-5.30pm
(in presentia / online meeting)
Room XI
UNESCO Headquarters**

REPORT

The meeting was attended by 81 States Parties to the Convention, with a total of 180 active participants, as well as 302 webcast connections.

Opening of the meeting by the Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG)

The **Chairperson** of the OEWG, H.E. Ms. Yvette Sylla, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Madagascar to UNESCO, opened the third meeting of the OEWG and welcomed all participants. She gave the floor to the **Director of World Heritage, Mr. Lazare Eloundou-Assomo**, to present some technical information followed by **Rapporteur of the OEWG, Ms. Barbara Engels**, who delivered her report of the last meeting of the group held on 16 September 2022, highlighting notably the importance raised by a large number of number of Delegations to adopt the Policy Document at the next General Assembly of States Parties in 2023. She reminded all participants that the next meetings of the OEWG would focus on reviewing the text of the revised Policy Document, working on the consolidated version from the Panel of experts (and more specifically, limited to the text which has been reviewed by the Panel) with a view to finalizing the version to recommend for adoption at the next General Assembly, supported by proposals regarding its implementation.

Designation of additional Bureau members

The **Chairperson** stressed that, after consulting some members of the OEWG, it appeared crucial to ensure more diversity and inclusiveness within its Bureau by representing all UNESCO Electoral Groups.

The Delegation of **Lebanon** was elected as Vice-Chairperson from Group V(b) upon the proposal of the Delegation of **Yemen**.

No Delegation was nominated for election as Vice-Chairperson from Group II.

Thus, the new composition of the Bureau of the OEWG is as follows: **Australia, Colombia** and **Lebanon** as Vice-Chairpersons and **Ms. Barbara Engels** (Germany) as Rapporteur.

Revision of Section I “Preamble”

the **Chairperson** gave an informative overview to structure the work of the OEWG by reminding members of the OEWG that their work should strictly focus, as previously agreed, on the 30 paragraphs that were subject to specific recommendations from the Panel of experts, more specifically on the text reviewed by the Panel i.e., the 14 paragraphs containing recommendations from the Panel and not the other parts of the paragraphs concerned.

Title of Section I

A proposal was made to replace the title of Section I ‘*Preamble*’ with ‘*Introduction*’, which did not receive any objection.

Paragraph 2:

The discussion on this Paragraph revolved around whether it was necessary to indicate in this Paragraph that the work related to managing the impacts of climate change on World Heritage is done in full recognition of the principles of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement and their centrality in the international climate-related discussions, or not, as negotiations under the World Heritage Convention do not have the mandate to revise nor rephrase States’ obligations and commitments under the international climate change framework. Recalling that the mandate of this Group is for the World Heritage Convention, participants concurred on the need to correctly quote short and clear references to the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC), for the sake of harmonizing the Policy Document with other climate change international agreements and frameworks, but without opening a discussion purely on climate change. The OEWG was reminded that the Panel of experts also discussed this issue during its meeting and decided to move the references to Paragraph 11.

Participants agreed that Paragraph 2 was actually more descriptive and decided to move such references to Paragraph 11 and to further discuss this matter when reviewing this latter.

Paragraph 2 therefore remains open until discussion on Paragraph 11 is finalized.

Paragraph 3:

The discussion on this Paragraph focused mainly on the causes of the unprecedented atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHG), with the possible mention of a full list of such causes and the addition of the percentages for which each cause listed contributes. As all did not agree on the addition of all causes, the compromise retained by the Group was to refer to “*anthropogenic emissions*” without any reference to percentages as science is not static and constantly evolving. A footnote with the definition of “*anthropogenic emissions*”, as defined by the IPCC in its 2018 Global Warming of 1.5°C Report, was also added for detailed elements or references to scientific evidence.

The Delegation of Venezuela requested that its intervention be included in extenso in this meeting’s report: “*Venezuela is pleased by the pace and advancement of the discussion of the*

paragraphs, and will go along with the consensus, we would like to kindly request that it be included in the report that, although the human species are responsible for the affectation that the planet is experiencing, it is necessary to point out that the deep inequalities of civilization as it is made up "of countries that have been indiscriminately exploiting the planet's natural resources for two centuries, while others barely have enough to eat and persist under a pre-industrial mode of production". Venezuela is responsible for less than 0.4% of global greenhouse gas emissions on the planet. However, the people must pay the consequences of the imbalance caused by the world's main capitalist economies that continue to pollute the planet for the benefit of a few. In this regard, Venezuela is concerned that the word on climate change is based solely or mostly on industries and does not take into consideration deep inequalities between countries and industrialized countries and the global south. Therefore, Venezuela continues to promote and defend the principle of CBDR."

Paragraph 3 was adopted as amended.

Paragraph 8:

During the review of this Paragraph, the definition of the word '*carbon neutral*' was questioned, some participants being more with the notion of '*climate neutrality*'. Both being defined in the IPCC Glossary, it was decided to maintain the reference to '*carbon neutral*' but to add the IPCC definition of '*climate neutrality*' in the glossary of the Policy Document. With regard to the glossary, the participants decided to 1) update those definitions, which are taken from the IPCC Glossary and that have been revised since the first draft, and 2) to note in the introductory paragraph of the glossary to which IPCC Report it is referred to.

Participants were also of the view to refer to 'significant greenhouse gas emissions management, including reductions, removals, reuse, and recycling in all sectors', instead of mentioning only '*greenhouse gas emissions reductions*'.

There was also a large majority to maintain the reference to a '*fair and equitable transition*' in the Policy Document

Paragraph 8 was adopted as amended.

Paragraph 9:

The OEWG only discussed a proposed addition at the end of the Paragraph, insisting that, in the context of this Policy Document, transformative change-related activities should be undertaken in line with the Paris Agreement and its principles.

Paragraph 9 was adopted as amended.

Paragraph 10:

As some Delegations were not comfortable with the reference to '*climate governance challenges*' in this Paragraph, after a short debate, the OEWG agreed to use an alternative wording referring to '*addressing challenges related to climate change*' instead.

Paragraph 10 was adopted as amended.

Paragraph 11:

As agreed by the OEWG while reviewing Paragraph 2 above, discussions resumed on whether it was necessary or not to indicate in this Paragraph that the Policy Document has been elaborated in full recognition of the principles of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement and their centrality in the international climate-related discussions.

The OEWG also discussed at length whether to maintain or not the references to the UNFCCC in '*the Paris Agreement adopted under the UNFCCC*', as all Delegations do not agree with such hierarchical language between the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC.

Members of the OEWG also shared different points of view regarding a proposal to include the text of 2 articles of the Paris Agreement in this Paragraph (Articles 2.1 and 2.2); some being of the view that this would make the intention of the Paragraph more readable, while others highlighted that this addition would establish three long term goals and that in their view, the Policy Document could not limit itself to what was under the Paris Agreement.

Due to the diverging views on these matters, it was agreed to adjourn the discussions on this Paragraph 11 and to come back to it at a later stage, once the OEWG has finished reviewing the other paragraphs of the Policy Document where articles of the Paris Agreement are cited in.

The discussion on Paragraph 11 was adjourned until the end of the revision of the Policy Document foreseen at the next meeting.

Paragraph 13 and Paragraph 14 were adopted without debate.

Paragraph 16:

Similar to what was debated in Paragraph 11 above, the OEWG discussed a proposed wording change aiming at the deletion of the UNFCCC reference in the term '*UNFCCC's Paris Agreement*'. As a consensus, the Group members agreed that it would actually be appropriate to refer to both '*the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement*', and that consistency in this regard should be ensured throughout the Policy Document.

The Group also agreed to add a reference to the Convention on Biological Diversity to the agreements and frameworks listed in this Paragraph 16, without necessarily stating their existing mandates and priorities.

Considering the wide range of international instruments listed in this Paragraph, the Group agreed to refer to '*other multilateral agreements, frameworks, processes and instruments*' instead of only referring to '*frameworks*'.

Paragraph 16 was adopted as amended.

Paragraph 17:

Regarding this Paragraph, there was some debate among the OEWG members: indeed, some wished to have a small addition to indicate that the Policy Document would provide an outcome-oriented '*national*' policy framework in order to strengthen what countries can incorporate in their national policies, while other members highlighted that the Policy Document -which is not a national document - aimed at guiding the work of the World Heritage Committee and States Parties to the Convention, and that the suggestion to add '*national*' could change

its entire purpose. In the spirit of consensus, the word '*national*' was not added to the Paragraph.

The OEWG also discussed at length the issue of monitoring the implementation of the Policy Document, and whether the terminology to be used should not be '*regular follow up*' rather than '*regular monitoring*', as the Policy Document is not binding and the word '*follow up*' seemed more flexible for a number of Delegations. After getting a clarification that it was not the first time that States Parties were working towards a Policy Document and that States Parties were not required to submit any form of monitoring under this Policy Document, as it is being written for guidance purpose only, it was agreed to have both words associated as follows: '*facilitating continuous follow up/monitoring of the implementation*'.

Paragraph 17 was adopted as amended.

Paragraph 20:

Although Paragraph 20 was not open for discussion, the wording '*other multilateral agreements, frameworks, processes and instruments*' was integrated for consistency, as agreed during the discussion of Paragraph 16.

Paragraph 20 was adopted as amended.

Throughout the revision of the Paragraphs above-mentioned, the working methodology approved during previous meetings of the OEWG (which consisted in the OEWG focusing only on the 30 paragraphs that were subject to specific recommendations from the Panel of experts, and more specifically on the text reviewed by the Panel) was recalled, as several amendments were proposed in Paragraphs not open for discussion, or in some sections of the Paragraphs, which had not been subject to discussion during the Panel of experts. It was also recalled that the Panel of experts had a clear and strict mandate given by the General Assembly to discuss certain sections of the Paragraphs, which were highlighted in green in the Panel's Report, and not the Paragraphs in their entirety.

Moreover, both the Chairperson and a number of Delegations expressed their regrets that some substantial amendments to the text of the Policy Document that were proposed in the room had not been shared ahead of the meeting with the Secretariat and all members of the OEWG. Members of the OEWG were hence reminded once more to submit in advance their amendments to the Secretariat to facilitate the work during the forthcoming meetings.

Closure of the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group:

The **Chairperson** warmly thanked the OEWG members for their contributions, as well as the interpreters and technical staff for their support. She shared her regrets that the OEWG did not progress as fast as expected and informed that the approved methodology would be applied in order to move more efficiently during their next meetings.

The Chairperson reminded the OEWG that their fourth meeting would be held in **January 2023** in order to pursue the reviewing of the Policy Document.

Finally, the floor was given to the **Director of World Heritage** who sincerely thanked the Rapporteur for her guidance and also encouraged all Delegations to submit their amendments in advance by e-mail to allow the Secretariat to integrate them in the text of the Policy Document and for all members of the OEWG to have access to them prior to the next meeting. He stated that this would allow the OEWG to move forward and work more efficiently.

Moreover, the Director reminded all participants that, every time the work of the OEWG is not progressing, the funds used for the holding of the meeting are lost and reiterated his call for the OEWG members to pursue their work in a spirit of consensus.

The meeting was closed at 5.40pm.