

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

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Item 10 of the Provisional Agenda: Periodic Reports

10C: Follow-up on the implementation of the Action Plans for the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in Africa and the Arab States regions

Summary

This document presents the progress on follow-up activities and implementation of Regional Action Plans of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting for the regions of Africa (Part I) and the Arab States (Part II). The reporting on regional activities since the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee is presented in a harmonized format.

Draft Decisions:

- ***45 COM 10C.1 see Part II***
- ***45 COM 10C.2 see Part IV***

I. FOLLOW-UP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN OF THE THIRD CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING IN AFRICA

A. Background and objectives

1. The Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Africa region was launched following Decision **41 COM 10A** (Krakow, 2017), and was implemented between September 2019 and July 2020. The report on the results of this exercise, including the regional Action Plan (please see [Document WHC/21/44COM/10B](#)), was endorsed at the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee (Fuzhou/online, 2021). The regional Action Plan has five strategic objectives and encompasses a set of 26 actions/activities linked to identified expected results. The present document provides information on the implementation of the Third Cycle Action Plan for Africa (2021-2027) from July 2021 to May 2023 and therefore also incorporates information regarding the progress report which is being requested by the World Heritage Committee for examination at its 46th session, initially foreseen for 2023.
2. The Strategy for World Heritage in Africa was informed by an inclusive consultation process, which included the seven Arab States located in the African Continent and is aligned with the regional Action Plans for Africa and the Arab States.
3. Furthermore, following the Declaration adopted at the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development – MONDIACULT 2022 (28-30 September 2022, Mexico City), and reflections undertaken at the international conference “The Next 50 - The Future of World Heritage in Challenging Times, Enhancing Resilience and Sustainability” (17-18 November 2022, Delphi), as well as the *Yaoundé Call to Action* adopted at the Sub-Regional Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the *UNESCO World Heritage Convention* in Central Africa (19 October 2022), the activities carried out thereafter have consistently been implemented in line with the outcomes of the above-mentioned conferences.

B. Activities implemented in relation to the priorities outlined in the Third Cycle Action Plan for Africa (2021-2027)

4. Following the World Heritage Committee's endorsement of the Regional Action Plan for Africa, several activities have been organised to initiate the implementation of Decision **44 COM 10B**. This has been done in cooperation with the States Parties of the region, the Advisory Bodies, the UNESCO Field Offices in the region and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in close collaboration with the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF).
5. Highlights of activities undertaken since July 2021 within the framework of the Third Cycle Action Plan for Africa (2021-2027) and in line with UNESCO's Operational Strategy for Priority Africa (2022-2029) and its Flagship Programme 3 “Fostering cultural heritage and capacity development” include:
 - a) An implementation plan has been developed to set clear targets for each biennium and efficiently monitor the implementation progress. Annual meetings with national focal points and quarterly meetings with Field offices and the AWHF on the implementation of the Action Plan are proposed as a mechanism to ensure the implementation and monitoring at the national and property level.
 - b) In line with Actions 1 to 4 of the Action Plan and in the framework of the “Capacity-building programme for the nomination of World Heritage sites in the Africa Region” financed by the Government of Japan, consultations have started, and progress has been made with all ten countries that currently have no properties inscribed on

the World Heritage List. Several capacity-building activities have been carried out in some of them including:

- i) Support to the finalisation of the nomination dossier for [Nyungwe National Park](#) (Rwanda) and to the organization of communities' consultation and awareness-raising workshops. The nomination dossier was submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in January 2022.
- ii) Support to update the Tentative List for Sierra Leone, along with capacity-building workshops for local experts, professionals and local communities and a field visit, have been organised in the [Gola-Tiwai complex](#). The Tentative List of the State Party was updated and submitted in January 2022, and the preparation of the nomination dossier for the Gola-Tiwai complex was started. A draft nomination dossier was submitted to the World Heritage Centre for comments in December 2022, in view of finalising the preparation of the dossier in 2023.
- iii) Support to empower local experts, professional and local authorities in Eswatini continues, following a mission for needs and capacity-building assessment organised in February 2022. This resulted in a proposal for an extension of the [Barbeton Makhonjwa Mountains](#) (South Africa). With the support and facilitation of the State Party of South Africa and AWHF, a second mission was organised in November 2022 to discuss the feasibility, opportunity and challenges of the proposal for extension. In March 2023, a roadmap was developed for the preparation of the first nomination as an extension of the Barbeton Makhonjwa Mountains.
- iv) A first technical assistance mission to Sao Tome and Principe for a needs assessment was organised in March 2022. In close collaboration with AWHF, a second mission was dispatched in October 2022 to train local experts in developing a Tentative List. On 30 January 2023, Sao Tome and Principe submitted its first Tentative List to the World Heritage Centre. A third mission was organised in April 2023 to develop a roadmap for the preparation of the nomination dossier.
- v) Consultation meetings regarding development of Tentative Lists, capacity building on World Heritage towards the preparation of nomination dossiers were organised for Burundi, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia and South Sudan. In South Sudan, a workshop on needs assessment was organised in June 2022 involving 25 key stakeholders. As for Djibouti, the Secretariat supported the State Party to mobilise World Heritage Fund to revise its Tentative List in 2022. Following two workshops in April and July 2022, in close collaboration with the Advisory Bodies and AWHF, the State Party revised its Tentative List and proposed the [Les Gravures Rupestre d'Abourma](#) as a potential site for nomination. The Secretariat is developing a specific training programme for local experts in Djibouti to develop a roadmap for the preparation of a solid nomination dossier.
- vi) At the time of preparation of this report, a first mission is being foreseen in Equatorial Guinea in Autumn 2023 to do feasibility work and train local experts in the implementation of the *Convention*. Following this, a targeted training will be organised to develop the first Tentative List.
- vii) The Secretariat is supporting the State Party of Guinea Bissau to finalise its nomination dossier ([Coastal Ecosystems of the Marine Protected Areas and Ecological Corridors of the Bijagós Archipelago](#)), by working to enhance its

management system and develop a management plan. In September 2022, the State Party submitted its draft nomination dossier to the World Heritage Centre for a completeness check.

- viii) A needs assessment and training workshop was organised in Liberia in June 2022. The State Party revised and submitted its Tentative List on 31 January 2023.
 - ix) The Secretariat is supporting the State Party to develop a roadmap for the nomination, in particular, the Gola-Tiwai Complex in Sierra Leone. Similarly, the World Heritage Centre is supporting South Sudan in developing a roadmap following a workshop organised in October 2022, involving 20 senior representatives from national and local authorities.
- c) In line with Action 4 of the Action Plan and in the framework of “Supporting capacity-building for nomination projects and promotion of World Heritage sites in East Africa” financed by the Sultanate of Oman, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre has implemented and/or developed the following activities:
- i) Supporting Kenya in developing the nomination dossier for [The Historic Town of Gedi](#) submitted on 31 January 2023, following consultations with communities and stakeholders. This was facilitated by the National Museum of Kenya (NMK) and the Kenyan Wildlife Services (KWS) in April and July 2022.
 - ii) Supporting Comoros in undertaking a feasibility study on the nomination dossier for the [Sultanats Historiques de Comores](#) with technical support from the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS. A mission was organised in June 2022, and a roadmap has now been developed to prepare a nomination dossier.
 - iii) An upstream process was conducted by ICOMOS for the [Eglise catholique d'Ambodifotatra de Sainte Marie](#), proposed by Madagascar for a possible nomination dossier. The World Heritage Centre is working with the State Party to develop a roadmap to prepare a nomination dossier.
 - iv) From 4-5 November 2021, national authorities of Somalia held a workshop and decided to set up a National Heritage Committee. In December 2022, an action plan was also developed to facilitate the implementation of the *Convention*. With the facilitation of NMK, six experts from Somalia were trained in Mombasa, Kenya, to develop their Tentative List. The State Party is developing its first Tentative List.
 - v) Following several meetings with national and local authorities in the United Republic of Tanzania, and in light of the partial collapse of the House of Wonder in Zanzibar, the Secretariat is focusing on the first phase of empowering management authorities in the islands of Zanzibar. This will be achieved by developing training modules aimed at reinforcing the capacity of national, and local authorities, local experts, stakeholders, and communities in the implementation of the *Convention* and managing the World Heritage site.
- d) In line with Action 8 of the Action Plan, a capacity-building programme, supported by the Governments of China and Norway, was initiated to empower all African countries concerned to elaborate their Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR).

In May 2022, an online workshop on developing disaster risk management plans for World Heritage properties was organised. During this online meeting which

involved 90 participants from 11 countries (Central Africa Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Uganda, and United Republic of Tanzania), including World Heritage site managers, as well as representatives from AWHF, ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN, a strategy was launched in view of removing African properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger

In June 2022, a training workshop was organised for Central African States Parties, in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. A second training workshop has been organised in May 2023 in Dakar, Senegal. The training was dedicated to Western African States Parties (Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal) with the participation of Côte d'Ivoire as a case study and a third training workshop is planned for Autumn 2023, which will be held for Eastern African States Parties (Kenya, Madagascar, Uganda, and United Republic of Tanzania).

- e) In line with Action 14 of the Action Plan, and with the support of the Government of China, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with ICCROM, *Ecole du patrimoine mondial africain* (EPA) and the AWHF, has developed a capacity-building project on disaster risk management and protection systems for World Heritage sites in Africa.

This one-year initiative project comprised a series of online webinars targeting World Heritage site managers in the management and evaluation of disaster-associated risks and assisting in the preparedness of preventive measures. In the first phase (30 May to 20 June 2022), a team of scientific coordinators were involved in the creation of learning materials for the online webinars, which targeted 25 States Parties. This was an opportunity for World Heritage site managers and their teams to familiarise themselves with the basic concepts of disaster risk management and protection systems and be aware of the basic building blocks available to put together effective disaster risk management strategies.

In the second phase, 6 World Heritage properties: [Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi](#) (Uganda), [Royal Palaces of Abomey](#) (Benin), [Koutammakou, the Land of the Batammariba](#) (Togo), [Historic Town of Grand-Bassam](#) (Côte d'Ivoire), [Island of Saint-Louis](#) (Senegal), and [Stone Town of Zanzibar](#) (United Republic of Tanzania), will be supported to develop and implement their own risk management plan.

- f) In line with Actions 13 and 16 of the Action Plan, with the support of the Governments of Japan, Norway and Switzerland, a pilot multi-lingual capacity-building training on “Improving Management Effectiveness of World Heritage in Africa” was organised in partnership with ICCROM in December 2021. It consisted of a three-phased package of online training activities and technical support in English, French and Portuguese to improve the management effectiveness of African World Heritage properties and other heritage places with the potential to be inscribed in the future. This was an opportunity to make use of the *Enhancing our Heritage 2.0* revised toolkit and to build capacity in heritage management and governance for a total of 86 participants from 25 African countries. Following this phase, local experts and management authorities from three sites will be supported to develop their own management plan using the toolkit.
- g) In line with Action 18 of the Action Plan,
- i) With the financial support from the World Heritage Fund, the Governments of China and France, and in partnership with ICOMOS, IUCN and ICCROM, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre is presently implementing a mentorship

programme aiming to increase, progressively the number and role of African heritage practitioners by becoming skilled international experts and more involved with the Advisory Bodies in implementing the *Convention* in the region, including Reactive Monitoring, Advisory processes and Evaluation processes. Initially, 12 African heritage practitioners (10 men and 2 women) were enrolled as mentees in December 2021. In order to ensure gender balance, eight more women mentees were recruited to make 50/50 parity, making a total of 10 men and 10 women mentees enrolled by December 2022. A conference was organised in Arusha (United Republic of Tanzania) from 12 to 14 December 2022: *Conference on Mentoring and World Heritage -Empowering African heritage professionals and achieve gender equality*. The Conference gathered over 100 participants. African experts addressed challenges and opportunities of capacity-building in the World Heritage system, reflected on the innovative approach through a mentorship programme and advocated gender equality and integration of a gender perspective in the implementation of the *Convention* in Africa. In addition, discussions were engaged on how to better institutionalise and sustain the capacity programme through a network of African universities and higher learning institutions.

- ii) With the support of the Governments of China and France, a pan-African site managers network has been founded. Following two years of the process of advocacy with African World Heritage site managers, an Interim Committee consisting of 15 members from the Eastern, Central, Southern, Western and Northern Africa sub-regions (i.e. three members per sub-region) were elected in October 2021. Its first objective was to develop a charter, the terms of reference and a website and to establish the African Site Managers Network (ASMN).

From January to May 2022, monthly meetings between the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, AWHF, ICCROM and the Interim Committee were organised to refine the modalities and organisation of the network. As a result of this, the ASMN was officially launched on 5 May 2022, under the leadership of the World Heritage site manager of [Fort Jesus, Mombasa](#) (Kenya) as a Chairperson, the World Heritage site manager of [Dougga / Thugga](#) (Tunisia) as a Secretary General. The World Heritage Centre together with ICCROM and the AWHF is presently supporting the ASMN to develop its annual plan, in line with Priority Africa and the Action Plans, adopted by the World Heritage Committee, for the Arab States and Africa in the framework of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting.

- iii) The UNESCO World Heritage Centre has conducted a mapping of universities and institutions of higher learning on the African Continent in partnership with the UNESCO Chair on African Heritage and Sustainable Development in Gaborone, Botswana and the Cheick Anta Diop University in Dakar, Senegal. The mapping will allow the UNESCO World Heritage Centre to create a network of African universities, support curricula development, and create five centres (hubs) of excellence one in each of the five subregions of the Continent.

II. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision: 45 COM 10C.1

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/10C,
2. Recalling Decision **44 COM 10B**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/Online, 2021),
3. Welcomes the progress made in the follow-up of the implementation of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting Action Plan in the Africa region (2021-2027);
4. Notes with appreciation the financial contribution of the Governments of China, France, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the Sultanate of Oman, to the activities carried out in the framework of the implementation of the Action Plan 2021-2027 for the Africa region;
5. Calls upon States Parties to financially and technically support the implementation of the Regional Action Plan for the Africa Region through follow-up activities with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies, the *École du patrimoine mondial africain* and the African World Heritage Fund;
6. Takes note with satisfaction of the creation of the African Site Managers Network (ASMN), working to develop a network of African universities and five centres of excellence in each of the five subregions to empower local experts and better institutionalise capacity development in implementing the World Heritage Convention in Africa and, notably, in synergy with the other UNESCO Culture Conventions;
7. Requests the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies, and with the support of States Parties, to continue its efforts to coordinate and implement the Regional Capacity Building Programme according to the Action Plan 2021-2027;
8. Acknowledges with appreciation that the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa was informed by an inclusive consultation process, which included the seven Arab States located in the African Continent, and that it is aligned with the regional Action Plans for Africa and the Arab States;
9. Also acknowledges with appreciation that the outcomes of the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development – MONDIACULT 2022 (Mexico City, 2022), and the reflections undertaken at the international conference *The Next 50 - The Future of World Heritage in Challenging Times, Enhancing Resilience and Sustainability* (Delphi, 2022), as well as the Yaoundé Call to Action adopted at the Sub-Regional Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention in Central Africa (Yaoundé, 2022) have been taken into consideration in the implementation of activities carried out thereafter;
10. Further reminds States Parties of the Africa region, which have not already done so, to submit their Retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value by **1 February 2024** at the latest, as well as clarifications of boundaries by **1 December 2023** at the latest;
11. Reiterates its request to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre to monitor the implementation of the Regional Action Plan in view of preparing a mid-cycle assessment report to be presented to World Heritage Committee at its 46th session.

III. FOLLOW-UP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE THIRD CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING IN THE ARAB STATES

A. Background and objectives of the Third Cycle Action Plan for the Arab States region (2021-2027)

1. The Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Arab States was launched following Decision **41 COM 10A** (Krakow, 2017), and was implemented between September 2018 and July 2019. The report on the results of this exercise, including the regional Action Plan (please see [Document WHC/21/44COM/10A](#)), was endorsed at the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee (Fuzhou/Online, 2021) by Decision **44 COM 10A**. The Action Plan has three strategic objectives, and a set of 35 actions linked to identified priorities. The present document provides information on the implementation of the Action Plan (2021-2027) from July 2021 to May 2023, and therefore also incorporates information regarding the progress report which is being requested by the World Heritage Committee for examination at its 46th session, initially foreseen for 2023.
2. The Strategy for World Heritage in Africa was informed by an inclusive consultation process, which included the seven Arab States located in the African Continent, and is aligned with the regional Action Plans for Africa and the Arab States.
3. Furthermore, following the Declaration adopted at the UNESCO Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development – MONDIACULT 2022 (28-30 September 2022, Mexico City), and the reflections undertaken at the international conference “The Next 50 - The Future of World Heritage in Challenging Times, Enhancing Resilience and Sustainability” (17-18 November 2022, Delphi), the activities carried out thereafter have consistently been implemented in line with the outcomes of the above-mentioned conferences.

B. Follow-up activities related to the dissemination and the implementation of the Third Cycle Action Plan for the Arab States (2021-2027)

4. An online regional meeting on the implementation of the Action Plan for the Arab States (2021-2027) was held on 27 October 2021. It was organised by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in collaboration with the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH), with the participation of World Heritage focal points and site managers in the Arab States, as well as UNESCO Field Offices in the region. Also, a summary of the report on the results of the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting exercise in the Arab States, including the Action Plan has been translated into Arabic and will be disseminated among the relevant stakeholders in the region.
5. At the time of the preparation of this report, a publication in the World Heritage Paper Series under the title “World Heritage in the Arab States: Outcomes of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting and the Regional Action Plan (2021-2027)” is under preparation.

C. Activities implemented in relation to the priorities outlined in the Third Cycle Action Plan for the Arab States (2021-2027)

6. A number of capacity building activities have been organised by the World Heritage Centre and support has been provided to States Parties, in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies, contributing towards the enhancement of protection, conservation and management of World Heritage, particularly for sites inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, including through emergency preparedness, disaster risk response, and planning for recovery (Strategic Objective 2 of the Action Plan). These activities relate to the elaboration of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of properties

from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), including the [Archaeological Site of Leptis Magna](#) (Libya), [Crac des Chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din](#), [Site of Palmyra](#) (Syrian Arab Republic), and [Hatra](#) (Iraq). In addition, support and online workshops have been organised to ensure the definition of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), attributes, and boundary clarifications for effective protection and management. This includes an online capacity building session organised in collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States - Cluster Office for Egypt and Sudan, which aimed at supporting the State Party of Egypt in the elaboration of Retrospective Statements of OUV (RSOUV) and the preparation of minor boundary modification proposals.

7. Moreover, in collaboration with ICOMOS, online capacity building workshops on the Reactive Monitoring process, state of conservation reporting, and the preparation of RSOUV for World Heritage properties in Iraq took place during May 2022, and follow up has been carried out with regard to RSOUVs for World Heritage properties in Libya, as well as supporting the implementation of the World Heritage Committee decisions in relation to boundaries and strategic conservation at [Gebel Barkal and the Sites of the Napatan Region](#) (Sudan). These activities were supported by the UNESCO/Netherlands Funds-in-Trust (NFIT).
8. With reference to enhancing resilience to natural hazards, activities have been implemented in Sudan to respond to the impact by flooding through the Emergency Assistance project for [Gebel Barkal and the Sites of the Napatan Region](#), and the implementation of emergency measures at the [Archaeological Sites of the Island of Meroe](#), supported by the Ministry of Culture of France.
9. Actions related to enhancing capacities in the preparation of Impact Assessments comprised two capacity building workshops. An online regional workshop was organised to strengthen capacities in the Arab States in applying Impact Assessments to both natural and cultural World Heritage properties, providing important tools to evaluate the risks and threats that new projects may pose to the Outstanding Universal Value of sites, and to elaborate mitigation measures (6 and 9 December 2021). The workshop was organised in collaboration with ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN. Another training workshop on applying Impact Assessments in a World Heritage context was organised from 22 to 24 August 2022 in Cairo, Egypt, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and ICOMOS. Both workshops were supported through the UNESCO/Netherlands Funds-in-Trust (NFIT).
10. With the aim of improving the integration of sustainable development policies in the management of World Heritage sites (Strategic Objective 3 of the Action Plan), a regional online training workshop on "World Heritage Site Management: Addressing the Various Dimensions of Sustainable Development in Conservation and Management Approaches" was organised from 24 to 27 October 2022. The workshop aimed at enhancing awareness and knowledge towards mainstreaming the various dimensions of sustainable development in the conservation and management of World Heritage sites, focusing on four thematic areas that have been identified as priorities in the Action Plan: a. Sustainable Development; b. The Historic Urban Landscapes Recommendation; c. Managing Disaster Risks at World Heritage Sites, and d. Climate Change and World Heritage.
11. Furthermore, several other activities were implemented by ARC-WH, thus contributing to the implementation of the Action Plan for the Arab States (2021-2027), in particular through awareness raising and capacity building activities in the region. Various workshops were conducted focusing on the preparation of state of conservation reports and Impact Assessment studies (Tunisia, September 2021), training of trainers in conducting Impact Assessments in a World Heritage context (online, October 2022), in collaboration with ICCROM, IUCN and ICOMOS, and the Norwegian Ministry of Climate

and Environment, in addition to a workshop on assessing the various urban impacts on World Heritage sites (Saudi Arabia, November 2022).

12. Other workshops organised by ARC-WH focused on the *World Heritage Convention* processes (online/United Arab Emirates, September 2021; Yemen, June 2021 - February 2022; Iraq, December 2021), preparation of management systems and plans for cultural World Heritage sites (online/Algeria, October 2021), mechanisms and procedures of the *World Heritage Convention* for Saudi Arabia Heritage professionals (Bahrain, March 2022). In addition, support was provided in sustainable tourism (Jordan, 2022), and a workshop was organised on Strengthening Capacities of World Heritage Professionals for Cultural and Natural Sites in the Arab Region (Egypt, 29 January - 2 February 2023), in collaboration with ICOMOS and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of Egypt, in cooperation with the World Heritage Centre, IUCN, and the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF).
13. Among its activities, ARC-WH also organised an online regional meeting for World Heritage focal points on sustainable tourism (July 2022), and another one focusing on strengthening capacities of heritage specialists in risk management actions, in cooperation with the ICCROM-IUCN World Heritage Leadership Program (WHLP) (October 2022), as well as a workshop on climate action for World Heritage in collaboration with ICCROM (March 2023). In addition, a course in marine archaeology and underwater cultural heritage was launched in February 2023, in cooperation between ARC-WH, the Heritage Commission of the Ministry of Culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UNESCO Chair for Underwater Cultural Heritage located in Alexandria University. This followed an expert meeting that was organised on developing synergies between underwater cultural heritage and World Heritage in the Arab States (March 2022).
14. The International Conference on Integrated Reconstruction and Post-Trauma Impact on Communities and Socio-Economic Aspects of Recovery was organised by ARC-WH in November 2021, while a number of awareness raising activities were carried out in the framework of the World Heritage Days, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of ARC-WH and the 50th anniversary of the *World Heritage Convention* (September 2022).
15. ARC-WH has also prepared several publications related to World Heritage in the Arab States, which would contribute to achieving the strategic objectives of the Action Plan (2021-2027), particularly in relation to its Strategic Objective 1, aimed at a representative, balanced and credible World Heritage List, reflecting the cultural and natural diversity of the region. These include the report on “Exploring Cultural Heritage of the Arab Region. Potential offered for a more balanced World Heritage List” in collaboration with ICOMOS, and “Tabe’a III report: Conflict and climate change pressures on natural World Heritage in the Arab region”, in collaboration with IUCN. Other relevant publications comprise two books on “World Heritage of the Arab Countries”, in collaboration with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO), and “Conservation and Development of Urban Heritage in the 21st Century”, which is in the Arabic language, prepared in collaboration with a group of experts from the Arab States.

IV. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision: 45 COM 10C.2

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/10C,

2. Recalling Decision **44 COM 10A**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/Online, 2021),
3. Welcomes the progress made in the follow-up on the implementation of the Third Cycle Regional Action Plan for the Arab States (2021-2027);
4. Expresses its appreciation to the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH) for its follow-up on the implementation of the Action Plan for the Arab States (2021-2027);
5. Invites the States Parties to support the implementation of the Action Plan for the Arab States (2021-2027), and to continue their collaboration with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and ARC-WH in implementing the related activities;
6. Acknowledges with appreciation that the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa was informed by an inclusive consultation process, which included the seven Arab States located in the African Continent, and that it is aligned with the regional Action Plans for Africa and the Arab States;
7. Also acknowledges with appreciation that the outcomes of the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development – MONDIACULT 2022 (Mexico City, 2022), and the reflections of international conference The Next 50 - The Future of World Heritage in Challenging Times, Enhancing Resilience and Sustainability (Delphi, 2022), have been taken into consideration in the implementation of activities carried out thereafter;
8. Reminds the States Parties of the Arab States region, which have not already done so, to submit their Retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value by **1 February 2024** at the latest, as well as clarifications of boundaries by **1 December 2023** at the latest;
9. Reiterates its request to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre to monitor the implementation of the Regional Action Plan in view of preparing a mid-cycle assessment report to be presented to the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session.